Joint Chiefs say invasion 'only way' to totally disarm N Korea

A Pentagon assessment has declared the only way to completely destroy all parts of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme is through a ground invasion.

Rear Admiral Michael Dumont expressed the opinion on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in a letter to Congressman Ted Lieu.

Mr Dumont said calculating "even the roughest" potential casualty figures would be extremely difficult.

He also gave some detail on what the first hours of a war would involve.

"The only way to 'locate and destroy - with complete certainty - all components of North Korea's nuclear weapons programs' is through a ground invasion," he wrote in response to Congressman Lieu's questions about a potential conflict.

The risks involved included a potential nuclear counter-attack by North Korea while US forces attempted to disable its "deeply buried, underground facilities", he said.

"A classified briefing is the best venue for a detailed discussion," he added.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff directly advise the president of the United States on military matters.
Dear @realDonaldTrump: It is morning in Japan. This @washingtonpost article on grim N Korea war options is for you. 


... 

3:13 PM - Nov 5, 2017

Securing North Korean nuclear sites would require a ground invasion, Pentagon says

A Navy admiral sent a blunt assessment of the dangers of military action to lawmakers.

washingtonpost.com
In a statement with more than a dozen other military veterans turned congressmen, Mr Lieu, a Democrat, said the assessment was "deeply disturbing" and warned that a conflict "could result in hundreds of thousands, or even millions of deaths in just the first few days of fighting."
"Their assessment underscores what we've known all along: there are no good military options for North Korea," the statement said.
The letter was published as Donald Trump begins his mammoth tour of Asia, during which the North Korean threat is expected to be a major topic of discussion.

Trump vows US resolve to Asian allies
A beginner's guide to Trump in Asia
Trump vows to tackle N Korea on Asia trip

The president has previously said that if forced to defend the US or its allies, he "will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea."
"The President needs to stop making provocative statements that hinder diplomatic options and put American troops further at risk," Mr Lieu's joint statement said.

Rear Admiral Dumont opened his letter with a clear indication that his office supported economic and diplomatic solutions ahead of any military action. Potential casualties from a conflict depended heavily on the intensity of any attack on South Korea's capital, Seoul, which lies just 35 miles (56 km) from the border, as well as how much advance warning the US and its allies had, he said. He said a counter-offensive from artillery battery fire and air strikes might help limit casualties.
The Joint Chiefs also fear that Pyongyang would use biological weapons in a conflict, despite international conventions banning their use, as well as chemical weapons - which it has never agreed to abandon.
"It likely possesses a [chemical weapons] stockpile," the letter said. The assessment by military chiefs follows the release of a report from the non-partisan Congressional Research Service, which warned that even a brief conflict without the use of banned weapons could cost tens of thousands of lives.
North Korean official: Take hydrogen bomb threat 'literally'

By Will Ripley, CNN

Updated 1748 GMT (0148 HKT) October 25, 2017

Pyongyang (CNN) A senior North Korean official has issued a stern warning to the world that it should take "literally" his country's threat to test a nuclear weapon above ground.

The official, Ri Yong Pil, told CNN in an exclusive interview in Pyongyang that the threat made by North Korea's foreign minister last month should not be dismissed. North Korea "has always brought its words into action," Ri said, visibly angry.
North Korea's missile tests

Speaking on a visit to New York for the United Nations General Assembly last month, Ri Yong Ho, the foreign minister, raised the possibility that North Korea could test a powerful hydrogen bomb over the Pacific Ocean. The threat came hours after US President Donald Trump threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea in a speech to the UN.

"The foreign minister is very well aware of the intentions of our supreme leader, so I think you should take his words literally," Ri told CNN in Pyongyang.

North Korea carried out the strongest of its six-ever nuclear tests in early September, claiming to have used a hydrogen bomb.

The UN responded to the test by imposing fresh sanctions on the rogue state.

North Korea’s continued threats have put its neighbors in the Pacific on high alert. In September, Pyongyang flew a ballistic missile over Japan. When North Korea it carried out its sixth nuclear test, it claimed to have detonated a hydrogen bomb that could fit atop a ballistic missile.

And during the back-and-forth barbs with Washington, Pyongyang at one point said it would fire missiles into the waters off the US Pacific territory of Guam.

Ri also implied that diplomatic channels between the US and North Korea
were nonexistent, despite US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson reiterating over months that they are still open.

Why Trump’s Korean war talk should be taken seriously

"The US is talking about a military option and even practicing military moves. They’re pressuring us on all fronts with sanctions. If you think this will lead to diplomacy, you’re deeply mistaken," Ri said.

Ri’s remarks come after Trump on Sunday boasted that the US was "prepared for anything" when it came to the North Korea nuclear crisis. "We’ll see what happens. ... We are so prepared, like you wouldn’t believe," he said in an interview with Fox Business Network's Maria Bartiromo.

"You would be shocked to see how totally prepared we are if we need to be," he added.

"Would it be nice not to do that? The answer is yes. Will that happen? Who knows, who knows, Maria."

President Trump will be in South Korea during his trip to Asia next month but will most likely forgo a visit to the heavily fortified border with between North Korea, a senior White House official told CNN.
Report: Massive morale problems aboard US Navy ship

By Ryan Browne and Joshua Berlinger, CNN

Updated 0942 GMT (1742 HKT) October 12, 2017

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

"Even the taxi drivers on base know us for being the 'USS Bread and Water,'" one
survey respondent said
The Shiloh is part of the US Navy’s 7th fleet, which has been beset by a series of problems

(CNN) Morale aboard a US warship operating in the Pacific reached such a low ebb that one sailor described serving aboard the ship as being akin to being on "a floating prison," according to surveys obtained via the Freedom of Information Act.

The Navy Times obtained three command climate surveys featuring hundreds of pages of anonymous comments from sailors revealing widespread morale issues aboard the USS Shiloh, a Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser based in Yokosuka, Japan.

Two Navy officials told CNN that the information reported from the surveys was accurate.

According to the obtained surveys only 31% of the sailors who responded to the survey said yes to the prompt: "I trust that my organization’s leadership will treat me fairly," compared to 63% under the previous commanding officer. The commanding officer at the time of the survey, Capt. Adam Aycock, no longer works on the Shiloh.

US Navy officers lose jobs after fatal collision

Additionally, only 37% agreed with the statement "I feel motivated to give my best efforts to the mission of the organization," compared to 69%
agreeing to the statement under the previous leadership.
The Shiloh is one of 84 US ships equipped with the Aegis Missile Defense system, which is capable of shooting down hostile missiles from adversarial states like North Korea.

One sailor hinted that morale could affect the Shiloh’s role in the US’ entire missile defense architecture.
"I just pray we never have to shoot down a missile from North Korea," one said, "because then our ineffectiveness will really show."

US President Donald Trump touted the effectiveness of missile defense systems in a recent interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity.
"We have missiles that can knock out a missile in the air 97% of the time," he said.
It's important to note not all military and weapons analysts share that level
of confidence in US ballistic missile defense systems, as they have never been used in wartime.

**More surveys**

The Navy officials added that the poor results of one climate survey caused Navy leadership to increase the frequency of which such surveys were conducted to help prompt the commander, Capt. Aycock, to improve his performance.

One of the officials said they could not explain how Aycock managed to retain command in the face of the poor survey results.

Aycock served as the Shiloh’s commanding officer from June 2015 to August 2017 and is now at the US Naval War College.

One official said that Aycock remains on active duty and was not prematurely reassigned from his command of the Shiloh.

The survey responses also showed that junior sailors were concerned about receiving harsh punishments from Aycock, including being placed in the brig and fed only "bread and water," an arcane form of punishment that is still available to commanding officers.

"Even the taxi drivers on base know us for being the 'USS Bread and
Water," one survey respondent said. Language prohibiting that form of punishment was placed into the current version of the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act. The Shiloh is part of the US Navy’s 7th Fleet which has been beset by a series of problems including two deadly collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald and the USS John McCain, both of which are also equipped with the Aegis system.

US bombers conduct drills off both coasts of Korean Peninsula

Officers in the 7th Fleet have faced a range of disciplinary actions and the Navy took the rare step of relieving the fleet’s commander, Vice. Adm. Joseph Aucoin. The ship made headlines in June when a US sailor who was thought to have gone overboard for seven days and was presumed dead was found alive aboard the ship after prompting a major search operation. The sailor was later subjected to a non-judicial punishment. The string of incidents has fueled concerns about perceptions of the 7th Fleet’s readiness and abilities.

"The Navy definitely has a perception problem, and the 7th Fleet in particular," Carl Schuster, a former director of operations at the US Pacific
Command's Joint Intelligence Center, told CNN. "Those issues could worry US allies who rely on Aegis-equipped ships for missile defense -- What if states like Japan and South Korea start doubting the 7th Fleet's ability to shield them from a North Korean attack? "There's an old saying that effectiveness not only has to be done, it has to be shown done. Perception is reality in these things," Schuster said. "They're going to have to address that perception."

'WARNO: prepare cruise missile strike.' This is the order given to a US destroyer off North Korea

20 Oct, 2017 6:48pm
4 minutes to read

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North Korean Official Says US President Donald Trump has "Lit The Wick" Of War
news.com.au
By: Jamie Seidel
Just how close is the world to nuclear war?
This offers a clue.

American international affairs news service Foreign Policy (FP) reports a US navy guided missile destroyer was in September issued a flash WARNO. The naval parlance translates to "warning order".

Its message?

Prepare for a Tomahawk cruise missile attack on North Korea.

Tomahawk cruise missiles can carry conventional explosive warheads. Or nuclear ones.

"It's not unheard of to do that," a former senior defence official told Foreign Policy. "But I would say it is a fairly significant indicator that the possibility of using Tomahawks is rising."

A WARNO is essentially a battle-stations alarm: be prepared to take instant action.

But it does not necessarily mean Washington is preparing to attack Kim Jong-un.

It's a warning to be ready for anything, with fingers on
triggers.

In the case of the Tomahawk cruise missile, it means the advanced weapon needs to be checked. Is it properly fuelled? Are its guidance computers - designed to fly through a window from its launch point hundreds of kilometres away after flying low through terrain to remain undetected - properly programmed?

Does it have any faults?

Does it have the appropriate warhead fitted?

"You would certainly want your Tomahawks ready in a fast-moving scenario like that should the president or secretary of defence make the judgement to respond with an offensive strike," FP quotes an unnamed former Pentagon official as saying.

"The fact that it's for a Tomahawk strike into [North Korea] feels ominous, but my guess it's more about having a quick strike response should 'Rocket Man' make an irrational decision and overt provocation," FP quotes former naval commander Ted Johnson as saying.

'BY MILITARY FORCE IF NECESSARY'

The revelation comes as CIA director Mike Pompeo warns that the United States should assume Kim Jong-un's regime is "on the cusp" of getting a nuclear missile capable of
striking mainland targets.

The CIA head said President Donald Trump is determined to prevent North Korea from making such a military technological breakthrough "whether it happens on Tuesday or a month from Tuesday."

Both Pompeo and US National Security Adviser HR McMaster said Trump would still prefer to use sanctions and diplomacy to force Kim to come to the table to discuss disarmament.

But, speaking to a Washington policy forum, both also warned that the use of US military force remains an option to prevent Pyongyang from acquiring a long-range nuclear missile.

"They are close enough now in their capabilities that from a US policy perspective we ought to behave as if we are on the cusp of them achieving that objective," Pompeo said.

Pompeo said US intelligence had kept close tabs on the North Korean program in the past, but that its missile expertise is now growing too quickly to be sure when it will succeed.

"But when you're now talking about months our capacity to understand that at a detailed level is in some sense irrelevant," he said.

"The president's made it very clear," he added.
"He's prepared to ensure that Kim Jong-un doesn't have the capacity to hold America at risk. By military force if necessary."

This week, North Korea's deputy UN ambassador declared that Pyongyang would not put its nuclear arsenal nor ballistic missile program on the table unless Washington drops its "hostile" stance.

And Kim's regime has made no secret of its efforts to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of hitting US mainland cities or bases in the Pacific, conducting regular tests.

McMaster told the conference, organised by the Federation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), that the regime would not be allowed to develop arms that would threaten the United States.

"We are not out of time but we are running out of time," Trump's top security adviser said.

"The president has been very clear. He's not going to accept this regime threatening the United States with nuclear weapons," he warned.

"There are those that say, 'accept and deter'. Well, 'accept and deter' is unacceptable."

**North Korea crisis: Tillerson says diplomacy will continue**
US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has insisted President Donald Trump wants to resolve the confrontation with North Korea through diplomacy. It will continue until "the first bomb drops", he told CNN. Sanctions and diplomacy, he said, had brought unprecedented international unity against North Korea’s nuclear weapons programme. Last month, Mr Trump told Mr Tillerson not to waste time seeking talks with Kim Jong-un.

South Korean forces have been holding exercises along the border with the North.
Rex Tillerson said Mr Trump wanted the issue "solved diplomatically"

In Sunday's interview, Mr Tillerson again refused to comment on whether he had referred to Mr Trump as a moron.
"I'm not going to deal with that petty stuff," he replied, saying he would not dignify the question with an answer.

In recent months, North Korea has defied international opinion by conducting its sixth nuclear test and launching two missiles over Japan.

Analysts say the secretive communist state it is clearly set on developing a nuclear-capable missile, able to threaten the continental US, despite UN sanctions.

Lines of communication
At the end of last month, Mr Tillerson disclosed that the US was in "direct contact" with the North and looking at the possibility of talks.

After months of heated rhetoric, it came as a surprise to some that the two countries had lines of communication.

However, the next day Mr Trump tweeted Mr Tillerson to say: "Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done!"

Skip Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump
Mr Tillerson has not denied calling Mr Trump a moron after a July meeting at the Pentagon.

The president responded by challenging the secretary of state to an IQ test but a spokeswoman said later it had been a joke.

'War by next summer': North Korean crisis at perilous point

15 Oct, 2017 6:59pm
6 minutes to read

Play Video

North Korean Official Says US President Donald Trump has "Lit The Wick" Of War
news.com.au
By: Sam Clench
Donald Trump is "overloading" his military, undermining the world's trust in the United States and pushing us towards an imminent war with North Korea, a respected retired general has claimed.

General Barry McCaffrey's comments, made during a TV interview with NBC, come amidst a perpetually deepening crisis on the Korean peninsula, as Kim Jong-un escalates his threats against the United States and its allies.

Last night North Korea directly threatened Australia, warning they'd made a "dangerous" mistake by aligning ourselves with the US.

"Lately, Australia is showing dangerous moves of zealously joining the frenzied political and military provocations of the US against the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)," the Korean Central News Agency, a government mouthpiece, said.

"The Australian foreign minister personally expressed her support for the stand of the US to consider all options, including the US of force towards the DPRK, and turned up at Panmunjom on October 11 together with the Australian
defence minister to condemn the DPRK during her visit to South Korea," it added, taking aim at Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop and Defence Minister Marise Payne.

Panmunjom is located inside the tense demilitarised zone, a 4km-wide strip that separates North Korea from South Korea, which you can see in the graphic below. The two countries have technically been at war for more than 65 years.

"Should Australia continue to follow the US in imposing military, economic and diplomatic pressure upon the DPRK despite our repeated warnings, they will not be able to avoid a disaster."

That threat does not appear to have shaken the Australian Government. Speaking on Sky News today, Defence Personnel Minister Dan Tehan said: "We will not be cowed by the North Koreans. We will continue to do everything we can to protect and help and support our allies."

During their visit to the DMZ, Bishop and Payne discussed ways to compel North Korea back to the negotiating table. But if Gen McCaffrey, a retired US Army general, is correct, that will be extremely difficult while Trump is president.

"Something has to be said here. I think the president has lost almost all credibility with the international community. They're going to wait him out. So I wouldn't overstate the
damage he's doing," Gen McCaffrey told NBC.

"The problem is we've got so many crises going on now, potentially, that he's overloading the diplomatic effort, as well as the US armed forces' ability to deal with it.

"I don't want us to take our eye off North Korea. The current language out of the administration, that lack of a diplomatic and serious engagement strategy, in my view, has us sliding toward war by next summer," the retired general said.

We should note that in the US, "next summer" would mean mid-2018.
Anchor Brian Williams was quick to point out that Gen McCaffrey does not have a reputation for inflammatory rhetoric - making his warning all the more chilling.

"I've known the general for many years. I know him as a level-headed man not given to hyperbole," Williams said.

Meanwhile Hillary Clinton, Trump's beaten opponent in last year's presidential election, took her own swing at his handling of the Korean crisis.

"We will now have an arms race, a nuclear arms race, in East Asia," the former US secretary of state told CNN.
"We will have the Japanese, who understandably are worried with missiles flying over them as the North Koreans have done, that they can't count on America.

"Diplomacy, preventing war, creating some deterrents is slow, hard-going, difficult work. And you can't have impulsive people or ideological people who basically say, 'Well, we're done with you.'"

Trump, for his part, has not spoken publicly about North Korea for several days, preferring to focus on health care policy. He has previously said diplomatic efforts have failed, and he will be forced to intervene militarily if Kim Jong-un does not halt his weapons program.

The president visited his golf club in Virginia today before having dinner at his hotel in Washington DC, but despite his relatively relaxed schedule, there are several crises on his plate.

Putting North Korea aside, Trump is still facing a difficult clean-up effort in Puerto Rico, where a majority of residents remain without power in the wake of Hurricane Irma. And on the world stage, he is dealing with a delicate situation in Iran after threatening to pull out of an Obama-era agreement designed to curtail its nuclear weapon program. Trump believes the deal is fatally flawed.

"As I have said many times, the Iran deal was one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States
has ever entered into," Trump said on Friday.

"I am directing my administration to work closely with Congress and our allies to address the deal's many serious flaws so that the Iranian regime can never threaten the world with nuclear weapons."

Unsurprisingly, Clinton has taken issue with Trump's handling of Iran as well, saying his decision "makes us look foolish and small and plays right into Iranian hands".

"That is bad not just on the merits for this particular situation, but it sends a message across the globe that America's word is not good," she said, echoing Gen McCaffrey's fear that Trump is undermining the world's confidence in his administration.

The general is also concerned that the Iran controversy will distract Trump from Kim Jong-un, who is believed to be preparing to launch another ballistic missile ahead of an upcoming joint naval drill by the US and South Korea.

The drill, to be led by an aircraft carrier, is a fresh show of force from the two key allies, and in the past Kim has responded angrily to such displays.

Satellite pictures have reportedly shown ballistic missiles mounted on launchers being transported out of hangars near Pyongyang. US and South Korean officials suspect Kim is planning to launch missiles capable of reaching US territory.
It would merely be the latest in a long line of provocative moves - and each one raises the prospect a war no one wants to fight.

What is North Korea up to now submarine is ready?

13 Oct, 2017 5:34pm
6 minutes to read

Is North Korea about to launch another missile?
news.com.au
By: Debra Killalea

New satellite images of a key North Korean shipyard show the regimen has completed work on an experimental ballistic missile submarine.

The images, obtained by Washington-based monitoring group 38 North, show several pictures of North Korea's Sinpo South Shipyard taken from September 21.

In the analysis, 38 North's Joseph S Bermudez Jr notes the ongoing activity which has taken place at the site in recent weeks.

According to Bermudez, netting previously around the SINPO-class (1) experimental ballistic missile submarine
(SSBA) seen on August 7 has been removed.

This indicates "whatever work is being done is now completed".

38 North has detailed the activity taking place at the site in recent weeks. Photo / 2017 Planet Labs, Inc.
However the analysis notes the submarine and submersible missile test stand barge remain in the same positions they were seen in previously.

The website, part of the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University's Advanced International Studies, stress this doesn't mean any sort of test is imminent.

"The SINPO-class submarine, submersible test stand barge and nearby test stand, however, appear capable of supporting a test at any time of Pyongyang's choosing," 38 North note.

It also suggests the secretive regimen is in the middle of a ship building program but concede it remains unclear exactly what sort of vessel this could be.

The analysis reveals further ongoing activity at port and facilities at Nopyong-ni on the west side of the peninsula has undergone modernisation.

"This program is continuing and progress is observable in the current imagery. Whether this modernisation program is related to the future development and deployment of a ballistic missile submarine capability is unknown," Bermudez writes.

"Slow pace"

Speaking to news.com.au about the analysis, Dr Peter
Layton, a visiting fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute at Griffith University, said he was surprised at how little is going on at the site.

Dr Laton said the rate of building new facilities is actually quite slow.

"Given the astonishing speed of the DPRK (Democratic Republic of Korea) in building and testing new rockets the rather placid scene here is interesting," he said.

"The focus to me then seems very much on building a
submarine launched ballistic missile not the submarine which will carry it.

"The DPRK might be happy with the design of the first Sinpo class and happy to build the remaining five of the class later after the missile is proven."

On the other hand, he said the Sinpo is fairly small and short range.

"It may not be a viable platform in being able to be easily found and tracked by US and ROK (Republic of Korea) boats," he said.

"From a military viewpoint, a longer range land-mobile missile would seem a much better alternative - being more survivable and giving the same result of warheads on target."

Dr Layton said these photos suggested there could be more to these photos than meet the eye.

"These photos to me suggest that the DPRK submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) program is more a public relations stunt intended to demonstrate DPRK technical prowess and worry others but not a war fighting weapon," he said.
Dr Layton also said it didn't appear that the DPRK was building a nuclear sub.

He said there has been talk of the DPRK getting some assistance from external sources as their "missile program is extraordinarily broad and fast moving to be accomplished
by a technically backward nation."

However he said these photos suggested that the DPRK is not getting any external support for its submarine building program.

**Tremors detected**

The analysis comes as a 2.9 magnitude earthquake was recorded near North Korea's nuclear test site Punggye-ri.

It follows a 6.1-magnitude quake last month, which Pyongyang claimed was the result of hydrogen bomb test.

The Korea Meteorological Administration said today's quake was a magnitude 2.7 with a depth of 3km in North Hamgyong Province in North Korea.
The United States Geological Survey (USGS) measured the quake at 2.9 magnitude with a depth of 5km and added it could not conclusively confirm its nature.

A statement on the US Geological Survey website reads: "This event occurred in the area of the previous North Korean Nuclear tests.

"The event has earthquake like characteristics, however, we cannot conclusively confirm at this time the nature (natural or human-made) of the event."

A 3.4 magnitude quake last month near the same location sparked fears there could have been another nuclear test.

Rocket men mystery

Meanwhile speculation has been mounting that North Korea could be planning another missile launch or nuclear test soon with two key officials missing from recent public events.
Ri Man-gon, supervisor of the department for the nuclear and missile development, and Kim Rak-gyom have not been seen in some time with a source telling South Korean newspaper Chosun Ilbo, there could be a good reason for this.

The source told the paper there was "little chance" the men were removed from their positions because they were "praised for [recent] major achievements."

"It's highly likely that they were absent because they'd been given an important assignment," the source said.

Threat "manageable"

White House Chief of Staff John Kelly today said the North Korean nuclear and missile threat remains "manageable".

However he said the isolated nation can't be allowed to develop the ability to strike the US homeland.

His more diplomatic approach is in stark opposition to US President Donald Trump who said his top diplomat was "wasting his time" trying to negotiate with the North.

The president has exchanged threats and personal insults with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, escalating tensions in recent weeks.
Gen Kelly said he hopes diplomacy works before the nation can develop its weapons capabilities further, adding Americans should be concerned about North Korea.

He said the North has developed a "pretty good" intercontinental ballistic missile capability and is developing
a nuclear re-entry vehicle, which is needed for a missile to survive re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere, the Associated Press reported.

"I think I speak for the administration, that that state can simply not have the ability to reach the homeland," Gen Kelly said.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, who is currently in Seoul for talks with her South Korean counterpart, said she hoped there would be no need for military action.

Bishop, who visited the heavily fortified border between the two Koreas, told Sky News Australia continued to support its ally.

"There is a determination on the part of South Korea to bring this tension to an end and compel North Korea back to the negotiating table," she said.

"Australia has reiterated our support for South Korea, we will stand with them in doing what we can to deter North Korea from further illegal ballistic missile and nuclear weapons tests."

Report: Massive
morale problems aboard US Navy ship

By Ryan Browne and Joshua Berlinger, CNN

Updated 0942 GMT (1742 HKT) October 12, 2017

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

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North Korean hackers stole US-South Korea war plans, official says
Official: N. Korean hackers stole US war plans

STORY HIGHLIGHTS
- Rhee Cheol-hee said the documents stolen included the South Korea-US wartime operational plan.
- About 235 gigabytes worth of military data was stolen by the hackers, Rhee said.

North Korean hackers allegedly stole classified military documents from a South Korean Defense Ministry database in September 2016, according to Rhee Cheol-hee, a member of South Korea's National Assembly.

Rhee, who belongs to the ruling Democratic Party and sits on the Defense Committee, told CNN on Tuesday that he received information about the alleged hacking from the Defense Ministry.

He said the documents stolen included the South Korea-US wartime operational plan and a document that includes procedures to "decapitate" the North Korean leadership.

About 235 gigabytes worth of military data was stolen by the hackers, Rhee said.

When asked about Rhee's comments by reporters at a daily press briefing on Tuesday, a spokesman from South Korea's Defense Ministry declined to comment, saying the information is classified.
The Pentagon also declined to comment specifically on reports of the potential breach, but spokesman Col. Robert Manning said on Tuesday that the US is "confident in the security of our operations plans and our ability to deal with any threat from North Korea."

"The operations plan that they are referring to is a bilateral plan, so the Republic of Korea-US alliance remains steadfast in their commitment to make sure they safeguard that information and ensure readiness on the Korean peninsula to counter any North Korean threats," Manning said.

"I'm not going to address the specifics of that discussion but what I will tell you is that it is a ROK-US alliance commitment to make sure that they safeguard operations and plans," he added.
'Treasure trove'

Depending on the level of detail in the stolen plans, the hack could pose serious challenges for the US-South Korean alliance.

"If the North Koreans in fact accessed the US/South Korean defense plans, this is a treasure trove of information and presents a real danger," said CNN military analyst and retired Lt. Col. Rick Francona.

"If I had access to the enemy's plans, not only would I know what forces were going to be arrayed against me, I would now where they will be, what weapons they will have, where the command and control nodes will be established -- all critical warfighting information."

US Army chief: 'No risk-free options' on North Korea

Details of the alleged 2016 hack emerged as President Donald Trump continues to imply that diplomatic efforts to rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs through negotiations have proven to be ineffective.

"Our country has been unsuccessfully dealing with North Korea for 25 years, giving billions of dollars & getting nothing. Policy didn't work," Trump tweeted on Monday.
In a pair of tweets sent Saturday afternoon, Trump said past agreements with North Korea have all been violated.

"Presidents and their administrations have been talking to North Korea for 25 years, agreements made and massive amounts of money paid ... hasn’t worked, agreements violated before the ink was dry, makings fools of U.S. negotiators," Trump wrote. "Sorry, but only one thing will work!"

Asked by reporters later Saturday about the tweet, Trump would only say: "You’ll figure that out pretty soon."

''Range of options''

The White House said Tuesday that Trump and his national security team were briefed and discussed "a range of options to respond to any form of North Korean aggression or, if necessary, to prevent North Korea from threatening the United States and its allies with nuclear weapons."

On Monday, Secretary of Defense James Mattis reiterated that diplomacy along with international economic sanctions against Pyongyang would remain the leading element of US strategy towards North Korea.

Trump administration's mixed North Korea signals raise questions about US strategy

"It is right now a diplomatically led economic sanction buttressed effort to try and turn North Korea off this path," Mattis said Monday during his opening remarks at the Association of the United States Army's annual
meeting in Washington.

But Mattis added that the military would continue to prepare options should diplomacy fail.

"We've got to be ready to ensure that there are military options that our President can employ if needed," he said.

"Now what does the future hold? Neither you nor I could say," Mattis said. US Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley made clear Monday what a bind the US is in when it comes to solving the challenge of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, stating there are "no risk-free options" but said there is also not an "indefinite amount of time" to solve the crisis.

"A full-blown war on the Korean Peninsula will be horrific by any stretch of the imagination. No one has any doubts about that," Milley told reporters.
North Korean-linked hackers

The US and South Korea have been aware of North Korea’s bold hacking operations for several years, linking Pyongyang to a series of sophisticated cyberattacks.

In 2013, when South Korea’s banks and broadcasters were attacked, that government blamed its neighbor to the north. In 2014, the US government blamed North Korea for the hack on Sony Pictures.

And in April, North Korea was linked to attacks on banks in 18 countries after researchers connected hackers to an operation known as "Lazarus," according to a report from Russian cybersecurity firm Kaspersky. The stolen money was likely used to help advance North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons, Anthony Ruggiero, a senior fellow for Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told CNN at the time.
up that attack server. But there was apparently one mistake spotted by Kaspersky: A connection that briefly came from North Korea.

Kaspersky is one of the world's top cybersecurity firms, providing popular anti-malware protection to computers at homes and companies worldwide. Its researchers are known for exposing some of the most complex global hacking operations. US law enforcement remains suspicious of the firm's ties to the Russian government, but Kaspersky strongly denies Kremlin influence on the company's business.

Kim Jong-un: October 10 holiday the latest 'flashpoint' that could lead to Korean war

10 Oct, 2017 6:04am
8 minutes to read

Is North Korea about to launch another missile?
news.com.au
By: Jamie Seidel

Chances are, Kim Jong-un is about to do something stupid. An aggressive missile launch. A provocative nuclear test. Whatever it is, the US has positioned an aircraft carrier battle group nearby to retaliate with its own 'message'.

Today is October 10.

In North Korea, that is significant.

It's the anniversary of the founding of its Communist Worker's Party and the Kim dynasty of rulers.

To North Korea, it's exactly the kind of day that warrants celebration.

And, in Kim Jong-un's mind, posturing.

Such celebrations tend to be marked by military parades and boisterous speeches. But also missile launches and nuclear warhead tests.

But he's being predictable.

"The Kim regime usually uses these sorts of occasions to demonstrate some show of strength - in this current climate a missile test is a likely result," says Dr Genevieve Hohnen, lecturer in politics and international relations at Edith Cowan University.

Less predictable is US President Donald Trump - himself full of bluster that North Korea's "Rocket Man ... won't be around much longer."

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U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, right, during a news program at the Seoul Train Station. Photo / AP
Today, he's tweeted again: "Our country has been unsuccessfully dealing with North Korea for 25 years, giving billions of dollars & getting nothing. Policy didn't work!"

This time he will have significant military forces at his fingertips. US forces have been positioned and prepared to counter any possible North Korean provocation over coming days.

And tensions have long since escalated to flashpoint. Military and diplomatic analysts the world over all agree that all it could take to ignite war is one stupid mistake from either player.

TONGUES OF WAR

North Korea's Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump both have a way with words.

Especially when it comes to insults.

Last month, President Trump told the United Nations he would eliminate North Korea if the United States was to be attacked.

"No nation on earth has an interest in seeing this band of criminals arm itself with nuclear weapons and missiles," he
said. "The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea. Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime. The United States is ready, willing and able, but hopefully this will not be necessary."

President Donald Trump speaks to reporters before leaving the White House in Washington. Photo / AP
Kim Jong-un, naturally, had a reply.

"The US president ... has been rendered tense as never before and is inching closer to a touch-and-go state, is arousing worldwide concern," a statement made in his name reads.

"A frightened dog barks louder ... Now that Trump has denied the existence of and insulted me and my country in front of the eyes of the world and made the most ferocious declaration of a war in history that he would destroy the DPRK, we will consider with seriousness exercising of a corresponding, highest level of hard-line countermeasure in history."

Jong-un asserted he would continue down his well-established path of testing and bluster. And one of his most recent - specific - threats was to 'bracket with fire' the US military bases on the Pacific island of Guam.

"(Trump's) remarks ... have convinced me, rather than frightening or stopping me, that the path I chose is correct and that it is the one I have to follow to the last," Jong-un asserted.

And Dr Hohnen believes October 10 has renewed relevance in Jong-un's mind.

"It is also significant that Kim Jong-un has reinvigorated the
importance and power of the Korean Worker's Party in comparison to his fathers more military focused approach. Kim Jong-un has really used the Worker's Party to embed his power so it is likely he will prioritise sending a message of strength to the world on their founding day."

DATES WITH DESTINY

Dr Colin Alexander, an expert in East Asian political communications from Nottingham Trent University, agrees October 10 is a very important date for the Kim regime.

"National holidays in North Korea tend to be occasions where the regime expresses their power to the North Korean people and the wider world," Dr Alexander says. "Indeed, the current round of tensions began just over a year ago on 9th September 2016 when North Korea exploded a nuclear bomb underground. The DPRK was founded on 9th September 1945, days after the surrender of Japan."
Dr Alexander points out the current cycle of tensions began on September 9, 2016, when North Korea exploded a nuclear bomb at its underground test facility. The DPRK, he points out, was founded on September 9, 1945 - just days after the surrender of Japan and the end of World War II.
And while it may seem odd to Western democracies, Dr Alexander says celebrating the founding of the Worker's Party is in keeping with North Korea's authoritarian nature.

"In democratic regimes there is a clear distinction between parliament, the executive, the civil service, and political parties," he says. "In an authoritarian regime like North Korea the party encompasses all aspects of political life and many aspects of public life. To this end, the celebration of the founding of the party forms part of the people's ideological 'education' and is thus a propaganda of the regime."

**PIECES IN PLACE**

Late last month South Korea's president Moon Jae-in was briefed by his national security adviser that October 10 date would likely produce the next provocation.

"(The report) also said there are worries over military conflict being sparked by accidental incidents," said Park Wan-ju, politician and head spokesman of the ruling Democratic Party said at the time. "The president said the United States speaks of military and diplomatic options, but South Korea can't go through war again."

Technically speaking, South Korea and the United States are still at war with North Korea. The last fight only ended in 1953 with a tense truce. Not a peace treaty.

They've been staring each other down across the
demilitarised zone along the 38th parallel ever since.

But things changed with North Korea's sixth nuclear warhead test last month.

It was the first time Pyongyang demonstrated it has a
hydrogen bomb - significantly more powerful than those it had previously tested. It also came after the successful test-firing of a prototype intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with the necessary range to reach the United States.

It has also proven its intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM) are becoming more robust and reliable, with two overflights of Japan with the type. Kim Jong-un says he is "studying" a proposal to unleash these on Guam.

The nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan has just finished a visit to the Chinese territory of Hong Kong. It's the first such visit since a super carrier was turned away from the high profile port in 2016.

The 100,000 ton warship is due to be back near the Korean Peninsula in the next few days - just in time for joint-exercises with South Korean ships, and any fresh sabre-rattling aimed at Pyongyang.

Dr Alexander says the USS Reagan's arrival ahead of the October 10 celebrations is a "clear statement of power" by the United States.

"This is an asymmetric conflict and should be framed in the context of the US's other neo-conservative actions around the world regarding regime change," he says. "Just like Hussein, Gaddafi and other leaders who have been deposed in recent years, the propaganda of the United States has been to emphasise the inherent danger, erratic behaviour and almost psychopathy of these regimes, to
undermine their legitimacy and to prepare the minds of international audiences for intervention, no matter the actual threat posed."

CONFLICT SPIRAL

This time around, South Korea says it has not yet seen North Korea undertaking any preparations for a long-range missile launch or nuclear test.

"We have yet to detect any signs of immediate provocations from North Korea," a South Korean military source told the Yonhap News Agency. "We are maintaining an upgraded monitoring effort to guard against any developments."

Up to this point, instead of attempting to douse North Korea's escalating threats the Trump administration has chosen to match them.

The advanced US antimissile THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) system is now fully in place in South Korea after its rollout was delayed in April. China and Russia are disturbed its powerful radars could be used to track aircraft and missiles deep within their own territory. Washington insists it's only there because of Kim Jong-un's increasingly bellicose threats.

The US has also promised to strengthen its presence on and around the Korean peninsula.

"The US has pledged to expand the rotational deployment
of its strategic assets near the Korean peninsula," South Korea's head of the National Security Chung Eui-yong said. "[This] will begin as early as late this year, and will help us expand our defence capabilities."

He was not specific about what these "strategic" assets were.

The presence of the USS Ronald Reagan could already be part of this.

North Korea has made equivalent rumbles.

Pyongyang's foreign minister Ri Yong-ho has said Trump's rhetoric on Twitter now made it justifiable for his nation to shoot down any US bombers - even if in international airspace - that strayed too close to his country. Aircraft, ammunition and fuel have reportedly been observed moving to back up his threat.

And it came just one day after a flight of US B-1B strategic bombers, with a fighter escort, flew north - past the demilitarised zone - along the North Korea coast (although in international airspace) for the first time in two decades.

'Only one thing will work' with N Korea, says President Trump

8 hours ago
"Only one thing will work" in dealing with North Korea after years of talks with Pyongyang brought no results, US President Donald Trump has warned.

"Presidents and their administrations have been talking to North Korea for 25 years," he tweeted, adding that this "hasn't worked".

Mr Trump did not elaborate further.

The two nations have been engaged in heated rhetoric over North Korea's nuclear activities, with the US pressing for a halt of missile tests.

Pyongyang says it has recently successfully tested a miniaturised hydrogen bomb which could be loaded on to a long-range missile.

President Trump has previously warned that the US could destroy North Korea if necessary to protect America's national interests and defend its allies in the region.

Inside the world's most secretive country
Where is the war of words heading?

Saturday's tweets are another cryptic announcement by America's leader, the BBC's Laura Bicker in Washington says.

Last week, it was suggested that US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had set up a direct line of communication with Pyongyang to try to resolve the escalating tensions. Mr Trump then tweeted: "Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done!"

On Saturday, the US president insisted he had a good relationship with his secretary of state, but added that Mr Tillerson could be tougher.

Earlier in the week, Mr Tillerson had denied rumours of a rift between the two men, amid media reports he had called the president a "moron".

Mr Trump's latest comment on North Korea could just be bluster - but the fear is that Pyongyang will interpret it as a threat, our correspondent says.
In September, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear explosive test despite international condemnation, and has promised to carry out another test in the Pacific Ocean.

At a speech to the UN later that month, Mr Trump threatened to annihilate North Korea, saying the country's leader, Kim Jong-un, "is on a suicide mission". In exchange, Mr Kim in a rare statement, vowed to "tame the mentally deranged US dotard with fire".

Inside the world's most secretive country

A group of "young pioneers" on the way home on the Pyongyang metro.

Daily life goes on in world's most secretive capital

North Korea preparing long-range missile test: RIA cites Russian
MOSCOW (Reuters) - North Korea is preparing to test a long-range missile which it believes can reach the west coast of the United States, a Russian lawmaker just returned from a visit to Pyongyang was quoted as saying on Friday.

Anton Morozov, a member of the Russian lower house of parliament’s international affairs committee, and two other Russian lawmakers visited Pyongyang on Oct. 2-6, Russia’s RIA news agency reported.

“They are preparing for new tests of a long-range missile. They even gave us mathematical calculations that they believe prove that their missile can hit the west coast
of the United States,” RIA quoted Morozov as saying.

“As far as we understand, they intend to launch one more long-range missile in the near future. And in general, their mood is rather belligerent.”

Tensions have risen in recent weeks over North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile programs as Pyongyang has test-fired several missiles and conducted what it said was a test explosion of a hydrogen bomb as it advances toward its goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the U.S. mainland.

Morozov’s comments drove up the price of U.S. Treasury bonds, as investors, worried about the prospect of new North Korean missile tests, moved into assets the market views as a safe haven in times of uncertainty.
Reuters was not able to independently verify Morozov’s account, and he did not specify which North Korean officials had given him the information about the planned test.

In Washington, a U.S. official said that there had been indications that North Korea could be preparing for a missile test on or around Oct. 10, the anniversary of the founding of the ruling Korean Workers Party and a day after the Columbus Day holiday in the United States.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, did not disclose the type of
missile that could be tested and cautioned that North Korea in the past has not staged launches despite indications that it would.

A senior CIA analyst, speaking at a conference in Washington this week, said the North Korean government likely would stage some kind of provocation on Oct. 10 but did not elaborate on what form it might take.

“There is a clarity of purpose in what (North Korean leader) Kim Jong Un is doing. I don’t think he’s done,“ said Yong Suk Lee, the deputy assistant director of the CIA’s Korea Mission Center, which was set up this year. ”In fact, I told my own staff (that) October 10th is the Korean Workers Party founding day. That’s Tuesday in North Korea, but Monday – the Columbus Day holiday - in the United States. So stand by your phones.”

Morozov’s delegation had “high-level” meetings in Pyongyang, RIA news agency
said, citing the Russian embassy in the North Korean capital.

Tensions over North Korea’s nuclear program have been running high in recent weeks since Pyongyang staged a series of missile tests, and conducted a text explosion on Sept. 3 of what it said was a hydrogen bomb.

There has also been an exchange of tough rhetoric between Pyongyang and Washington.

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to “totally destroy” North Korea if it threatens the United States. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un responded by calling Trump deranged and saying he would pay dearly for his threat.

“BELLICOSE RHETORIC”
Morozov is a member of the LDPR, a right-wing populist party. It casts itself as an opposition party, but hews close to the Kremlin line on matters of international affairs.

Describing meetings with North Korean officials, Morozov said they “displayed serious determination and bellicose rhetoric,” RIA reported.

“The situation, of course, demands the swiftest intervention of all interested states, particularly those represented in the region, in order to prevent wide-scale military action,” the agency quoted him as saying.

Russia has closer relations with Pyongyang than many other world powers, linked in part to Kim Il Sung, the founder of North Korea and the current leader’s grand-father, having lived for a time in the Soviet Union.
Russian President Vladimir Putin has joined other world powers in condemning North Korea’s weapons program, but has taken a softer line than Western governments.

Putin has said that Pyongyang will not be cowed into giving up its weapons program. He has accused Washington of trying to effect regime change in North Korea, and predicted that would unleash chaos.

U.S. Treasury prices surged on the report of a possible new missile test, pulling yields lower, as investors cut risk out of their portfolios and sought the safety of Treasuries. Treasury prices move inversely to their yields.

Benchmark 10 year U.S. Treasury yields fell from the session high 2.40 percent mark US10YT=TWEB to 2.35 percent around midday (1600 GMT) in New York.
“It has just been risk-off buying into the long (Columbus Day) weekend ... You look at the charts, it has really been a one-way trade of lower yields,” said Justin Lederer, Treasury analyst at Cantor Fitzgerald in New York.

**Trump to Tillerson: N Korea negotiations a waste of time**

13 minutes ago

Image copyright

Image caption

The US president and his North Korean counterpart (R) are at loggerheads over Pyongyang's nuclear programme

US President Donald Trump has told his secretary of state that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with North Korea over its nuclear programme. "Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done!" Mr Trump tweeted, after it emerged the US had lines of communication with Pyongyang.

Rex Tillerson disclosed the development on Saturday, saying North Korea had little interest in dialogue.

The two countries have engaged in heated rhetoric in recent months.
Inside the world's most secretive country
Where is the war of words heading?

The US wants North Korea to halt its weapons programme, which has seen it perform repeated missile tests, as well as claim to have successfully tested a miniaturised hydrogen bomb which could be loaded on to a long-range missile. But attempts at dialogue seem to be at odds with President Trump's own attitude to the issue.

On Sunday, he tweeted, in reference to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un: "I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful Secretary of State, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man..."

He then added:

I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful Secretary of State, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man...

...Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done!

He did not elaborate on what he means by "we'll do what has to be done". However a senior US official, asked for clarification later, told Reuters: "At a time when North Korea is continuing its provocations, the president does not think now is the time to negotiate with them."

The official also said the diplomatic channels were mainly used to discuss American citizens detained by Pyongyang.

'Stay tuned'

It is not the first time Donald Trump has sought to contradict top officials within his administration.

In August, he said the US military was "locked and loaded" ready to deal with North Korea, just hours after his defence secretary tried to cool tensions by saying that diplomatic efforts were succeeding.

Trump administration's mixed messages on North Korea
His comments come a day after Mr Tillerson revealed that US officials had some communication channels open with Pyongyang, despite the escalating war of words between the leaders of both countries. Asked whether North Korea would come to the negotiating table, the secretary of state said: "We are probing, so stay tuned."
However, he later acknowledged that little progress had been made. Mr Tillerson was speaking during a trip to China - the North's biggest trading partner - to meet President President Xi Jinping and other officials. China just last week told North Korean businesses operating in its territory to close down as part of fresh United Nations sanctions against the reclusive state.

**North Korea and US 'in direct contact', says Tillerson**

*Inside the world's most secretive country*

*Where is the war of words heading?*
The US state department later confirmed there were a number of communication channels open with Pyongyang, but said little progress was being made. "Despite assurances that the United States is not interested in promoting the collapse of the current regime (...) North Korean officials have shown no indication that they are interested in or are ready for talks regarding denuclearisation," department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement.

The US wants North Korea to halt its weapons programme, which has seen it perform repeated missile tests and, on 3 September, the test of a miniaturised hydrogen bomb which could be loaded on to a long-range missile, which Pyongyang said was successful.

But attempts at dialogue seem to be at odds with President Donald Trump's own attitude to the issue. Just last month, he said "talking is not the answer".

Skip Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump

Follow

Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

The U.S. has been talking to North Korea, and paying them
extortion money, for 25 years. Talking is not the answer!

Mr Trump has previously threatened to annihilate North Korea, saying the country's leader, Kim Jong-un, "is on a suicide mission". Mr Kim then vowed to "tame the mentally deranged US dotard with fire".

North Korea continued the rhetoric on Saturday, releasing a statement calling Mr Trump an "old psychopath" bent on the "suicidal act of inviting a nuclear disaster that will reduce America to a sea of flames".

The UN has brought in sanctions against North Korea in an attempt to force the secretive state to stop its weapons programme.
sanctions are effective. China this week told North Korean businesses operating in its territory to close down. However, China remains keen to see negotiations with North Korea. Mr Tillerson revealed the communications channels following a meeting in Beijing with President Xi Jinping and other officials.

Twitter explains why it won't remove Trump's North Korea tweet

by Selena Larson  @selenalarson
September 25, 2017: 9:46 PM ET

How many of Trump's twitter followers are bots?
Twitter says it won't take down a controversial weekend tweet from President Donald Trump -- the tweet North Korea's Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho described as a declaration of war.

On Sept. 23, Trump tweeted, "Just heard Foreign Minister of North Korea speak at U.N. If he echoes thoughts of Little Rocket Man, they won't be around much longer!"

The phrase "Little Rocket Man" refers to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

In a statement on Monday, Ri said: "Since the United States declared war on our country, we will have every right to make all self-defensive counter measures, including the right to shoot down the United States strategic bombers at any time even when they are not yet inside the aerospace border of our country."

Related: North Korea accuses Trump of declaring war

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said the U.S. has not declared war on North Korea. "Frankly, the suggestion of that is absurd," she said on Monday.
Twitter (TWTR, Tech30) faced questions on Monday from users on its platform about why the company hadn't taken the tweet down and whether Trump's tweet violated the company's rules. Those rules indicate the company can suspend an account that is deemed to have engaged in violent threats; attacks on people based on race, religion, gender and more; or "targeted abuse or harassment of others."

In a six-tweet response thread, Twitter said that when it considers removing a tweet, one of the factors it takes into account the newsworthiness and public interest of the post.

The company also said it is "committed to transparency and keeping people informed about what's happening in the world."

Related: Why Trump's offensive tweets don't get him kicked off Twitter

"This has long been internal policy and we'll soon update our public-facing rules to reflect it. We need to do better on this, and will," Twitter said in its response.
We hold all accounts to the same Rules, and consider a number of factors when assessing whether Tweets violate our Rules 2/6

Among the considerations is "newsworthiness" and whether a Tweet is of public interest 3/6

Twitter has been subject to continued criticism over how it handles tweets from the president that some consider offensive.

The company also said it holds all accounts to the same rules. It has consistently struggled to crack down on harassment and hate speech on its platform.

North Korea accuses US of declaring war

1 hour ago
North Korea's foreign minister has accused US President Donald Trump of declaring war on his country and said Pyongyang had the right to shoot down US bombers.

Ri Yong-ho said this could apply even if the warplanes were not in North Korea's airspace.

The White House dismissed the statement as "absurd". The Pentagon warned Pyongyang to stop provocations.

A UN spokesman said fiery talk could lead to fatal misunderstandings.

Mr Ri's comments were a response to Mr Trump's tweet that the North Korean leadership would not "be around much longer" if they continued their rhetoric.

"The whole world should clearly remember it was the US who first declared war on our country," Mr Ri told reporters as he was leaving New York, where he had addressed the UN General Assembly on Saturday.

Skip Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump
Follow

Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

Just heard Foreign Minister of North Korea speak at U.N. If he echoes thoughts of Little Rocket Man, they won't be around much longer!

4:08 PM - Sep 24, 2017

48,864 replies

35,792 retweets

128,296 likes

Twitter Ads info and privacy

End of Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump

Referring to Mr Trump's post, North Korea's minister said "the question of who won't be around much longer" would be answered by his country.

Mr Ri's remarks - not the first time that North Korea has used the phrase "a declaration of war" in relation to the US - are the latest in an increasingly angry war of words between the two countries.

His statement came two days after US warplanes flew close to North Korea's coast in a show of force.
Pentagon spokesman Col Robert Manning reacted by saying: "If North Korea does not stop their provocative actions, you know, we will make sure that we provide options to the president to deal with North Korea."

"We want things to calm down," China's ambassador to the UN, Liu Jieyi, told Reuters. "It's getting too dangerous and it's in nobody's interest."

Stéphane Dujarric, a spokesman for UN Secretary General António Guterres, said: "Fiery talk can lead to fatal misunderstandings."

"The only solution for this is a political solution," he added.
Despite weeks of tension, experts have played down the risk of direct conflict between the two.

North Korea has continued to carry out nuclear and ballistic missile tests in recent weeks, in defiance of successive rounds of UN sanctions.

The country's leaders say nuclear capabilities are its only deterrent against an outside world seeking to destroy it.

After the North's latest and most powerful nuclear test earlier this month, the UN Security Council approved new sanctions on the country.

**What weapons does North Korea have?**
**How a Pacific nuclear test might happen**
**Kim's 'dotard' insult explained**

**Actions not words**

By Jonathan Marcus, BBC News diplomatic correspondent

The rhetoric on both sides may have got out of hand already but the real question is what practical consequences might ensue from the war of words between Washington and Pyongyang?

It should be remembered that the Korean peninsula is not at peace - the Korean conflict of the 1950s was only brought to a halt by an armistice, not a peace treaty. But it is actions that are likely to provoke renewed fighting, not just words.

The latest North Korean threat to shoot down US warplanes comes in the wake of a recent US patrol that took its B1-B Lancer bombers and their accompanying F-15 fighter escorts over waters to the east of North Korea - the furthest north US
warplanes have flown for several months, albeit still outside Pyongyang's airspace. The US believes it has every right to do this but if one day Pyongyang judges that these aircraft are on an offensive mission - what then?

North Korea’s top diplomat says strike against U.S. mainland is ‘inevitable’

Play Video 1:41

Trump turned U.N. into a 'gangsters nest,' North Korea foreign minister says

North Korea Minister for Foreign Affairs Ri Yong Ho addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations on Sept. 23, with harsh words directed at President Trump. (United Nations)
North Korea’s foreign minister warned Saturday that a strike against the U.S. mainland is “inevitable” because President Trump mocked leader Kim Jong Un with the belittling nickname “little rocketman.”

U.S. bombers, escorted by fighter jets, flew off the North Korean coast in a show of force shortly before Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho strode to the podium to address the United Nations General Assembly in New York, capping an extraordinary week of militaristic threats from both nations before an organization founded to maintain international peace and security.

Ri said that Trump’s bombast had made “our rockets’ visit to the entire U.S. mainland inevitable” and linked it to Trump’s insulting shorthand references to Kim.

Harsh sanctions placed on North Korea’s trade with the outside world will have no impact on its ability to complete building a nuclear bomb capable of reaching the United States, Ri said, suggesting that stage is imminent.
Amid new sanctions, Trump calls North Korea’s leader ‘madman’ whose regime will face new tests

In a rare statement on Sept. 22, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called President Trump a “mentally deranged U.S. dotard,” vowing to “tame him” with fire. On Sept. 19, Trump threatened to “totally destroy” North Korea in front of the United Nations General Assembly. (Reuters)

“Through such a prolonged and arduous struggle, now we are finally only a few steps away from the final gate of completion of the state nuclear force,” he said.

“It is only a forlorn hope to consider any chance that the DPRK would be shaken an inch or change its stance due to the harsher sanctions by the hostile forces,” he said, using the acronym for North Korea’s official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The rhetoric between Trump and Kim has grown exceptionally personal. At a rally Friday night in
Alabama, Trump called Kim “little rocketman,” magnifying the disparaging label he slung at Kim in his U.N. speech Tuesday in which he threatened that the United States would “totally destroy” North Korea in defense of itself or its allies. He said Kim was on a “suicide mission.”

Kim, in turn, called Trump a “frightened dog” and a “mentally deranged U.S. dotard.” Ri echoed those sentiments Saturday, calling the president a “mentally deranged person full of megalomania” and at one point referring to him as “President Evil.”

“None other than Trump himself is on a suicide mission,” Ri said in broad denunciation of Trump, which brought applause from the North Korean delegation. “In case innocent lives of the U.S. are harmed because of this suicide attack, Trump will be held totally responsible.”

Ri emphasized that North Korea has the know-how to carry out its threat. He said Pyongyang has a hydrogen
bomb that can fit on an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States. On Friday, Ri said North Korea was prepared to test a hydrogen bomb over the Pacific Ocean.

“Trump might not have been aware what is uttered from his mouth, but we will make sure that he bears consequences far beyond his words, far beyond the scope of what he can handle even if he is ready to do so,” Ri said.

On Friday, Trump kept up his verbal fusillade against Kim, tweeting that Kim is a “madman” who will be “tested like never before.”

Tensions are escalating so quickly that when a 3.5-magnitude earthquake was detected Saturday in northern North Korea, in the vicinity of a nuclear test site, it briefly aroused suspicions that North Korea had
conducted another underground nuclear test. It was quickly confirmed as only an earthquake.

The heated exchanges between Trump and North Korea’s leader come as diplomatic pressure may be starting to bear fruit. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said last week that sanctions are beginning to have an effect. China, North Korea’s economic lifeline, has gradually imposed greater economic sanctions on its neighbor, including caps on oil. On Thursday, Trump signed an executive order giving the Treasury Department more authority to cut off trade that helps finance North Korea’s weapons and nuclear programs.

While Tillerson has insisted that diplomacy still has a chance to work, military force appears to be increasing as an option.

Just before Ri spoke at the United Nations, the Pentagon disclosed that U.S. Air Force B-1B Lancer bombers flew in international airspace east of North Korea. The Pentagon said it was the farthest point north of the
Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea that any U.S. planes have flown in this century. The bombers took off from an air base in Guam, which North Korea has threatened to target. They were escorted by F-15C fighter jets from Okinawa, Japan.

Kim says 'deranged' Trump shows need for nuclear programme

20 minutes ago

North Korean state media released this picture of Mr Kim delivering his statement.

Kim Jong-un has said remarks by "deranged" US President Donald Trump have convinced him he is right to develop weapons for North Korea.

In an unprecedented personal statement, Mr Kim said Mr Trump would "pay
dearly" for a UN speech where he threatened to "totally destroy" the North if the US was forced to defend itself.

Mr Trump responded that the "madman... will be tested like never before".

The two countries have engaged in ever more heated rhetoric in recent months. North Korea has been testing missiles at an unprecedented rate, and conducted its sixth nuclear test despite international condemnation. North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho, who had earlier compared Mr Trump's speech to "the sound of a barking dog", has warned that Pyongyang could test a hydrogen bomb in the Pacific Ocean in response to the US president's threat.

"It could be the most powerful detonation of an H-bomb in the Pacific," Mr Ri said, quoted by South Korea's Yonhap news agency. However, he added: "We have no idea about what actions could be taken as it will be ordered by leader Kim Jong-un."

'Dotard' Trump? The story of 'rocket man' Kim's insult
What missiles and nuclear weapons does North Korea have?
North Korea crisis in 300 words
What are North Korea's other WMDs?

Media caption
How would war with North Korea unfold?

Analysis: A test with immense risks
By North Korea analyst Ankit Panda

The prospect of a hydrogen bomb being tested in the Pacific raises a terrifying spectre - one that North Korea-watchers have mulled for some time, but which did not seem realistic until this year.

Kim Jong-un could conduct an atmospheric nuclear detonation in the Pacific Ocean. There are two mechanisms for a test like this. One is for Kim Jong-un to mount the nuclear device he showed the world before his 3 September nuclear test and fire it over Japan, into the Pacific Ocean, and demonstrate a credible thermonuclear capability.

Presumably, witnessing this feat would "tame" Trump into accepting the "equilibrium" that North Korea alluded to earlier this week - a state of stable nuclear deterrence. Given the inadequacy of existing US and Japanese ballistic missile defence systems, it is far from a sure thing that such a test could be intercepted.

The risks are immense. Civil aviators and mariners in the target area may perish, given that North Korea does not offer international warning of its missile launch plans - unlike other states that routinely test ballistic missiles. The environmental damage and fallout could be catastrophic. Moreover, should the missile fail over Japan - or prematurely detonate - the consequences would effectively guarantee a nuclear war in retaliation.

North Korea could choose not to use a missile for a test like this to mitigate some
risk, but still demonstrate an awe-inspiring capability. A second mechanism could be to sail a ship out to sea with a nuclear device and detonate it. Here, the odds that US intelligence would detect and interdict the North Korean vessel are higher.

What would a nuke in the Pacific mean?

Mr Kim said in an English statement carried by state news agency KCNA that Mr Trump's remarks "have convinced me, rather than frightening or stopping me, that the path I chose is correct and that it is the one I have to follow to the last".

He said "now that Trump has denied the existence of and insulted me and my country in front of the eyes of the world and made the most ferocious declaration of a war in history", North Korea would consider the "highest level of hard-line countermeasure" to make Mr Trump "pay dearly for his speech".
He ended by saying he would "surely and definitely tame the mentally deranged US dotard with fire".
Experts say this is the first time a North Korean leader has made a direct address to an international audience.
The statement came shortly after the country's delegation arrived in New York for the UN General Assembly. Analysts say that for this reason it merits serious and thorough consideration.

What is a dotard?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "an old person, especially one who has become weak or senile"

Its first known use was in the 14th Century and initially meant "imbecile", according to the US Merriam-Webster Dictionary. It stems from the Middle English word "doten" which means "to dote"

Searches for the term have been "high as a kite" since Mr Kim released his statement, Merriam-Webster tweeted

Mr Kim's comments prompted swift criticism from the Japanese government. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said in a news conference on Friday: "North Korea's remarks and behaviour are provocative to regional and international security, and they are absolutely unacceptable."
North Korea has fired two ballistic missiles over Japan in the past month, raising regional tensions even further.
Mr Trump on Thursday signed a new order **boosting sanctions** against North Korea, where the US treasury would target firms and financial institutions doing business with Pyongyang.

He said: "For much too long North Korea has been allowed to abuse the international financial system to facilitate funding for its nuclear weapons and missile programs."

The UN Security Council had approved new rounds of sanctions earlier this month aimed at starving North Korea of fuel and income, which were in response to Pyongyang's much-condemned **sixth nuclear test** on 3 September.

North Korea was one of the top issues dominating the agenda at the UN General Assembly in New York, where several speakers called for a de-escalation of tensions.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned that "military hysteria" over the nuclear testing would lead to "disaster", while China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Pyongyang not to go in a "dangerous direction".

Mr Wang told the UN on Thursday that there should be no new nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula "whether it is in the North or the South".

**North Korea's foreign minister says country may test hydrogen bomb in Pacific**

22 Sep, 2017 1:15pm

3 minutes to read

South Korean media report North Korea's foreign minister has said the country may test a hydrogen bomb in the
North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho said on Friday (US time) he believes the North could consider a hydrogen bomb test on the Pacific Ocean of an unprecedented scale, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported.

Ri was speaking to reporters in New York when he was asked what North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un had meant when he threatened in an earlier statement the "highest level of hard-line countermeasure in history" against the United States.
Ri told reporters in New York that a response "could be the most powerful detonation of an H-bomb in the Pacific," although he did not know Kim's exact thoughts, Yonhap reported.

Ri reportedly added that "We have no idea about what actions could be taken as it will be ordered by leader Kim Jong Un."

Ri is in New York attending the United Nations General Assembly.

Such a test would be considered a major provocation by Washington and its allies.

Ri's threat is significant because such a detonation would move North Korea's nuclear weapons activities beyond its borders for the first time.

The communist dictatorship's previous nuclear tests have taken place in its isolated mountains.

Hydrogen bombs are more powerful by an order of magnitude than the atomic bombs that North Korea tested in previous years. The country claims that an atomic test it
carried out early this month was an H-bomb.

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The apparent threat comes after Kim issued a rare statement calling US President Donald Trump "deranged" and warning he "pay dearly" for his threats.

In his maiden speech to the UN two days ago, Trump said he would "totally destroy" North Korea if it attacked the US or one of its allies.

"Far from making remarks of any persuasive power that can be viewed to be helpful to defusing tension, he made unprecedented rude nonsense," Kim said today.

"A frightened dog barks louder," Kim said. "He is unfit to hold the prerogative of supreme command of a country, and
he is surely a rogue and a gangster fond of playing with fire."

Pyongyang launched an intercontinental ballistic missile over Japan exactly one week ago, earning a fresh new round of sanctions.

Seoul's spy agency also warned the North could launch an ICBM on a standard trajectory toward the Pacific Ocean around its founding anniversary of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea on October 10.

Australian nuclear disarmament campaigner John Hallam warned Trump's remark at the UN General Assembly would make North Korea feel more backed into a corner.

He wanted the comments were likely to cause conflict rather than bringing about a potential solution and that it could become nuclear very quickly.

"It's unlikely, though just possible, that the DPRK will in fact back down, and much more probable that he will do as he has done up to this point: Do precisely that which his interlocutor has forbidden him to do," he said.

"The US having established a red line, the DPRK has always immediately crossed it."

- additional reporting news.com.au

North Korea:
Trump's UN speech amounted to 'the sound of a dog barking'

By Joshua Berlinger, CNN

Updated 0852 GMT (1652 HKT) September 21, 2017

Growing push to expel North Korea from UN 02:12

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

'I feel sorry for his aides,' North Korea's foreign minister said of US President Donald Trump

Trump threatened to 'completely destroy' North Korea in his first speech at the United Nations

(CNN) North Korea's foreign minister has delivered a scornful response to US President Donald Trump's threat to destroy the hermit kingdom,
likening it to the sound of "a dog barking."

Ri Yong Ho, who is in the US for the United Nations General Assembly, said he "felt sorry" for Trump’s advisers after the speech on Tuesday.

"If he was thinking he could scare us with the sound of a dog barking, that’s really a dog dream," Ri told reporters outside his hotel in New York. In Korean, a dog dream is one that is absurd and makes little sense.
another country with destruction was unprecedented for a US President and took diplomats aback.

North Korean diplomats were not present for Trump's speech.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho, left, shakes hands with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Pak Myong Guk as he leaves the Pyongyang Airport on Tuesday.

**Little chance of meeting**

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is also in New York, but played down the possibility of a meeting with his North Korean counterpart. Pyongyang and Washington do not maintain formal diplomatic relations and the presence of North Korea’s top diplomat in the US could have afforded a rare chance for high-level, face-to-face dialogue. Tillerson told reporters he did not believe he could have a "matter-of-fact discussion with North Korea because we don't know how their means of communication and behavior will be."
N. Korean FM at UN poses chance for dialogue 02:50

Tillerson claimed there were signs that increased international pressure on North Korea was starting to bear fruit. He said there was evidence of fuel shortages in the country after the passage of recent UN sanctions, which targeted oil imports among other things.

However, analysts pointed out that fuel shortages did not necessarily prove that sanctions were having an effect, as most North Koreans don't own cars or use fuel at anywhere near the rate of the rest of the world. Anthony Ruggiero, an expert in the use of targeted financial measures at
the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, said sanctions rarely hit fast. Any lines for gas were "probably more due to the regime stockpiling fuel in anticipation that China would implement the restriction," Ruggiero, who worked at both the State Department and Treasury Department, told CNN.

**More meetings**

Trump is scheduled to meet with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Moon Jae-in Thursday, two important US allies on North Korea's doorstop.

They are likely to discuss the sanctions regime, a key part of the Trump administration's strategy on North Korea. The US hopes that if a global coalition mounts enough pressure on North Korea, it will put its nuclear weapons on the negotiating table.

China spoke with Chinese President Xi Jinping about the issue in a phone call Monday, the White House said. Accounting for about 90% of North Korea's imports, Beijing is seen by many as the key to any North Korea strategy.

While China voted in favor of the two most recent UN resolutions against North Korea, Chinese diplomats have called for calm as Trump's rhetoric has heated up, and editorials in Chinese state media have continued to assail the US President's approach to diplomacy.

"It is time for the US to realize that irresponsible words and actions are backing the DPRK into a corner with no way out, and it would be a tragedy if Trump's risky game of chicken with the DPRK crosses the point of no return," read an editorial published Thursday in the People's Daily, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party.

"Rather than hurl threats and try to pass the buck to China, the US should accept its responsibility, and do more to resolve the issue through dialogue
Trump to UN: 'Rocket Man is on a suicide mission'

By Kevin Liptak and Jeremy Diamond, CNN

Updated 1718 GMT (0118 HKT) September 19, 2017

STORY HIGHLIGHTS
  - Trump called out North Korea and Iran in cutting terms
  - "Our military will soon be the strongest it's ever been," he said.

United Nations (CNN) President Donald Trump delivered Tuesday a doomsday warning to North Korea and mocked its young leader, a
pugnacious escalation in rhetoric in a wide-ranging debut address to the United Nations, the world's foremost diplomatic body.

In blunt terms, Trump warned the US would "totally destroy North Korea" if forced to defend itself or its allies. He said while the US has "great strength and patience," its options could soon run out.

Directly putting the country's leader on notice, Trump suggested Kim Jong Un could not survive an American attack.
"Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself," he said.

It was a characteristically bombastic approach to a crisis that's growing in scale. Throughout his address -- the most closely watched foreign policy remarks of his presidency -- Trump brought frank assessments to a range of sticky global flashpoints.
He declared the Iran nuclear deal all but dead, saying it was an "embarrassment" to the United States. He bluntly described some regions
of the world as "going to hell." And he revived his use of the term "radical Islamic terrorism," vowing to stamp out terrorists worldwide.

But it was Trump's remarks about North Korea that prompted the loudest buzz in the soaring, green-hued General Assembly hall, where Trump spoke to more than 100 world leaders and diplomats.

"It is an outrage that some nations would not only trade with such a nation but would arm, supply and financially support a country that imperils the world," he said.

He warned nations against becoming "bystanders to history" and thanked members of the UN Security Council -- where he's secured key victories through passage of sanctions measures against North Korea -- for escalating their rebukes of Pyongyang.

Iran
Donald Trump and Iran: the one thing to know 01:36

He directed similar ire toward Iran, which he accused of supporting terrorists and destabilizing the region.

"The Iranian government masks a corrupt dictatorship behind the false guise of a democracy," Trump said. "It has turned a wealthy country with a rich history and culture into an economically depleted rogue state whose chief exports are violence, bloodshed and chaos."

He left little doubt to his plans for the nuclear deal, which was brokered under the Obama administration and lifted some sanctions on the country in exchange for curbing aspects of its nuclear program.

These Trump phrases from the UN speech matter most

"The Iran deal was one of the worst and most one-sided transactions," Trump said. "That deal is embarrassment to the US and I don't think you've heard the last of it, believe me."

Trump faces a mid-October deadline for re-certifying Iran’s compliance with the agreement. US officials say Trump is still weighing his next moves and plans to announce his intentions next month.
He also lambasted Venezuela’s leader Nicolas Maduro, accusing him of depriving his people in the same of socialist ideas. "The Venezuelan people are starving and their country is collapsing," Trump said.

'Sovereignty'

Trump has delivered major foreign policy addresses before, but the issues at the United Nations are broader and the geographic spread of Trump’s audience wider. The message he delivered here will resonate in capitals worldwide, where officials and leaders are still seeking a cohesive foreign policy doctrine from new American leader.

In his remarks, Trump sought to encapsulate his worldview through the theme of "sovereignty," suggesting that nations acting in their own self-interest would create a more stable world.

"As President of the United States, I will always put America first, just like you, as the leaders of your countries, will always and should always put your countries first," he said to scattered applause. "All responsible leaders have an obligation to serve their own citizens, and the nation-state remains the best vehicle for elevating the human condition."

Trump told world leaders that he would not insist their countries adopt US values.

"In America, we do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example for everyone to watch," Trump said. For a President whose election and elevation to the White House was among the most improbable in modern political history, the United Nations stage represented a milestone, even if some in the audience still find the sight of Trump in front of the iconic green marble jarring. Trump's three eldest children -- Donald Jr, Ivanka and Eric Trump -- all attended his speech, along with first lady Melania Trump.
Trump's remarks, which ran 41 minutes long, were written with the help of Stephen Miller, Trump's senior policy adviser who also acts as the presidential speechwriter. Miller's nationalist worldview was evident throughout, from Trump's critiques of free trade agreements to his insistence that refugees are better resettled in their own regions than in the United States. In a return to a campaign-style phrase, Trump declared that America's middle-class would be "forgotten no more."

So, too, was Miller’s voice evident in Trump’s use of the phrase "radical Islamic terror," a loaded term that some argue unfairly impugns an entire religion. Trump, who employed the term frequently on the campaign trail, curtailed its use as President. But he returned to the description on Tuesday, claiming his administration had done more to go after groups like ISIS than his predecessor.

"Our military will soon be the strongest it's ever been," he said.

**UN criticism**

Trump has a long history with the UN -- and it involves marble

Trump has demeaned the United Nations in the past, claiming the body is
ridden with bureaucracy and overspending. His first remarks as president here on Monday were centered on reforming the institution's practices. During his address, however, Trump was optimistic about the UN's ability to improve global security through collective action.

"Major portions of the world are in conflict, and some in fact are going to hell, but the powerful people in this room, under the guidance and auspices of the United Nations, can solve many of these vicious and complex problems," he said.

In his remarks, Trump made no mention of climate change, an issue the United Nations has worked to combat through the Paris accord, an agreement Trump has lambasted. He also made few references to Russia, whose actions in Ukraine have caused deep anxiety throughout Europe. Among the hundreds of diplomats assembled to watch his speech, reaction was largely muted. He received applause for declaring that countries should act in their own interest and for his backing of women's equality, but only bemused murmurs for his bellicose threats toward North Korea.

US considers shooting down NK missiles that
don't pose a direct threat

By Barbara Starr, CNN Pentagon Correspondent

Updated 1717 GMT (0117 HKT) September 19, 2017
Source: CNN

Trump vows to keep pressure on North Korea 01:47

STORY HIGHLIGHTS
Mattis said the US has military options that would not put Seoul at risk
Members of the administration have repeatedly emphasized that a range of military options are on the table

(CNN) As tensions continue to ratchet up with North Korea, CNN has learned that the US is considering shooting down a North Korean ballistic missile even if it does not directly threaten the US or its allies.

Speaking to reporters Monday, Defense Secretary James Mattis said North Korea is "intentionally doing provocations that seem to press against the envelope for just how far can they push without going over some kind of a line in their minds that would make them vulnerable."

An official directly familiar with options planning within the Trump administration told CNN the question that now needs to be answered is whether North Korea's missile program has progressed to the level of being such an inherent threat that the Pentagon would recommend targeting a missile even if its trajectory did not indicate it would hit the US or its allies. The official declined to speak on the record because of the sensitivity of the issue.
Latest North Korea missile test renews US talk of military option

The discussion of whether to shoot down a North Korean missile comes as US intelligence has assessed that North Korea's KN-17 (Hwasong 12) intermediate range ballistic missile has proven so successful in recent flight tests that Pyongyang now counts on it as part of its strategic deterrence against the US, according to a US official familiar with the latest intelligence analysis. Because the KN-17 appears to be successful, the official says the US has assessed that it is likely North Korea will turn back to additional testing of the KN-20 (aka Hwasong 14) intercontinental ballistic missile to see if they can improve its performance.

While US officials have long said the military maintains a full range of options for dealing with North Korea, the notion of shooting down a missile has largely centered on conducting an operation if the missile were to directly threaten the US or its allies. There has been particular concern since Kim Jong Un recently threatened the US territory of Guam.

On July 4, North Korea conducted its first test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which it claims could reach "anywhere in the world" and conducted a second test on July 28.

The idea of shooting down a missile even if it is not a direct threat is not new. But with two recently launched North Korean missiles flying over northern Japan, the potential for having to consider a shoot-down without
a direct threat remains very real, according to one senior defense official. President Donald Trump, while addressing the United Nations General Assembly Tuesday, warned Kim Jong Un that he would not survive an attack by the United States: "The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea. Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime."

Members of the administration have repeatedly emphasized that a range of military options are on the table and Mattis said Monday that the US possess military options that would not put Seoul at risk of a North Korean counterattack with the potential to kill tens of thousands of civilians.

'REocket Man' tweet, threats haven't quelled N. Korea crisis

Asked at an off-camera briefing at the Pentagon if there are military options that would not put Seoul at "grave risk?" He answered: "Yes there are, but I will not go into details."

Mattis would not clarify if the options he was referring to are kinetic-meaning strikes using conventional weapons.

The Pentagon is looking at potential covert cyberattack options. But other non-kinetic options could include a show of force in the air or on land in the region or increasing the US military presence in the area by deploying more ships or troops.
Iran, North Korea expected to dominate Trump's first UN General Assembly. He did confirm that he had discussed the option of putting tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea, an idea rejected by South Korea's President last week. Several Pentagon officials say Mattis was not signaling that tactical nuclear weapons are likely to be placed in South Korea. And the situation remains tense with Mattis stating: "I believe that there is always the potential for miscalculation by the DPRK leader."

In a tweet, Trump sticks North Korea’s Kim Jong Un with a
nickname: ‘Rocket Man’

By David Nakamura and Carol Morello September 17 at 9:13 AM

A submarine-launched ballistic missile is displayed in Kim Il Sung Square during a military parade in April in Pyongyang, North Korea, to celebrate the 105th birth anniversary of Kim, the country’s late founder. (Wong Maye-E/AP)

NEW YORK — President Trump is calling Kim Jong Un names — the “Rocket Man.”

The president stuck the moniker on the North Korea
dictator in a Sunday morning tweet ahead of Trump's scheduled arrival here in the evening for the U.N. General Assembly, the annual gathering of more than 120 world leaders.

I spoke with President Moon of South Korea last night. Asked him how Rocket Man is doing. Long gas lines forming in North Korea. Too bad!

Trump, who has spent two nights at his golf resort in Bedminster, N.J., also revealed that he spoke with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who will join Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for a trilateral
dinner this week in New York to collaborate on addressing North Korea’s growing nuclear and ballistic missile threats. The White House said Trump and Moon discussed North Korea’s continued defiance of the international community and “committed to continuing to take steps to strengthen deterrence and defense capabilities and to maximize economic and diplomatic pressure.”

North Korea will reach its nuclear force goal - Kim Jong-un

4 hours ago
North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has vowed to reach the country's nuclear goals, according to state media. The aim was to establish "equilibrium" of military force with the US, the KCNA news agency quoted him as saying. Mr Kim's comments come after North Korea fired its latest missile over Japan - in what is being described as the country's farthest-reaching test. The move split world powers who united behind new UN sanctions against North Korea just days ago. "We should clearly show the big power chauvinists how our state attain the goal of completing its nuclear force despite their limitless sanctions and blockade," Mr Kim was quoted as saying by the KCNA. He also said North Korea's goal was "to establish the equilibrium of real force with the US and make the US rulers dare not talk about military option for the DPRK [North Korea]."

Seismologists stumped by mystery shock after North Korean nuclear test

A second jolt felt minutes after this month's detonation continues to confound researchers.

David Cyranoski
14 September 2017
Article tools

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Eight-and-a-half minutes after North Korea set off a nuclear bomb on 3 September, a second burst of energy shook the mountain where the test had just occurred. More than a week later, researchers are still puzzling over what caused that extra release of seismic energy — and what it says about North Korea's nuclear-testing site, or the risks of a larger radiation leak. Monitoring stations in South Korea have already picked up minute levels of radiation from the test.

A number of theories have emerged to explain the second event, ranging from a tunnel collapse or a landslide to a splintering of the rock inside Mount Mantap, the testing site. But seismologists can't agree and say that they may not get enough evidence to pin down the cause.

“This is an interesting mystery at this point,” says Göran Ekström, a seismologist at Columbia University in New York City.

Related stories

- What kind of bomb did North Korea detonate?
- Nuclear detectives sniff out North Korea
- Isotopes hint at North Korean nuclear test
The nature of the first seismic signal is clearer because it matches the profile of a bomb blast. The US Geological Survey (USGS) determined the magnitude of the seismic event associated with the nuclear explosion at 6.3, whereas the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in Vienna calculated it at 6.1 on the basis of a separate analysis. The explosion was many times the size of past North Korean tests and was the largest seismic signal from a nuclear test ever detected by the international network of seismic monitoring stations used by the CTBTO.

The second event came 8.5 minutes later and registered as magnitude-4.1, reported the USGS. The agency suggested that it was associated with the test and may have been a “structural collapse”. The possibility that the smaller shock was caused by a tunnel collapse inside the testing site has dominated discussion in the media. But Paul Earle, a seismologist at the USGS, told Nature that was just one possibility that was raised in the immediate aftermath of the explosion. The USGS, he said, was “basing that on previous nuclear tests of comparable size that had a collapse”.

Possible signs of a collapse are visible on satellite images taken of the testing site, according to an analysis released on 12 September by 38 North, a partnership of the US-Korea Institute and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC.

Satellite images before and after the 3 September nuclear test show evidence of landslides and a region of the mountainside that might have sunk.

But the seismic signal doesn’t match what would be expected from a collapse, says Lianxing Wen, a geophysicist at the State University of
New York at Stony Brook. A collapse would produce mostly vertical movement of rock, but his own unpublished work suggests that the seismic clues point to a large horizontal movement as well, something he says would be more consistent with a landslide.

**Sliding scale**

Although the satellite data do show a lot of landslides on Mount Mantap, other researchers argue that they could not have caused the magnitude-4.1 event. Much larger landslides, such as at Bingham Canyon mine in Utah in 2013, haven’t produced seismic signals close to that size, says Ekström.

He also argues that the seismic signals he has seen do not match the pattern expected from a landslide. Such an event would have longer-duration signals (matching the time that it takes rocks to fall down a slope) and fewer high-frequency waves (because the energy in a landslide is released more slowly than in earthquakes or explosions) than what was recorded in the North Korean event. He says that a collapse cannot yet be ruled out. The crater formed by a collapse sometimes does not become visible at the surface until much later.

Another theory comes from Ekström’s colleague at Columbia, seismologist Won-Young Kim. Kim rules out a collapse, a landslide and the possibility that there was an earthquake triggered by the explosion. He says that the seismic event was probably a rock burst — a violent fracturing of rock around one of the many tunnels under Mount Mantap. That could explain the frequency of the seismic waves, which were lower than an earthquake rupture but higher than a landslide, as well as the other features, he says.

The characterization of landslides and rock bursts could help researchers to assess how unstable Mantap is. Even if the whole mountain isn't going to collapse, as some have warned, subtler signs from landslides or rock bursts could indicate whether a major section of the mountain above the tunnels may have cracked. If so, that could lead to contamination of the mountainous area by radioactive material. “It is difficult to imagine how to contain that, given the altitude and remoteness of the place,” says Kim.

Stations outside of North Korea have started to detect radiation from the latest test. On 13 September, the South Korean Nuclear Safety and
Security Commission in Seoul announced that several ground- and sea-based monitoring stations downwind of the test site had detected the radioactive isotope xenon-133, an indicator of a nuclear test. However, no other isotopes were detected, preventing a determination of what type of bomb was used. It also did not indicate whether radiation is leaking from the site at a higher rate than expected, said Cheol-Su Kim, the head of the environmental radioactivity assessment department at the Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety in Daejeon, South Korea.

Based on South Korea's ground-based network of reporting stations, overall radiation levels there ranged from 50–300 nanosieverts per hour — no higher than the country's background level.

*With reporting by Mark Zastrow*

**North Korea missile test splits world powers**

North Korea and its leader Kim Jong-un - seen here on a TV screen in Tokyo - are overshadowing the region again. The latest missile test by North Korea, one of its furthest-reaching yet, has split world powers who united behind new UN sanctions just days ago.
The US said all nations had "to address this problem short of war", hours after saying the burden of response should fall on China and Russia. China accused the US of shirking its own responsibility, while Russia condemned US rhetoric as "aggressive".

The missile fired over Japan had the range to hit the US territory of Guam. It reached an altitude of about 770km (478 miles), travelling 3,700km past Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido before landing in the sea, South Korea's military says.

It is the furthest any North Korean ballistic missile has ever travelled overground, Joseph Dempsey of the International Institute for Strategic Studies said in a tweet. Are missiles a risk to planes? The weapons North Korea does not admit to

Three minutes to shelter from a missile

Key US ally South Korea responded within minutes by firing two ballistic missiles into the sea in a simulated strike on the North.

The UN Security Council was due to meet later on Friday in New York at the request of the US and Japan. However, the US envoy to the UN, Nikki Haley, said there was not much the body could do.

US officials pointed to President Donald Trump's address at the UN next week and his planned meetings there with the Japanese and South Korean leaders.
What accusations are being traded?

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said his country would "never tolerate" such "dangerous provocative action", and the US, China and Russia also condemned the test, coming as it did after the North's nuclear bomb test on 3 September.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron have called for a resumption of direct talks with Pyongyang to de-escalate the crisis, the Kremlin says.

On Monday, UN Security Council members voted unanimously to restrict oil imports and ban textile exports to North Korea in response to the nuclear test, which had violated UN resolutions.
US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson made clear Washington considered it was now up to Beijing and Moscow to act to restrain Pyongyang. He said China supplied North Korea with most of its oil, while Russia was the largest employer of North Korean forced labour.

Hours later, National Security Adviser HR McMaster told reporters: "We're out of road. We have to call on all nations... to address this problem short of war." But he did not rule out a military response.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying insisted her country was not the "focal point of the conflict". "The various directly involved parties should take responsibility," she told journalists, in remarks clearly aimed at the US and South Korea. "Any attempt to wash their hands of the issue is irresponsible and unhelpful for resolving the issue."
She added that sanctions were "not the way to solve the problem" and called for a peaceful solution "through formal diplomatic means". Speaking on a Russian radio station, Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said: "We are demonstrating not only our intolerance towards the illegal launches but also our willingness to settle the situation in the Korean peninsula." "Regrettably, aggressive rhetoric is the only thing coming from Washington," she added.

**North Korea crisis in 300 words**

**Pyongyang's missile and nuclear programme**

**Why does this new test matter?**

The launch took place from the Sunan district of the capital Pyongyang just before 07:00 local time (22:00 GMT on Thursday), South Korea's military says. Sunan is home to Pyongyang International Airport.
As with the last test on 29 August, the missile flew over Japan's northern Hokkaido island before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean. There were no immediate reports of damage to aircraft or ships.
Sirens sounded across the region and text message alerts were sent out warning people to take cover.

### Comparison of missile launches over Japan

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<td>Landing distance from Japan</td>
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<td>Flight duration</td>
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Missile type

- Thought to be intermediate range missile
- Thought to be intermediate range Hwasong-12

Observers say it is likely to have been an intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) though Japanese officials believe there is still a possibility it was an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

What is so alarming about the new launch is that the US Pacific territory of Guam, which North Korea says it has plans to fire missiles towards, is 3,400km from Pyongyang, putting it within range of the latest missile.

The North's sixth nuclear test reportedly involved a miniaturised hydrogen bomb that could be loaded on to a long-range missile.

Approximate path of North Korean missile

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Have North Korea's missile tests paid off?
How is South Korea responding?

In South Korea, President Moon Jae-in held an emergency meeting of his national security council, where he said that dialogue with the North was "impossible in a situation like this".
Officials have been ordered to prepare for possible North Korean chemical, biological and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attacks, a presidential spokesman said. North Korea has said it has bombs capable of sending EMP shock waves, which would disrupt power supplies, although the claim has been greeted with some scepticism. The country does have an extensive chemical arsenal and may also have biological weapons.

**What damage could North Korea do?**

**Can the world live with a nuclear North Korea?**

**Why is the North acting like this?**

It insists it needs a nuclear-weapons programme to ensure its survival and there has been no let-up in its fiery rhetoric. On Thursday, it threatened to "sink Japan and turn America to ashes".
North Korea said in early September that it had tested a "missile-ready" hydrogen bomb. A commentary in North Korea's state-run Rodong Sinmun newspaper, published after the latest missile launch, accuses the US and South Korea of conducting "ceaseless" exercises as a provocation.

Watch: Was your T-shirt made in North Korea?  
What's life like on the border with North Korea?
Pyongyang has been developing weapons, initially based on the Soviet-developed Scud, for decades. Conducted short and medium-range missile tests on many occasions, sometimes to mark domestic events or periods of regional tension. Pace of tests has increased in recent months; experts say North Korea appears to be making significant advances towards building a reliable long-range nuclear-capable weapon. On 3 September, North Korea said it tested a hydrogen bomb that could be miniaturised and loaded on a long-range missile.

The scary reason why nobody has attempted to shoot-down one of North Korea's missiles

Air raid sirens blared across Japan again today. Another North Korean missile streaked over the island nation's skies.

As startled citizens streamed into bunkers and shelters, Japan's government went to great lengths to inform and reassure the public that it was doing everything possible to protect them.

Truth is, there is very little the Japanese military can do.
The launch was detected at 6.59am Japanese Standard Time. At 7.06am, the ballistic missile flew over the heavily populated island of Hokkaido. It was in Japanese air space for less than two minutes before it fell into the ocean some 2000km to the east at 7.16am.

Early reports indicate it was in the air for a total of just 17 minutes, during which it reached an altitude of 770km and flew a total of 3700km. This is characteristic of the nuclear-capable HS-12 intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM).
So why did Japan's much-hyped interceptor missiles not attempt to take it down?
They probably can't.

**ACTION STATIONS**

The North Korean missile was detected within seconds of its launch. US early warning satellites have been keeping a close watch on North Korea for some time now. And there's an extensive network of radars in South Korea, the Sea of Japan and Japan itself on standby for just such an event.

It would have taken just minutes to activate Japan's automatic public alert system, with messages flashing up on mobile phones and recorded voices blaring over radios and televisions.

Every movement of the missile would have been precisely tracked. Computers would have been rapidly number-crunching to anticipate its exact flight path.

**Related articles:**

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4 minutes to read
But no interceptor was fired.

This is despite Japan having placed a picket of advanced Aegis radar missile destroyers in the Sea of Japan for just that purpose. And highly visible batteries of Patriot Advanced Capability anti-air missiles have been deployed.
to major residential and military centres.

When a similar shot was fired in August, Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera told his public that there was no attempt to bring it down as it was not aimed at a target in Japan.

It was also suggested Japan and the United States were deliberately holding fire to watch and learn North Korea's missile capabilities.

But there are persistent doubts their defence technology is up to the task anyway.

**CATCH 22**

The ballistic missile was flying very fast, and very high.

Reaction times would have needed to be lightning fast.

There was no time for political decisions. There was no time for consultations with allies.

There was barely enough time to pull the trigger.

In essence, what needed to be done was to shoot down a bullet with another bullet.

But the speed and rapidly-gaining height of the HS-12 would likely have placed it beyond the reach of the Standard Missile 3 interceptors aboard Japanese and US destroyers. It would likely have been too fast and too high for the Patriot PAC3 missiles at Hokkaido's Chitose Air Base.
North Korea on Friday fired an intermediate range missile over Japan into the Northern Pacific ocean. Photo / AP

"We'd have no shot against an IRBM, or a MRBM or SRBM for that matter, during the missiles boost phase as that is beyond the capability of the SM-3 interceptor," Arms Control Association director Kingston Reif recently told The National Interest. "For a midcourse intercept, that would depend on the trajectory, how much warning we had, and
how many ships were deployed and where."

And the public fallout of shooting - and missing - would likely be far worse than just another North Korean missile overflight.

The credibility of US and Japanese defence forces would suffer severe damage.

"If they had tried to bring it down and failed, then the consequences would have been serious," Tokyo-based Nexial Research defence analyst Lance Gatling says. "This is a defensive system that Japan has spent a lot of money on and it had come up short in its first test. That would not have looked good domestically, while it would also encourage the North Koreans to think their missiles could not be touched."

But even if North Korea's missile had been flying within the supposed parameters enabling intercept, history shows any attempt would likely have ended in failure.
And the US Pentagon knows it.

"The Regional/Theater BEDS (missile defence systems) demonstrates a limited capability to defend the US Pacific Command, US European Command, and US Central Command areas of responsibility for small numbers of medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missile threats
(1000 to 4000km), and a fair capability for short-range ballistic missile threats (less than 1000km range)," the 2016 Pentagon's Director Operational Test and Evaluation report reads.

**WISHFUL THINKING**

The Patriot and Standard interceptor missiles currently stationed in and around Japan are advanced. But they're not the latest technology.

New SM-3 Block IIA Standard missiles are being deployed by the United States. These are supposed to fly higher, faster - and with greater accuracy.

But they've also failed several tests.

This is not uncommon for missile interceptors.
Generally tests are conducted under optimal conditions. Launch times, directions and trajectories are often known in advance.

Yet, disturbingly frequently, the test still fail.

Real-world operational conditions will likely reduce their
success rate even further.

There are a few apparent aces up the West's sleeve.

A new version of the Standard Missile, the SM-6, was test fired from a destroyer on August 30 - successfully downing a medium range ballistic missile in its final seconds of flight in its first attempt.

Then there's highly-publicised successor to the Patriot air defence system - the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system (THAAD). This has been hyped as having a "perfect record on launches" with a claimed track record of 14 kills out of 14 targets so far.
It has also been deployed to Guam and South Korea. But even this has not been extensively tested against ballistic missiles.

One timely test, however, did prove promising. In July a THAAD system in Alaska successfully downed a mid-range projectile.

But it is only able to intercept intermediate (such as the HS-12) and short range missiles.

The bad news is, in August, North Korea successfully tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile. This appears to be outside THAAD's scope.

THE NEXT THREAT

In August, Pyongyang declared it was "seriously examining the plan for an enveloping strike at Guam through simultaneous fire of four Hwasong-12s."

These missiles would "cross the sky above Shimane, Hiroshima, and Koichi Prefectures of Japan" before flying the 2350km in 18 minutes necessary to reach the US
territory of Guam.

Such an open act of aggression puts the US in a challenging position.

Should it shoot back, or not?

By the time the North Korean missiles true target is known, they may likely already be outside of intercept launch range from South Korea and Japan. And the recent loss of two advanced US destroyers capable of launching interceptor missiles to collisions makes matters worse.
So Guam will need to defend itself with antimissile batteries there.

"Even if one missile is successfully intercepted, the odds of going four-for-four with North Korea's Hwasong-12 salvo over the Sea of Japan using SM-3s are likely to be vanishingly low," North Korea missile analyst Ankit Panda recently wrote.

"If he (Kim Jong-un) orders a salvo test and the US and Japan attempt interception but fail to make contact with all four missiles, US defence assurances and credibility take a hit. "In any scenario where a ballistic missile is allowed to overfly Japan into the Pacific, this remains true." In the end, Panda says, the prospect of successful interception of one IRBM would come down to a great number of variables having to fall in favour of the United States and Japan.

So alternative options will have to be explored.

**PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE?**

In the face of Kim Jong-un's increasingly inflammatory rhetoric and nuclear-capable missiles flying over its
territory, Japan's President Shinzo Abe is faced with a terrible decision.

Should he rely on unproven, unreliable interceptor missiles to protect his people.

Or should he consider something much more extreme.

In recent months the Japanese government has been debating the need to modify its pacifist constitution to allow a pre-emptive strike capability.

It's already been quietly building up just such an ability, such as the acquisition of the stealthy F-35 strike fighter.

But more blatant moves - such as the acquisition of its own ballistic and cruise missiles - will need a constitutional shift.

And this is looking increasingly likely in the face of the limitations of antimissile systems.

"Calls to shoot down DPRK missiles tests reflect widespread overconfidence in the efficacy and importance of missile defence," Reif said. "Missile defence is not an escape route from our and our allies vulnerability to a nuclear-armed North Korea, which is (already) taking steps to evade our defences and can build more missiles to overwhelm our defences."

North Korea fires
another missile over Japan, triggering warnings and condemnation

A photo made available by the North Korean Central News Agency shows the second test firing of Hwasong-14 intercontinental ballistic missile from an undisclosed location in North Korea on
SEOUL — North Korea fired another missile over the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido on Friday morning, just a day after Pyongyang said that Japan “should be sunken into the sea” with a nuclear bomb and the United States should be “beaten to death” with a stick “fit for a rabid dog.”

This was the second time in less than three weeks that North Korea sent a ballistic missile over Japan, and comes less than two weeks after North Korea exploded what is widely believed to be a hydrogen bomb.

The latest provocation immediately sparked angry reactions from Tokyo and Seoul. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the international community had to unite to punish Kim Jong Un’s regime, calling this week’s United Nations sanctions “the floor, not the ceiling.”

“China supplies North Korea with most of its oil. Russia is the largest employer of North Korean forced labor,” Tillerson said in a statement, singling out the two veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council, who are
also North Korea’s closest things to allies.

“China and Russia must indicate their intolerance for these reckless missile launches by taking direct actions of their own,” he said.

Play Video 6:10

Economy of deceit: How North Korea funds its nuclear weapons program | Loopholes

Kim Jong Un has tested nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles at an unprecedented rate since he came into power. Yet, the country is under some of the toughest sanctions ever. This is how the regime is able to funnel billions of dollars into its nuclear program. (Video: Jason Aldag/Photo: Linda Davidson/The Washington Post)

The latest missile was launched from the Sunan airfield just north of Pyongyang about 6:30 a.m. local time, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said. It flew 2,300 miles over 17 minutes, passing over Hokkaido and landing some 1,200 miles to the east in the Pacific Ocean.

The launch immediately triggered emergency alerts in Japan, with text messages and loud speakers telling
residents along the missile’s potential flight path to seek shelter.

The Japanese government warned people not to approach any debris or other suspicious-looking material, a reflection of the fact that North Korean missiles sometimes break up in flight.

Japan’s chief cabinet secretary, Yoshihide Suga, condemned the latest launch in “the strongest terms possible” and reiterated that Japan would “not tolerate” North Korea’s actions. But Japan did not try to shoot down the missile.

South Korea, however, immediately fired one of its Hyunmoo-II missiles 155 miles into the sea — the same distance it would have to travel to reach the Sunan airfield.

In Washington, the White House said President Trump was briefed on the latest North Korean missile launch by his chief of staff, John F. Kelly.
The missile did not pose a threat to North America or to the U.S. territory of Guam, U.S. Pacific Command said. The Pacific island of Guam is home to large Air Force and Navy bases and the target of North Korea's recent rhetorical threats.

“We continue to monitor North Korea’s actions closely,” Pacific Command said in a statement.

[ North Korean missile flies over Japan, escalating tensions ]

Friday’s launch appeared similar to the previous launch, on Aug. 29. On that day, North Korea fired a Hwasong-12 — an intermediate-range ballistic missile technically capable of flying 3,000 miles, enough to reach Guam — from the Sunan airfield. But it also flew to the east, over Hokkaido and into the Pacific Ocean, rather than on a southward path toward Guam.

Analysts said that, after testing its missiles by firing them straight up and having them crash into the sea
between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, North Korea was apparently testing its flight on a normal trajectory without crossing a “red line” of aiming at the United States.

On Thursday, a North Korean state agency had issued an alarming threat to what it offensively called the “wicked Japs.”

“The four islands of the [Japanese] archipelago should be sunken into the sea by [our] nuclear bomb,” a spokesman for the Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee said in a statement carried by the official news agency. Hokkaido is the northernmost of Japan’s four main islands.

“Japan is no longer needed to exist near us,” the committee said.

This is the first missile launch since North Korea conducted a huge nuclear test Sept. 3, which analysts say appeared to live up to Pyongyang’s claim that it was a hydrogen bomb, exponentially more powerful than a
normal atomic device.

That test, combined with the rapid pace of missile launches and North Korea’s stated goal of wanting to be able to strike the mainland United States with a nuclear-tipped missile, has caused alarm around the world.

The U.N. Security Council imposed its toughest-ever sanctions against North Korea on Monday, setting limits on North Korea’s oil imports and banning its textile exports. But the new sanctions were a compromise. The United States had to tone down its demands, which included a total oil embargo and a global travel ban on leader Kim Jong Un, in order to win the support of China and Russia.

Tillerson’s statement reflected the Trump administration’s frustration with the reluctance of Beijing and Moscow to inflict real pain on Pyongyang.

The North Korean statement that hit out at Japan also, meanwhile, reflected Pyongyang’s anger at what it called
the “heinous sanctions resolution.”

The North Korean people and military wanted “the Yankees, chief culprit in cooking up the ‘sanctions resolution,’ [to] be beaten to death as a stick is fit for a rabid dog,” the statement said.

The Sept. 3 nuclear test, North Korea’s sixth, is now widely assumed to have been a test of a hydrogen bomb, as Pyongyang claimed in its state propaganda.

The Japanese government estimates that the force of that nuclear explosion was 160 kilotons — more than 10 times the size of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima — but some analysts have said its yield could have been as much as 250 kilotons.

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, traveling from Washington to view U.S. nuclear weapons at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., said Wednesday that the North Korean nuclear test appeared to be “100 kilotons or more.” “It’s a large one,” he said.

Earlier, Air Force Gen. John Hyten, the chief of U.S.
Strategic Command, said that he “had to assume” that North Korea had probably tested a hydrogen bomb, based on the size of the explosion.

Speaking just before the missile was launched, Hyten, who oversees U.S. nuclear forces and monitors North Korea, told reporters that the size, yield and other indications seen in North Korea’s most recent nuclear test “equates to a hydrogen bomb.”

[What is North Korea trying to hit?]

He said he could not confirm that a hydrogen bomb was tested but said the test was significant “because of the sheer destruction and damage you can use and create with a weapon of that size.”

“The change from the original atomic bomb to the hydrogen [bomb] changed our entire deterrent relationship with the Soviet Union,” Hyten said. “It is significantly of concern not just to Strategic Command but to everybody in the free world. It should be of concern to people in the neighborhood, which is Japan
and Korea, as well as China and Russia.”

Today's WorldView
What's most important from where the world meets
Washington

Hyten said that if North Korea can mount a bomb of that
type on a missile, it could potentially destroy a city. The United States has the ability to deter a nuclear attack on itself or its allies because of the nuclear weapons it maintains, Hyten said, but it’s a “different question” whether the United States can stop North Korea from building them.

Hyten said that the United States still has not seen North Korea “put everything together” with a nuclear warhead mounted on an intercontinental ballistic missile but that it is only a matter of time before the North Koreans do so.

“Whether they have the ability, I don’t have any insight into that,” Hyten said. “I can just look at historic examples and say that it could be within months or it
A North Korean state agency yesterday threatened to use nuclear weapons to "sink" Japan and reduce the United States to "ashes and darkness" for supporting a United Nations Security Council resolution and sanctions over its latest nuclear test.

Pyongyang's Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, which handles the North's external ties and propaganda, also called for the breakup of the Security Council, which it called "a tool of evil" made up of "money-bribed" countries that move at the order of the US.

"The four islands of the archipelago should be sunken into the sea by the nuclear bomb of Juche. Japan is no longer needed to exist near us," the committee said in a statement carried by the North's official KCNA news agency.

Juche is the North's ruling ideology that mixes Marxism and an extreme form of go-it-alone nationalism preached by
state founder Kim Il Sung, the grandfather of the current leader, Kim Jong Un.

Regional tensions have risen markedly since the reclusive North conducted its sixth, and by far its most powerful, nuclear test on September 3.

The 15-member Security Council voted unanimously on a US-drafted resolution and a new round of sanctions on Tuesday in response, banning North Korea's textile exports that are the second largest only to coal and mineral, and capping fuel supplies.

The North reacted to the latest action by the Security Council, which had the backing of veto-holding China and Russia, by reiterating threats to destroy the United States, Japan and South Korea.

"Let's reduce the US mainland into ashes and darkness. Let's vent our spite with mobilisation of all retaliation means which have been prepared till now," the statement said.

The North's latest threats also singled out Japan for "dancing to the tune" of the US, saying it should never be pardoned for not offering a sincere apology for its "never-to-be-condoned crimes against our people", an apparent reference to Japan's wartime aggression.

**North Korea threatens US with 'greatest pain' after UN sanctions**

2 hours ago
North Korea has threatened the United States with the "greatest pain" it has ever suffered following new sanctions imposed by the United Nations.

Pyongyang's envoy to the UN accused Washington of opting for "political, economic and military confrontation".

US President Donald Trump said the move was nothing compared to what would have to happen to deal with North Korea.

The UN sanctions are an attempt to starve the country of fuel and income for its weapons programmes.

The measures restrict oil imports and ban textile exports, and were approved after North Korea's sixth and largest nuclear test earlier this month.

Han Tae Song, North Korea's ambassador to the UN, said he "categorically rejected" what he called an "illegal resolution".

"The forthcoming measures by DPRK [the Democratic Republic of Korea] will make the US suffer the greatest pain it has ever experienced in its history," he told a UN conference in Geneva.

"Instead of making [the] right choice with rational analysis... the Washington regime finally opted for political, economic and military confrontation, obsessed with the wild dream of reversing the DPRK's development of nuclear force - which has already reached the completion phase."

The resolution was only passed unanimously after North Korea's allies Russia and China agreed to softer sanctions than those proposed by the US.

The initial text included a total ban on oil imports, a measure seen by some analysts as potentially destabilising for the regime.

The new sanctions agreed by the UN include:
Limits on imports of crude oil and oil products. China, Pyongyang's main economic ally, supplies most of North Korea's crude oil.
A ban on exports of textiles, which is Pyongyang's second-biggest export worth more than $700m (£530m) a year.
A ban on new visas for North Korean overseas workers, which the US estimates would eventually cut off $500m of tax revenue per year.
A proposed asset freeze and a travel ban on North Korean leader Kim Jong-un were dropped.
Reacting on Tuesday, Mr Trump said: "We think it's just another very small step, not a big deal."
"I don't know if it has any impact, but certainly it was nice to get a 15 to nothing vote. But those sanctions are nothing compared to what ultimately will have to happen," he added, without giving details.

**U.N. agrees to toughest-ever sanctions against North Korea**

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley spoke after the U.N. Security Council voted on Sept. 11 to impose further economic sanctions against North Korea. (Reuters)
The United Nations Security Council on Monday agreed on its toughest-ever sanctions against North Korea that passed unanimously after the United States softened its initial demands to win support from China and Russia.

The sanctions set limits on North Korea’s oil imports and banned its textile exports in an effort to deprive the reclusive nation of the income it needs to maintain its nuclear and ballistic missile program, and increase the pressure to negotiate a way out of punishing sanctions.

“The stronger the sanctions we impose on North Korea, the stronger our hand in promoting a political solution,” said French U.N. Ambassador François Delattre ahead of the deliberations.

The new set of sanctions come on top of previous sanctions that cut into North Korea’s exports of coal, iron ore and seafood. A U.S. official familiar with the negotiations over the resolution said more than 90 percent of North Korea’s reported exports are now covered by sanctions.
The new sanctions ratchet up to the pressure on North Korea, though they are far less sweeping than what Washington originally sought after Pyongyang carried out its sixth and most potent nuclear test on Sept. 3. But the United States agreed to drop several key demands, and toned down others, to keep China and Russia from exercising their veto over the measure.

Only a week ago, Nikki Haley, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, urged the “strongest possible”
sanctions on North Korea. Among the measures Washington pushed in an initial draft were a complete oil embargo and an asset freeze and global travel ban on leader Kim Jong Un. During negotiations last week and through the weekend, the embargo became a cap and the punitive measures against the leader were dropped.

But the sanctions are potentially far-reaching in their ability to cut off North Korea's sources of revenue.

Under the Security Council resolution, oil imports of both refined and crude oil will be capped at 8.5 million barrels a year, which the U.S. official said represents a 30 percent cut. Natural gas and condensates also were prohibited to close off possible alternative fuels. In addition, textiles, which last year accounted for $726 million representing more than a quarter of North Korea’s export income, are banned.

In an effort to curb smuggling, the resolution allows countries to demand the inspection of ships suspected of carrying North Korean goods, though a U.S. proposal to allow the ships to be challenged with military force was
dropped. But ships proven to be abetting Pyongyang’s efforts to evade sanctions are subject to an asset freeze and may be barred from sailing into ports.

And in a separate measure that will not take effect immediately, countries will be required not to renew contracts for an estimated 93,000 North Korean guest workers who labor overseas. According to U.S. assessments, their salaries bring the North Korean government $500 million a year.

In recent days, the United States and its allies spent the last several days trying to come up with a resolution that would be acceptable to Moscow and Beijing.

China, which is responsible for 90 percent of North Korea’s foreign trade, is particularly reluctant to impose sanctions as leakproof as the United States wants, because it fears chaos across its border could set off a wave of refugees and potentially end up with a more democratic model in place of the authoritarian regime.

Russia, itself the subject of sanctions over its annexation
of Crimea and interference with separatists fighting the government in eastern Ukraine, has called sanctions against Moscow “illegal” and suggested they are not an effective tool.

North Korea threatens 'pain and suffering' ahead of UN sanctions vote

By Ben Westcott, CNN

Updated 0707 GMT (1507 HKT) September 11, 2017

Story highlights

Strict new sanctions could cut off North Korea's oil supply and freeze Kim's accounts

Amid the economic threats, Pyongyang celebrated North Korea's Foundation Day

(CNN) The United States will pay a "due price" if harsh sanctions against North Korea are agreed at a United Nations Security Council meeting in New York Monday.

North Korea’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement published on state media that if the US "does rig up the illegal and unlawful 'resolution'" it
would respond in kind.

"The DPRK is ready and willing to use any form of ultimate means," the statement said, referring to the country by its official name the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

"The forthcoming measures to be taken by the DPRK will cause the US the greatest pain and suffering it had ever gone through in its entire history."

The UN Security Council is due to vote Monday on new restrictions on the rogue state, including an oil embargo, a ban on North Korean laborers and an asset freeze on leader Kim Jong Un.

Despite the vocal backing of the US, which proposed the sanctions, they could be vetoed by Russia and China which have expressed skepticism about the harsh measures.

The US and its allies have been calling for stern measures against North Korea following the country's latest nuclear test, its largest yet, which took place just over a week ago.

The device, which Pyongyang said was a hydrogen bomb, was detonated on Sunday September 3 with a yield of over 100 kilotons, many times stronger than their previous nuclear tests.

Speaking on Monday, South Korea’s Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha said North Korea’s nuclear arsenal was "the biggest challenge to our foreign affairs and security front and will continue to be so for many years to come."

But Kang added both the US and South Korea believed in following a policy of "responding firmly provocations through tough sanctions while leaving the door open for dialogue."
'We Koreans will (shoot) many more missiles'

Despite the impending vote on potentially painful economic sanctions, the atmosphere in Pyongyang over the weekend was one of celebration. North Korea commemorated the 69th anniversary of its founding on Saturday, holding large patriotic displays of dancing and devotion to the Kim family.

Speaking to CNN reporters, North Koreans on the street appeared unconcerned about further UN sanctions and threats of military action from the United States.
lower the nuclear bar?

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. (Korean Central News Agency/Reuters)

By George F. Will Opinion writer September 6 at 7:37 PM

The U.S. Air Force “sniffer plane” was collecting air
samples off Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula on Sept. 3, 1949, when it gathered evidence of radioactivity, confirming that the war-shattered Soviet Union had tested a nuclear device. The Soviets’ Aug. 29, 1949, test had come faster than expected.

Dating from the detonation at the Trinity Site in New Mexico on July 16, 1945, the basic science of nuclear explosions is more than 72 years old — three years older than the North Korean nation. Ballistic missile technology is more than 60 years old. The problems of miniaturizing warheads for mounting on missiles, and of ensuring the warheads’ survival en route to targets, are not sufficient to stymie a nation — consider Pakistan, whose annual per capita income is less than $2,000—that is determined to have a nuclear arsenal.

North Korea has one and is developing intercontinental ballistic missiles faster than expected and with ostentatious indifference to U.S. proclamations. On Jan. 2, President-elect Donald Trump scampered up the rhetorical escalation ladder, unlimbering his heavy
artillery — an exclamation point — to tweet about North Korea’s promised ICBM test: “It won’t happen!” It did. North Korea’s most audacious act, firing a missile over Japan, came seven days after Secretary of State Rex Tillerson praised North Korea’s “restraint.”

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Pyongyang’s “signaling” does not involve abstruse semiotics: It wants a global nuclear reach, and as the Economist magazine says, the world’s unpalatable options are the improbable (productive negotiations), the feeble (more sanctions) and the terrifying (military preemption). Concerning the latter, there is no bright line, but there is a distinction to be drawn, however imprecisely, between preemptive war and preventive war. The former constitutes self-defense in response to a clear and present danger — repelling an act of aggression presumed with reasonable certainty to be imminent. The latter is an act of anticipation — and, to
be candid, of aggression — to forestall the emergence of a clear and present danger.

When Trump threatened North Korea with “fire and fury like the world has never seen,” was he threatening to cross the nuclear weapons threshold? This has been contemplated before regarding North Korea. Former Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who had been fired by President Harry S. Truman for insubordination, handed President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower a memorandum on how “to clear North Korea of enemy forces”: “This could be accomplished through the atomic bombing of enemy military concentrations and installations in North Korea and the sowing of fields of suitable radio-active materials, the by-product of atomic manufacture, to close major lines of enemy supply and communication. . . .”

MacArthur badly misjudged Eisenhower, whose biographer Jean Edward Smith says that during the Potsdam Conference (July 17 to Aug. 2, 1945), when Eisenhower was told of the New Mexico test = his first
knowledge of the new weapon — “he was appalled” and “was the only one at Potsdam who opposed using the bomb.” Smith says:

“As president, Eisenhower would twice be presented with recommendations from his National Security Council and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the bomb be used; first, in Vietnam to protect the French at Dien Bien Phu, then against China at the time of the Formosa Strait crisis. Both times Eisenhower rejected the recommendations. As a former supreme commander, Eisenhower had the confidence to do so, where other presidents might not have. And by rejecting the use of the bomb, there is no question that Eisenhower raised the threshold at which atomic weaponry could be employed — a legacy we continue to enjoy.”

But for how long? The nonproliferation regime has been remarkably successful. During the 1960 presidential campaign, John Kennedy cited “indications” that by 1964 there would be “10, 15 or 20” nuclear powers. As president, he said that by 1975 there might be 20. Now,
however, North Korea, the ninth, might be joined by Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, among others, unless U.S. leadership produces, regarding North Korea, conspicuously credible deterrence. The reservoir of presidential credibility is not brimful.

On Aug. 1, Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) said Trump had told him that “there will be a war with North Korea” if it continues to develop ICBMs capable of reaching the United States. “We’ll see,” said Trump on Sunday, responding to this shouted question: “Will you attack North Korea?” You?

Are Congress’s constitutional powers regarding war so atrophied that it supinely hopes for mere post facto notification? Ten months after Nov. 8, that day’s costs, until now largely aesthetic, are suddenly, although not altogether unpredictably, more serious than were perhaps contemplated by his 62,984,825 voters.

North Korea nuclear crisis: Test 'caused landslides'
North Korea's recent nuclear test appears to have triggered several landslides, according to what is believed to be the first satellite images of the aftermath.

Sunday's test took place underground at the mountainous Punggye-ri site. Analysis group 38 North published pictures which show "more numerous and widespread" disturbances than before.

The test unleashed a powerful 6.3-magnitude tremor which was felt across the border in China.

North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests so far all at Punggye-ri, which consists of a system of tunnels dug beneath a mountainous region.

38 North said its latest pictures, which were taken a day after the latest test, showed landslides as well as numerous areas of gravel and scree fields which were "lofted" from the tremors.

Lofting occurs when shockwaves force material to be lifted up from the ground, and the material falls back down in the same place.
A close-up of the Punggye-ri test site as photographed days before the test...
The disturbances took place near Mount Mantap, the highest point in the test site. They were "more numerous and widespread than what we have seen from any of the five tests North Korea previously conducted", the site's analysis said. But it added that while the test triggered a powerful tremor, it did not appear to have caused the crater to collapse.

Some experts believe however that the nuclear test did cause an underground tunnel at Punggye-ri to collapse.
A wider shot of Punggye-ri before the test shows the mountainous region covered in green vegetation.
A picture taken after the test show more brown patches along mountain ridges, seen as evidence of landslides.

Sunday's bomb was thought to have had a power range from 50 to 120 kilotonnes. A 50kt device would be about three times the size of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima in 1945.

The repeated tests have prompted concerns about the test site's longevity, although experts are divided.

Can we work out the power of the tested bomb?
Can the world live with a nuclear North Korea?
Have North Korea's missile tests paid off?
Earlier this week Chinese scientists warned of the possibility of the mountain caving in and releasing radiation after future tests, reported the South China Morning Post. A previous 38 North commentary debunked the possibility of the tests triggering a volcanic eruption.

4 September 2017

Seismic tests hint North Korea’s nuke is its first hydrogen bomb
On Sunday at exactly noon local time, a massive vibration emanated from the mountains of Kilju County in North Korea. It felt like a short earthquake, a magnitude 6 or so tremor, but the disturbance was in fact caused by an underground nuclear weapons test – and it could signal a significant leap forward for the nation’s nuclear capabilities. It might be their first “proper” hydrogen bomb.

“The nuclear explosion was seen around the world – the surface waves generated really do cover the globe,” says Steven Gibbons, senior research geophysicist at Norwegian monitoring agency NORSAR, which combines data from its own sensors with that of other institutions.

The rumbling was even registered by a seismometer set up by a
school in Nottingham, England.

“I was surprised by the sheer size of the event,” says Gibbons, explaining an early morning tweet. “It towers above all the others.”

The “others” are the five previous nuclear weapons tests thought to have been carried out by North Korea between 2006 and 2016. The latest is likely to be an order of magnitude bigger than the last one, about a year ago. While it is difficult to estimate the explosive power, or yield, of the bomb used because the exact geology of the site is unknown, NORSAR’s calculation suggests around 120 kilotons – nearly 10 times the size of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

Most experts agree that such a large detonation was probably caused by a hydrogen bomb, or H-bomb – a nuclear weapon that uses a two-stage explosion. The process involves a small fission reaction that emits X-rays that then trigger the fusion of hydrogen isotopes in a separate, secondary compartment.
Last year North Korea claimed it had developed an H-bomb but most experts believed that instead it was a “boosted fission” device – a standard fission weapon spiked with heavy isotopes of hydrogen. Now it looks as if they might have the real deal.

That’s certainly the interpretation North Korea wants us to make. Leader Kim Jong-un was pictured with a bomb design the day before the test that suggested a two-stage device, dubbed “the peanut” by one researcher.

It’s not actually possible to differentiate between H-bombs and pure fission detonations on seismic data alone, but the size of the explosion is a good indicator, says Gibbons.

Further evidence may be collected in the form of radionuclides that leak into the atmosphere from the underground test site. These unstable atoms are produced in a nuclear explosion and may be detectable by aircraft fitted with special instruments.
**Sniffing for evidence**

So far China says it has not detected any radioactive material. The radionuclides would reveal unequivocally whether it was an H-bomb as they differ depending on what materials were used in the explosion.

Either way, the incident has huge diplomatic ramifications, not least because North Korea’s capabilities have evolved so quickly. The country now appears to have intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that could in theory deliver a nuclear warhead to targets in the US.

Sunday’s tremors were felt underfoot by residents in China and Russia to the north of the test site, according to reports collected by the US Geological Survey. This may hasten North Korea’s powerful neighbours’ willingness to work with the US on diplomatic solutions to the crisis, says Catherine Dill at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in California.

But she adds that a “pre-emptive strike” option to disarm North Korea is too risky to properly execute.

“In my opinion it’s not reasonable to assume that we can destroy all their [nuclear weapons] sites even if we know where they are,” she says.

**Plea for Putin to help 'tame' North Korea as regime threatens more 'gift packages'**

South Korean president tells Russian leader that situation risks becoming ‘uncontrollable’, while financial markets remain in a spin following nuclear test
South Korea’s president, Moon Jae-in, has warned that the crisis on the Korean peninsula risks becoming “uncontrollable” as Asia-Pacific stocks tumbled for the third day running.

“The global political situation has become very serious due to North Korea’s repeated provocations,” Moon told the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, during bilateral talks in Vladivostok on Wednesday.

According to South Korean media, Moon asked Putin to help “tame” North Korea, as the international community considers its response to Pyongyang’s sixth nuclear test on Sunday.

There was further evidence that North Korea has made significant progress in its nuclear programme, with Japan saying it had revised upwards the estimated yield from Sunday’s bomb to 160 kilotons – making it more than 10 times bigger than the Hiroshima bomb.

“This is far more powerful than their nuclear tests in the past,” Japan’s defence minister, Itsunori Onodera, told reporters.

Japan’s revised estimate is far greater than the 50-100 kiloton yield given by the UN security council. The council is due to vote on Monday on a resolution condemning the North’s recent test, but there are signs of division over how to respond.

Putin has said he opposes fresh economic measures against the regime. While he condemned North Korea’s provocations, Putin said further sanctions would be useless and ineffective, describing the measures as a “road to nowhere”.

China, too, opposes any measure – namely an oil embargo favoured by the US and Japan – that could foment a domestic crisis big enough topple North Korea’s leader,
Kim Jong-un, and potentially end the country’s status as a buffer between China and South Korea, where US forces are based.

Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe arrives in Vladivostok, where he will meet Vladimir Putin. Photograph: Alexander Ryumin/Tass

Japan’s prime minister, Shinzo Abe, is expected to broach sanctions with Putin when they meet in Vladivostok on Thursday.

“We have to make North Korea change its current policy and understand that there is no bright future if North Korea continues the present policy,” Abe told reporters before he left Tokyo.

Geopolitical concerns continued to simmer following North Korea’s biggest-ever nuclear test on Sunday, with one of the country’s most senior diplomats saying that the US would receive more “gift packages” from the regime.

Han Tae Song, the country’s ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, confirmed that North Korea had successfully conducted its sixth and largest nuclear bomb test on Sunday.

“The recent self-defence measures by my country ... are a gift package addressed to none other than the US,” Han told a disarmament conference in Geneva on Tuesday. “The US will receive more ‘gift packages’ ... as long as it relies on reckless provocations and futile attempts to put pressure on [North Korea].”

Tensions between the US and North Korea continued to take their toll on markets in the region on Wednesday. The Nikkei share average fell 0.7% to a four-month low in Tokyo in early trading but had mounted a slight recovery by mid-afternoon. In Sydney, the ASX200 benchmark index plunged by the same margin as investors opted for safe havens such as gold and government bonds.

The South Korean benchmark index – the Kospi – was 0.35% lower on Wednesday in the fifth successive day of losses. Shanghai dropped 0.4% while Hong Kong’s Hang Seng retreated 1%.

The FTSE100 is due to slip by 0.4% when it opens on Wednesday morning.

The losses in Asia followed a selloff on Wall Street on Tuesday where the Dow Jones industrial average fell 1.1% to 21,753.31 in its worst day in almost three weeks.

Bank shares led the slide as bond yields slumped on the influx of cash into treasuries. Technology stocks, the biggest gainers this year, also pulled the market lower. Spot gold was 0.2% higher at $1,341.31 an ounce after touching $1,344.21 overnight, its highest since September 2016.
“The risk-off trade really is North Korea front and centre,” said Jeff Zipper, managing director of investments at US Bank Private Wealth Management. “Also you have the hurricane last week and the upcoming Hurricane Irma, so there’s a lot on the plate for the market to digest.”

The Nikkei suffered heavy selling when it opened for business on Wednesday, falling to 19,254.67, the lowest level since 1 May. It recovered to 19,349 points in the afternoon session or down 0.2%, but the continued strength of the yen, which is being forced up by the US dollar’s continued weakness, is weighing on the Nikkei’s export-heavy listings.

Vladimir Putin's scary warning on North Korea

5 Sep, 2017 7:44pm
4 minutes to read

Russian President Vladimir Putin. Photo / AP
news.com.au
By: Emma Reynolds
Vladimir Putin has warned of a "global planetary catastrophe" with many victims unless a solution is found to the North Korea crisis, rejecting the idea of imposing further sanctions on Pyongyang.

The Russian President spoke out against ramping up military hysteria after the United States called for using "strongest possible measures" to rein in Kim Jong-un's regime.

Putin, speaking after an international summit in China, said Russia "condemns" North Korea's "provocative" actions around its nuclear weapons program, but added: "Resorting to just any sanctions in this situation is useless and inefficient."

He called for dialogue on the crisis and warned against other measures that could escalate the situation.

"All of this can lead to a global planetary catastrophe and a great number of victims," he said.

His comments were made to reporters in the Chinese city of Xiamen after the annual BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Korea) summit of five emerging
They came after North Korea detonated what it called a hydrogen bomb on Sunday and announced it could mount the warhead on a missile, dramatically raising the stakes in Pyongyang's standoff with the international community over its banned weapons programs.

North Korea has been spotted moving what appears to be an intercontinental ballistic missile towards its west coast, according to reports.

The rocket started moving on Monday, a day after the North's sixth nuclear test, an unidentified intelligence source has now revealed to South Korea's Asia Business Daily.

It was spotted moving under cover of darkness to avoid surveillance, the report said. North Korea has launch facilities for its missile program on its west coast.

The destination could be Sohae Satellite Launching Station, a major intercontinental ballistic missile development and testing site around 200 kilometres northwest of Pyongyang, or a missile silo in mountainous Geumchang-ri, North Pyongan province.

But Brendan Thomas-Noone from the US Studies Centre said North Korea now has technology that allows it to launch missiles from road mobile launchers, on any flat surface.

It could also fire a rocket over its own land, meaning the
'They'll keep pushing until they can strike the US'

Thomas-Noone told news.com.au Kim Jong-un could be purposely moving the rocket to demonstrate that the United States and South Korea will struggle to track and destroy its weapons.

"It came from one of the missile factories on the west coast known to produce ICBMs," he said.

"The last couple of tests have shown they can launch from multiple locations.

"They are obviously saying they're working to keep pushing the envelope until they are confident they can strike the US with an ICBM."

North Korea has already shown its ICBMs could threaten the US mainland by testing two in July that were capable of flying 10,000 kilometres.

"The last missile test fired directly up into the atmosphere - they can test missile distance without firing over land - this one started because they want to test the distance over land," said Mr Thomas-Noone. "I expect them to do that."

South Korea's defence ministry said they were unable to confirm the report that North Korea is moving a rocket, but the ministry said in parliament on Monday that the North
was considered ready to launch more missiles, including ICBMs, at any time.

It comes amid speculation the rogue nation may be planning to fire an ICBM as early as this weekend, when the republic celebrates its foundation on September 9.

**South Korea sends strong warning**

South Korean warships conducted further live-fire exercises at sea on Tuesday as Seoul continued its displays of military capability after North Korea's most powerful nuclear test to date.

South Korea's presidential office said Washington had agreed to remove bilaterally agreed warhead restrictions on Seoul's missiles, to allow it to develop bigger weapons that would boost its pre-emptive strike capabilities against the North.

The South's military exercises on Monday involved F-15 fighter jets and land-based ballistic missiles simulating an attack on North Korea's nuclear test site to "strongly warn" Pyongyang over the recent detonation.

The North's underground test of what it claimed was a hydrogen bomb on Sunday had an estimated strength of 50 kilotons, according to the acting chief of South Korea's defence ministry.
North Korea released photos of Kim next to what it said was a bomb designed for an ICBM.

Pyongyang called the device a "thermonuclear weapon with super explosive power" entirely made "by our own efforts and technology."

South Korea's military on Monday responded to North Korea's nuclear test with live-fire exercises off its eastern coast involving ground and air-launched rockets.

The South fired short-range Hyunmoo missiles into the sea to simulate an attack on the North's main nuclear test site.

**South Korea’s defense minister suggests return of tactical U.S. nuclear weapons**
Seoul holds live-fire drills with jet fighters and missiles in an exercise targeting the site where North Korea held its sixth and largest nuclear test. (Reuters)

By Anna Fifield September 4 at 2:38 PM

SEOUL — South Korea’s defense minister on Monday said it was worth reviewing the redeployment of American tactical nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula to guard against the North, a step that analysts warn would sharply increase the risk of an accidental conflict.

As concern over Korea deepened following North Korea’s huge nuclear test Sunday, Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said the regime of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was “begging for war.”

Here in Seoul, the defense ministry warned that Pyongyang might be preparing to launch another missile into the Pacific Ocean, perhaps an intercontinental ballistic missile theoretically capable of reaching the mainland United States.
President Trump and his South Korean counterpart, Moon Jae-in, spoke on the phone for 40 minutes Monday night, Korean time — some 34 hours after the nuclear test and more than 24 hours after Trump took to Twitter to criticize Moon's “talk of appeasement.”

The two agreed to remove the limit on allowed payloads for South Korean missiles -- something Seoul had been pushing for — as a way to increase deterrence against North Korea, according to a read-out of the phone call from South Korea's Blue House.

They agreed as well to work together to punish North Korea for Sunday's nuclear test, pledging “to strengthen joint military capabilities,” a White House statement said, and to “maximize pressure on North Korea using all means at their disposal.”

In a later phone call, Trump and German Chancellor Angela Merkel “reaffirmed” the necessity of coordinating a response at the U.N.
At a Security Council meeting, Haley pressed for the "strongest possible" sanctions against the North. The administration plans to circulate a new sanctions draft this week. Haley did not spell out how she would overcome the objections of veto-wielding permanent members China and Russia.

But she cautioned, "War is never something the United States wants. We don’t want it now. But our country’s patience is not unlimited. We will defend our allies and our territory."

Haley ruled out the "freeze for freeze" proposal backed by China and Russia, which would suspend U.S. joint military exercises with South Korea in return for suspension of North Korean nuclear and missile tests.

"When a rogue regime has a nuclear weapon and an ICBM pointed at you, you do not take steps to lower your guard. No one would do that. We certainly won’t," she said.

Instead, she reiterated a White House threat from
Sunday to cut off trade with any countries that also trade with North Korea. That would presumably include China, with which the United States had nearly $650 billion worth of trade in goods and services last year.

“The United States will look at every country that does business with North Korea as a country that is giving aid to their reckless and dangerous nuclear intentions,” she said.

Her remarks appeared to be unpersuasive. “China will never allow chaos and war” in Korea, said Liu Jieyi, the Chinese ambassador to the U.N. Sanctions alone will not solve the crisis, Russia’s U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, said:

[ North Korea defies predictions = again = with early grasp of weapons milestone ]
Earlier Monday, South Korean Defense Minister Song Young-moo said that he asked his American counterpart, Jim Mattis, during talks at the Pentagon last week for strategic assets like U.S. aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines and B-52 bombers to be sent to South Korea more regularly.

“I told him that it would be good for strategic assets to be sent regularly to the Korean Peninsula and that some South Korean lawmakers and media are strongly pushing for tactical nuclear weapons [to be redeployed],” Song told a parliamentary hearing on North Korea’s nuclear test, without disclosing Mattis’s response.

A poll that YTN, a cable news channel, commissioned in August found that 68 percent of respondents said they supported bringing tactical nuclear weapons back to
South Korea.

“The redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons is an alternative worth a full review,” Song said, echoing a position closely associated with conservatives in South Korea, not progressives like Moon, who was elected president in May after vowing to engage with North Korea.

[Seoul tries to ignore Trump’s criticism: ‘They worry he’s kind of nuts,’ one observer says]

The United States had about 100 nucleararmed weapons, including short-range artillery, stationed in South Korea until 1991. Then President George H.W. Bush signed the Presidential Nuclear Initiative and withdrew all tactical nuclear weapons that had been deployed abroad.

Shortly after, the two Koreas signed an agreement
committing to making the peninsula free of nuclear weapons — a deal that North Korea violated by developing its own nuclear arms. But Pyongyang has maintained that Seoul has also broken its promise because remaining under the U.S. nuclear umbrella is tantamount, it says, to having such weapons.

After the defense minister spoke at the hearing, the South Korean president’s office said that it was not considering redeploying tactical nuclear weapons. “Our government’s firm stance on the nuclear-free peninsula remains unchanged,” said Kim Dong-jo, a spokesman for Moon.

Military experts in the United States are almost universally opposed to the idea of deploying strategic or tactical weapons in South Korea.

“The thing that most concerns me about redeployment is that it introduces more room for miscalculation or unintended escalation,” said Catherine Dill of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, Calif.
In that situation, the ability to react more quickly could be a negative factor.

From the perspective of the military alliance between the United States and South Korea, having long-range ballistic missiles or strategic bombers is “perfectly sufficient” to continue to deter North Korea, Dill said.

As alliance partners, the United States and South Korean militaries work in close cooperation, regularly conducting drills together. This includes sending “strategic assets” like bombers stationed on the Pacific Island of Guam over South Korea on a regular basis, and having submarines make port calls during exercises.

As the North Korean threat has increased this year, the United States has sent F-35 stealth aircraft and other strike fighters on flyovers across the southern half of the peninsula in a not-so-thinly veiled warning to Kim. U.S. Pacific Command even released photos last week of B-1B
Lancers dropping bombs on a range on the southern side of the demilitarized zone that separates the two Koreas.

But a growing number of policymakers in Seoul say that Guam is too far away and that, if it comes under attack from North Korea, South Korea can’t wait the two-plus hours it would take American bombers to arrive from their base in the Pacific.

“We need these strategic or tactical assets that can destroy North Korea’s nuclear-capable missiles before they can inflict harm on us,” said Chun Yung-woo, a former South Korean national security adviser.

“Right now they can retaliate but by that time, tens of thousands of people might have been killed,” Chun said. “We need a first layer of offensive weapons stationed closer to North Korea’s nuclear and missile sites.”

Jon Wolfsthal, a nuclear expert who served on President Barack Obama’s national security council, said that in the South Korean context, “strategic assets” were all
about giving “a tangible sense of reassurance” to the government in Seoul.

“The reassurance bucket is bottomless,” Wolfsthal said. “You can pour stuff into it and it’s never going to fill up.”

South Korean officials have been asking for fighter jets and ballistic missile-equipped submarines to be based on the peninsula, and have long wanted B-1Bs and B-52s to land rather than just fly over — all to give a sense of greater sense of commitment to South Korea.

But there are good logistical reasons why that can’t happen, said Wolfsthal. For one, South Korea doesn’t have airstrips long enough for big, heavy B-52s, and second, the U.S. does not want its high-tech fighter jets sitting within North Korean artillery range.

[ Don’t be surprised by North Korea’s missiles. Kim Jong Un is doing what he said he would. ]

South Korea has been also flexing its military muscles by itself in response to North Korea’s provocations,
practicing for strikes on the North Korean nuclear test site at Punggye-ri at dawn Monday.

The South Korean air force would stage a live-fire drill, launching Taurus air-to-surface guided missiles from F-15K fighter jets, later this month, the defense ministry said Monday. The missiles have a range of 300 miles — enough to carry out precision strikes on North Korea’s key nuclear and missile sites.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is 'begging for war', South Korea branded 'scabby sheep'
The US Ambassador to the United Nations has declared North Korea is "begging for war" during an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council.

Nikki Haley said the US does not want war, but "the time has come to exhaust diplomatic means before it's too late" after the rogue nation detonated a thermonuclear device on Sunday in its sixth and most powerful nuclear test.

"Enough is enough. War is never something the United..."
States wants. We don't want it now. But our country's patience is not unlimited," Ms Haley told an emergency session of the Security Council.

The emergency meeting comes less than a week after the council strongly condemned the North's "outrageous" launch of a ballistic missile over Japan.

Other Security Council members, including Japan and France, have called for further sanctions. The council already imposed its stiffest sanctions so far on North Korea last month.
Fox News

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@nikkihaley: "War is never something the United States wants. We don't want it now. But our country's patience is not unlimited."

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North Korea defies predictions - again - with early grasp of weapons milestone

4 Sep, 2017 2:07pm
6 minutes to read

By Joby Warrick, analysis

The device that shook the mountains over the Punggye-ri test site on Sunday represented a quantum leap for North Korea's nuclear capability, producing an explosion at least five times greater than the country's previous tests and easily powerful enough to devastate a large city.

And if studies confirm that the bomb was a thermonuclear weapon - as North Korea claims - it would be a triumph of a
different scale: a major technical milestone reached well ahead of predictions, putting the world's most destructive force in the hands of the country's 33-year-old autocrat.

The feat instantly erased lingering skepticism about Pyongyang's technical capabilities and brought the prospect of nuclear-tipped North Korean intercontinental ballistic missiles a step closer to reality, US analysts and weapons experts said. Many predicted that a miniaturised version of the presumed thermonuclear bomb would soon be in North Korea's grasp, and that it probably already exists.

Earthquake and Volcano of the Korea Monitoring Division Director Ryoo Yong-gyu speaks about North Korea's artificial earthquake with a map of the Korean peninsular in South Korea. Photo / AP
"North Korea has achieved a capability to wipe out a big chunk of any major city," said Sue Mi Terry, a former senior analyst on North Korea at the CIA and now managing director for Korea at the Bower Group Asia. "If the North didn't test a hydrogen bomb, as they said they did this time around, they will get there very soon."

The blast, at exactly noon local time in the country's northeastern mountains, produced seismic waves equivalent to a 6.3-magnitude earthquake, or 10 times as strong as the country's last nuclear test, which occurred a year ago this week. A conclusive analysis will take days or weeks, but weapons experts said the sheer force of the explosion is highly suggestive of a thermonuclear bomb. Sometimes called hydrogen bombs or H-bombs, these second-generation nuclear devices entered US and Soviet arsenals in the 1950s, threatening adversaries with a vastly greater destructive force compared with atomic bombs dropped on Japan in the final days of World War II.

Because of the H-bomb's relatively complex two-stage design, many experts thought it would be months, or perhaps years, before North Korea's scientists could master the necessary technology. When Pyongyang boasted last year that it had tested a thermonuclear device, many US experts dismissed the claim as propaganda.

By early Sunday, Washington time, the skepticism had mostly evaporated.
"There's little doubt in my mind," said James Acton, a physicist and co-director of the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a Washington, DC, think tank. "North Korea has been hinting for a while that it was working on an H-bomb - even apart from the photos it released last night - so this should not come as a huge surprise. But it does represent a significant technological advance."

The apparently successful test came hours after leader Kim Jong Un appeared on state-run television with what appeared to be a prototype of a new North Korean thermonuclear bomb, in a remarkable display of his confidence in the capabilities of his country's weapons engineers. Given other recent technical gains in producing long-range missiles and miniaturised warheads, US experts said there is little doubt about North Korea's ability to eventually master all the steps needed to send a nuclear-tipped missile halfway around the world.

Although it is not known for certain that North Korea can build a miniaturised thermonuclear warhead that can fit on a missile, Acton said, "I believe we have to assume it can."
Peter Zimmerman, a nuclear physicist and former chief scientist for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said initial calculations based on seismic readings suggested a device with a yield of up to 200 kilotons - a destructive force 13 times as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945, and probably "too big for a pure fission bomb." Moreover, the prototype displayed by Kim on the eve of the test "pretty well shows they know the essentials of a thermonuclear device design," he said.

Several other nuclear experts noted that the vaguely peanut-shaped metallic device shown on North Korean television bore features that were broadly consistent with a
two-stage hydrogen bomb, although it did not resemble any weapon in past or current U.S. arsenals.

"This was a major step forward for the [North Korean] scientists and engineers," Zimmerman said. "Their first test was a dud; the next couple were very low yield. Since then, their yields have steadily gone up. But this is a discontinuity indicating the introduction of new technology."

The technical hurdles appear to be falling at a surprising clip, considering North Korea's economic backwardness and diplomatic isolation. Yet, Pyongyang's progress with nuclear weapons roughly parallels that of other countries that developed the same weapons decades ago, said Jeffrey Lewis, founder of Arms Control Wonk, an influential blog focused on nuclear weapons proliferation.

"If you look at the United States, the Soviet Union and China, by their fifth nuclear tests they were all well on their way to thermonuclear weapons," Lewis said. "There is no reason to think that North Korea couldn't do this. The materials are pretty straightforward, so that's not a problem. In the past, the trick was the concept. But you also need tests and data to understand how the materials behave."

For longtime North Korea watchers, Sunday's test was another in a succession of technical surprises. Exactly two months earlier, on July 4, Pyongyang launched what many experts think was the country's first intercontinental ballistic missile, capable of reaching Alaska and perhaps cities in
the Midwestern United States. Weeks later, US intelligence officials formally concluded that North Korea is able to build miniaturized nuclear warheads that can fit inside the country's long-range missiles.

In each case, North Koreans announced the achievement of the new milestone well in advance - often eliciting scoffs from experts - before they offered proof. Given the rapid pace of North Korea's advances, analysts can no longer afford to dismiss Kim's claims as mere propaganda or empty boasts, said Joshua Pollack, an expert on nuclear and missile proliferation.

"What they show us is going to be the real deal, or very true to life," said Pollack, a senior researcher with the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute for International Studies in Monterey, California. "Given the closeness in time between the exhibition of the device and the actual test, I wouldn't be surprised if that was the actual device" shown on state-run television the day before the blast.

"They have very good reasons to show exactly what they've got, because they're trying to enhance their credibility," Pollack added. "I give them the benefit of the doubt on this one."

Trump's 'fire and
fury' rhetoric met with defiance by Kim Jong Un

By Stephen Collinson, CNN

Updated 0341 GMT (1141 HKT) September 4, 2017

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Trump's rhetoric set up a test of wills with North Korea's Kim Jong Un
Nothing the previous administrations did halted North Korea's nuclear program either

Washington (CNN) While triggering global geopolitical shockwaves, North Korea's nuclear test also represents a flagrant personal challenge to President Donald Trump and his strategy of escalating the showdown with Pyongyang with explosive rhetoric.

With his previous threat to rain "fire and fury" on North Korea and warning that the US military is "locked and loaded" to respond to Kim Jong Un's provocations, Trump set up a test of wills with his unpredictable adversary.

Now, with his nation's most powerful nuclear detonation Sunday and a string of missile launches, including one over Japan, Kim has effectively called the President's bluff, escalating a dangerous foreign policy crisis.
Trump says appeasement ‘will not work’ after N.K. nuclear test

Trump’s options to prevent North Korea twinning a nuclear device with an intercontinental ballistic missile that could reach the US are narrowing, and with each North Korean move, the time available to act is running out. Every time that the Trump administration has hiked pressure and rhetoric against Pyongyang, through sanctions, condemnations and military maneuvers and exercises, Kim has upped the ante in its showdown with Trump.

In this, the Trump administration is not alone -- nothing the previous three US administrations did to halt North Korea’s nuclear program worked either -- with the isolated state on an arc to building a deliverable nuclear device.

Personal element
Those who support Trump’s bombastic rhetoric say that since sanctions and pressure and diplomacy have in the past failed to slow North Korea’s nuclear and missile program, the President’s more approach is worth a try. But Trump has injected a particularly personal note into his confrontation with Kim, putting his own personal authority and credibility on the line in a way that worries some national security experts.

Former CIA and National Security Agency director Michael Hayden told CNN’s Dana Bash on "State of the Union" Sunday that he believed that Trump’s national security team had framed a coherent policy on North Korea, especially in its effort to impress upon the Chinese the urgent need to use more of its influence to change North Korea’s behavior.

But he said that the approach had sometimes been "inartfully executed" and warned that the President should avoid being drawn in to a mano-a-mano showdown with Kim in the wake of the nuclear test.

"I fear two things. The stray electron, the tweet that just goes out a 5 a.m. and unintentionally creates effects that make this go to a place where we don’t want it to go," Hayden said. "The other one is this. We just got into a
duel with the North Korean chairman, with Kim Jong Un. If we had a choice of weapons, I think it was a bad choice to get into a hyperbole contest with that kind of guy."

"Mr. President, this is not a manhood issue, this is a national security issue. Don't let your pride get ahead of wise policy here," he added.

**Authority on the line**

Is N Korea calling Trump's bluff with missile threats? 03:30

While putting Trump's authority on the line, Sunday's test also posed a challenge for the administration's sometimes confusing North Korea strategy, which has oscillated between Trump's threats and warnings that talks with Pyongyang won't work and his Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's assurances that dialogue is possible.

It has long been conventional wisdom that military action to destroy North Korea's nuclear capability is all but unthinkable because Pyongyang could send thousands of rockets across the demilitarized zone between the Koreas in reprisal, inflicting huge civilian casualties within a matter of minutes.
Trump's former political adviser Steve Bannon said in an interview with the American Prospect magazine last month that "there is no military solution" until someone solves the equation that suggests "10 million people" in Seoul could die under a North Korean onslaught.

But the White House has insisted that all options, including military ones are on the table. And Trump has given the impression that he might ultimately decide on a military strike -- either for strategic purposes, or because he sincerely believes such a move is viable.

Asked Sunday if he would attack North Korea, Trump responded, "we'll see," as he left a church service near the White House.

And after a meeting Sunday afternoon with Trump and top advisers at the White House, Secretary of Defense James Mattis reemphasized the military option, warning of "a massive military response" to any threat from North Korea against the United States or its allies.

Trump wanted to be briefed on each of the "many military options" for dealing with the North Korean nuclear threat, Mattis said in a statement to reporters after the meeting.

"Our commitment among the allies are ironclad," Mattis said. "Any threat to the United States or its territories, including Guam, or our allies will be met with a massive military response, a response both effective and overwhelming."

Mattis also called on Kim to "take heed" of the UN Security Council's unanimous position against North Korea's nuclear program.

"We are not looking to the total annihilation of a country, namely North Korea, but as I said, we have many options to do so," he said.

The alternative to military action would be for the President to accept the reality of a regime as unpredictable as that in Pyongyang having the capacity to hit the US with a nuclear weapon, and to put his faith in traditional doctrines of deterrence.
On Sunday, Trump reacted to North Korea’s claimed explosion of a hydrogen bomb by blasting the isolated state as a "rogue nation" that was "hostile and dangerous" to the United States.

But he also lashed out -- at America's crucial ally South Korea.

"South Korea is finding, as I have told them, that their talk of appeasement with North Korea will not work, they only understand one thing!" Trump tweeted.

Follow

Donald J. Trump

South Korea is finding, as I have told them, that their talk of appeasement with North Korea will not work, they only
The tweet came two days after a telephone conversation between Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, and suggests that the call did not end with both leaders in firm agreement on the strategy going forward. Trump's tweet also appears to validate one of Pyongyang's likely goals in continuing its nuclear and ballistic missile tests -- driving a wedge between the United States and its allies as they respond to its actions.

Trump's rebuke of Moon also followed a Washington Post report on Saturday that he had instructed his aides to withdraw from a free trade pact with Seoul -- a move that would severely strain ties with South Korea at an inopportune time.

Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake, a Republican, told Bash on "State of the Union" that pulling out of the deal would not be a good step at any time and "now is particularly troubling, given what South Korea is faced with."

The test will also renew tensions between China and the United States on how best to handle North Korea.

In his series of tweets the President noted that the explosion was an "embarrassment to China, which is trying to help but with little success."
@realDonaldTrump

The United States is considering, in addition to other options, stopping all trade with any country doing business with North Korea.

4:14 AM - Sep 4, 2017
24,61124,611 Replies
34,88334,883 Retweets
123,871123,871 likes

"The United States is considering, in addition to other options, stopping all trade with any country doing business with North Korea," he later tweeted.

**Act of defiance**
Ongoing tensions linger on Korean peninsula 01:48
While the test is a personal challenge to Trump it is also an act of defiance from Kim towards Beijing.
The detonation is also an unwelcome complication for China’s President Xi Jinping, as he prepares for a crucial Communist Party National Congress, which is held every five years to chart the country's future policy path and leadership line up.
It is possible that the scale of defiance shown by Kim will force China's hand and convince it to move to a more hostile stance towards North Korea.
China did sign on to a tough new range of UN Security Council sanctions against Pyongyang which were passed in August in a major foreign policy success for the Trump administration. But US officials believe Xi could do far more to rein in Kim, given that his impoverished nation is dependent on China for energy supplies.
But China’s end game in North Korea is not the same as Washington's -- its ultimate goal is to prevent a collapse of the regime in Pyongyang that could send millions of refugees into it’s territory and destabilize communist rule.
It also wants to prevent the evolution of a unified Korea allied to the United States in a scenario that would change the strategic balance in northeast Asia.
One option for Washington is to signal that it is ready to impose comprehensive sanctions on Chinese firms that do business with the
Pyongyang government, in an effort to force a tougher line than Beijing. Still, there is no guarantee that strategy would work either, since Kim is showing every sign that he believes the survival of his regime is guaranteed by a deliverable nuclear arsenal and he is willing to do everything to achieve it.

'We'll see,' Donald Trump says on potentially attacking North Korea

President Donald Trump signalled that he was not ruling out a retaliatory strike against North Korea in response to the isolated country's overnight nuclear test, which he called "very hostile and dangerous to the United States".

Asked as he left church services whether he was planning to attack North Korea after a nuclear test that defied his blunt warnings, Trump told reporters, "We'll see".

Trump's response to North Korea's announcement that it had detonated a hydrogen bomb that could be attached to a missile capable of reaching the mainland United States
included an admonishment of South Korea for its handling of the crisis.

Trump is convening a meeting of his national security team later on Sunday US time to discuss the US strategy, while Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said he is drawing up tough new economic sanctions to further isolate North Korea.

In a pair of tweets issued Sunday morning, Trump wrote: "North Korea has conducted a major Nuclear Test. Their words and actions continue to be very hostile and dangerous to the United States ... North Korea is a rogue nation which has become a great threat and embarrassment to China, which is trying to help but with little success."

Follow

Donald J. Trump

North Korea has conducted a major Nuclear Test. Their words and actions continue to be very hostile and dangerous to the United States.....

11:30 PM - Sep 3, 2017
10,248 10,248 Replies
22,024 22,024 Retweets
66,1066,106 likes
North Korea is a rogue nation which has become a great threat and embarrassment to China, which is trying to help but with little success.

11:39 PM - Sep 3, 2017
9,438 replies
18,087 retweets
63,121 likes

Trump also scolded South Korea, a longtime US ally, stating "South Korea is finding, as I have told them, that their talk of appeasement with North Korea will not work, they only understand one thing!"

Trump warned in a fourth tweet, "The United States is considering, in addition to other options, stopping all trade with any country doing business with North Korea."
South Korea is finding, as I have told them, that their talk of appeasement with North Korea will not work, they only understand one thing!

He said he would be meeting with Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, White House chief of staff John F Kelly and other military leaders to discuss options.

"The national security team is monitoring this closely," White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters. "The president and his national security team will have a meeting to discuss further later today. We will provide updates as necessary."

I will be meeting General Kelly, General Mattis and other military leaders at the White House to discuss North Korea.
After speaking with Trump on Sunday morning, Mnuchin called North Korea's nuclear test "unacceptable behavior" and said the United States was likely to impose stricter sanctions on Kim Jong Un's government and further pressure China, in particular, to "cut off" North Korea.

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"We've already started with sanctions against North Korea, but I'm going to draft a sanctions package to send to the president for his strong consideration that anybody who wants to do trade or business with them is prevented from doing trade or business with us," Mnuchin said on Fox News Sunday.

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@realDonaldTrump

The United States is considering, in addition to other options, stopping all trade with any country doing business with North Korea.

4:14 AM - Sep 4, 2017

15,85215,852 Replies
22,81422,814 Retweets
80,44080,440 likes

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"We are going to work with our allies, we'll work with China, but people need to cut off North Korea economically. This is unacceptable behavior."

The tumult in the region comes amid escalating economic tensions with South Korea. Trump is considering
withdrawing the United States from a free-trade agreement with South Korea, a long-standing economic and diplomatic partner of the United States.

The move would be in keeping with Trump's campaign promise to end what he considers unfair trade competition from other countries, but the president's advisers have cautioned a withdrawal from the agreement would strain ties with South Korea amid the mounting North Korean nuclear crisis.

Asked by Fox anchor Chris Wallace whether Trump would pull the United States out of the agreement, Mnuchin said, "The president has made clear that where we have trade deficits with countries, we're going to renegotiate those deals." He added that there have been "no decisions" yet with regard to the trade accord with South Korea.

North Korea's nuclear test came just a few hours after Trump spoke with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a key ally in the region.

In a Saturday evening (local time) phone call, the two leaders discussed "ongoing efforts to maximise pressure on North Korea", according to the White House.
"The two leaders reaffirmed the importance of close cooperation between the United States, Japan and South Korea in the face of the growing threat from North Korea," read a statement from the White House.

Trump also spoke recently with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. In a call on Friday, the two leaders talked
about "our co-ordinated response to North Korea's continued destabilising and escalatory behavior", according to the White House, which said Trump and Moon agreed conceptually to South Korea purchasing billions of dollars in US military equipment.

North Korea's testing of its most powerful nuclear device yet comes just three and a half weeks after Trump warned Kim that his continued nuclear provocations would be "met with fire and fury like the world has never seen".

Initially, North Korea seemed to back down from its threat of a nuclear strike in Guam, where many US military personnel are stationed. Trump said of Kim at an August 22 rally in Phoenix, "I respect the fact that, I believe, he is starting to respect us."

That assessment turned out to be premature. North Korea's test this weekend drew alarm from both Republican and Democratic lawmakers.

"North Korea right now is the most dangerous place on the face of the planet," Texan Republican Senator Ted Cruz said on ABC's "This Week." Cruz said of Kim, "He is radical, he is unpredictable, he is extreme, and he is getting more and more dangerous weapons."

Although Cruz said he would chose his words differently than Trump, the senator defended the president's bellicose rhetoric.
"I think the president is right that Kim Jong Un and other bullies only understand and respect strength, that weakness, that appeasement encourages this action," Cruz told ABC anchor Martha Raddatz.

Earthquake and Volcano of the Korea Monitoring Division Director Ryoo Yong-gyu speaks in front of a screen showing about artificial earthquake in North Korea. Photo / AP

Democratic Texan Representative Joaquin Castro differed,
saying Trump's rhetoric is inadvisable.

"I don't think that it's helpful to get into a Twitter shouting match with a 32-year-old dictator, Kim Jong Un, in North Korea," Castro told Raddatz in a separate interview. He said Trump should "let his diplomats and his military generals and others handle this situation".

General Michael Hayden, a former director of the CIA and the National Security Agency, stressed that Trump's tweets are fouling up his otherwise respectable plan to get tough on North Korea.

"You gotta watch the tweets," Hayden said on CNN's State of the Union. "Mr. President, this is not a manhood issue; this is a national security issue. Don't let your pride get in the way of wise policy here."

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker said he spoke Sunday morning with Kelly about the situation.

"We stand ready to work with the administration to support a comprehensive strategy that not only places an emphasis on deterrence but also empowers our allies and partners in the region, who must do more to confront this threat," Corker said in a statement.

Arizona Republican Senator Jeff Flake said that "there are no good options" to manage the North Korea crisis but that "harsh rhetoric" does not appear to help slow Kim's nuclear
Flake said that ending the US-South Korea trade agreement, as Trump is considering, would be inadvisable.

"I don't think that that would be good in any circumstances," Flake said on State of the Union.

"Now it's particularly troubling given what South Korea is faced with. I think we need to do more trade, not less, and withdrawing from trade agreements is a very troubling sign."

North Korea nuclear test: Mattis warns of 'massive military response'
Pentagon chief James Mattis says any threat to the US or its allies by North Korea will be met with a "massive military response". His comments came after he attended a national security meeting with President Donald Trump.

Pyongyang says it has successfully tested a more advanced nuclear weapon - a hydrogen bomb that could be loaded on to a long-range missile. The move has drawn international condemnation.

North Korea has defied UN sanctions and international pressure to develop nuclear weapons and test missiles that could potentially reach the US. But speaking to reporters outside the White House, Mr Mattis said the US had the ability to defend itself and its allies South Korea and Japan, adding that its commitments were "ironclad".

"Any threat to the United States or its territories - including Guam - or our allies will be met with a massive military response, a response both effective and overwhelming."

The UN Security Council is to hold an emergency meeting on Monday to discuss an international response, according to the US mission.

What has happened?

The first suggestion that this was to be a far from normal Sunday in the region came when seismologists' equipment started picking up readings of an earth tremor in the area where North Korea has conducted nuclear tests before. The US Geological Survey put the tremor at 6.3 magnitude.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono said there was no doubt this was North Korea's sixth nuclear test, calling it "unforgivable". Then North Korean state media confirmed this was no earthquake. It claimed the country had conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test, detonating a hydrogen bomb that could be loaded onto a long-range missile.
North Korean state media announces "hydrogen bomb" test

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was pictured with what state media said was a new type of hydrogen bomb.

Analysts say the North's claims should be treated with caution, but that its nuclear capability is clearly advancing.

Officials in China, where the blast was felt as a tremor, said they were carrying out emergency radiation testing along the border with North Korea.

What has the reaction been?

Denouncing the test as "hostile" and "dangerous", President Trump described the North as a "rogue nation" which had become a "great threat and embarrassment" to China - Pyongyang's main ally.

He also said South Korea's "talk of appeasement" was not working and that the secretive communist state "only understands one thing".

"The United States is considering, in addition to other options, stopping all trade with any country doing business with North Korea," Mr Trump later said in a tweet. North Korea relies on China for about 90% of its foreign trade.
South Korean President Moon Jae-in called for the "strongest possible" response, including new UN Security Council sanctions to "completely isolate" the country. "I can't help but be disappointed and outraged," he said, adding that North Korea's weapons programme was "threatening world peace" and would only "isolate them further".

China, meanwhile, also expressed "strong condemnation" and said the state "had ignored the international community's widespread opposition".

Russia urged all sides involved to hold talks, saying this was the only way to resolve the Korean peninsula's problems.

UK Prime Minister Theresa May said the "reckless" new test represented an "unacceptable further threat to the international community". She called on world leaders to come together to stop North Korea's "destabilising actions".

**What does the test tell us?**

South Korean officials said the latest test took place in Kilju County, where the North's Punggye-ri nuclear test site is situated. The "artificial quake" was 9.8 times more powerful than the tremor from the North's fifth test in September 2016, the state weather agency said.

Although experts urged caution, this does appear to be the biggest and most successful nuclear test by North Korea to date - and the messaging is clear. North Korea wants to demonstrate it knows what makes a credible nuclear warhead.

**Previous nuclear tests**
Nuclear weapons expert Catherine Dill told the BBC it was not yet clear exactly what nuclear weapon design was tested. "But based on the seismic signature, the yield of this test definitely is an order of magnitude higher than the yields of the previous tests."

Current information did not definitively indicate that a thermonuclear weapon had been tested "but it appears to be a likely possibility at this point", she said. Hydrogen bombs are many times more powerful than an atomic bomb. They use fusion - the merging of atoms - to unleash huge amounts of energy, whereas atomic bombs use nuclear fission, or the splitting of atoms.

What can be done?

By Jonathan Marcus, BBC defence and diplomatic correspondent

North Korea's sixth nuclear test - probably its largest so far - sends out one clear political signal. Despite the bluster and threats from the Trump administration in Washington and near-universal condemnation from around the world, Pyongyang is not going to halt or constrain its nuclear activities. Worryingly, it also suggests that this is a programme that is progressing on all fronts at a faster rate than many had expected. So far all efforts to pressure North Korea -
sanctions, isolation and military threats - have all failed to move Pyongyang. Could more be done? Certainly, but the harshest economic pressure would potentially cripple the regime and push it towards catastrophe - something China is unwilling to countenance.

Containment and deterrence will now come to the fore as the world adjusts its policy from seeking to roll-back Pyongyang's weapons programme to living with a nuclear-armed North Korea.

**Can the world live with a nuclear North Korea?**

**Have North Korea's missile tests paid off?**

__Media caption__

Speaking before the new nuclear test, Senator Lindsey Graham told BBC HARDtalk a US attack was inevitable if diplomacy failed.

**Will China clamp down?**

By Robin Brant, BBC News, Shanghai

North Korea's sixth nuclear weapons test is an utter rejection of all that its only ally has called for.

Beijing's response was predictable - condemnation, urging an end to provocation and dialogue. But it also spoke of urging North Korea to "face up to the firm will" of the international community to see denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula.

There is no sign, though, that China is willing yet to see that "firm will" go beyond UN sanctions, which recently clamped down on seafood and iron ore exports, in addition to the coal and minerals that are already banned from crossing the border.

It is noteworthy also that this test took place just as the Chinese president was about
to welcome a handful of world leaders to the two-day showpiece Brics summit on China's east coast.
Even the state-controlled media will find it hard to ignore the fact that their man has been upstaged - embarrassed too - by its almost universally ostracised ally and neighbour.

North Korea confirms successful test of hydrogen bomb

3 Sep, 2017 6:38pm
Quick Read

North Korea says it has successfully conducted a test of a hydrogen bomb that is meant to be loaded into an intercontinental ballistic missile.

A North Korean TV anchor announced the test's success on Korean Central Television, hours after Seoul and Tokyo detected unusual seismic activity at North Korea's nuclear test site.

The announcer says North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un ordered the test.

The announcement comes after the US Geological Survey said it had recorded a 6.3 magnitude earthquake exactly at noon Sunday local time, near North Korea's known nuclear test site in Punggye-ri, in the county's northeast region.

The quake was felt in northern China, with emergency
sirens blaring in Yanji, near the North Korean border, according to local media.

Today the state-run Korean Central News Agency released photos of Kim Jong Un inspecting what his government described as a hydrogen bomb that could be attached to a missile capable of reaching the mainland United States.

More to come.

North Korea says it tested a hydrogen bomb that can fit on an intercontinental ballistic missile, i.e. that can reach the mainland U.S.

North Korea: Tremor was sixth nuclear test, says Japan
North Korea has carried out its sixth nuclear test, Japan's foreign minister says.

"The government confirms that North Korea conducted a nuclear test after examining information from the weather agency and other information," Taro Kono told reporters.

North Korean state TV says it will make an "important announcement" shortly.

Seismologists earlier detected a tremor in an area where North Korea has conducted previous nuclear tests.

The tremor was detected hours after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was pictured with what state media said was a new type of hydrogen bomb. State media said the device could be loaded on to a ballistic missile. Neither claim could be independently verified.

South Korean officials said the quake took place in Kilju County, where the North's Punggye-ri nuclear test site is situated.

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**How advanced is North Korea's nuclear programme?**

**Have North Korea's missile tests paid off?**

**What can the outside world do?**

**Can the US defend itself against North Korea?**

Soon after, South Korean President Moon Jae-in convened an emergency meeting of his national security council.

China's Earthquake Administration described the tremor as a "suspected explosion". It said it had detected a second tremor just after the first, of 4.6 magnitude, which it...
termed "a collapse". Initial reports from the US Geological Survey put the tremor at 5.6 magnitude with a depth of 10km (six miles) but this was later upgraded to 6.3 magnitude at 0km. This would make it the North's most powerful nuclear test to date.

North Korea carried out its last nuclear test in September 2016. It has defied UN sanctions and international pressure to develop nuclear weapons and to test missiles which could potentially reach the mainland US.

Bruce Bennett, a defence analyst at public policy group the Rand Corporation, told the BBC that the size of the tremor was significant.

"If it really does prove out to be 6.3, that's a very big weapon, much bigger," he said. "It's still not a true hydrogen bomb but it's certainly much closer to that than anything they have ever done before."

He said China would also be concerned about the size of the suspected blast. "Those Chinese people across the border from that area, they were undoubtedly shaken terribly," he said.

'Great destructive power'

A series of recent missile tests has caused growing international unease. In a report on Sunday, the North's state news agency KCNA said Kim Jong-un had
visited scientists at the nuclear weapons institute and "guided the work for nuclear weaponisation".

"The institute recently succeeded in making a more developed nuke," the report said, adding: "He (Kim Jong-un) watched an H-bomb to be loaded into a new ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile)."

The report carried pictures of the leader inspecting the device. It described the weapon as "a multi-functional thermonuclear nuke with great destructive power which can be detonated even at high altitudes".

International experts say the North has made advances in its nuclear weapons capabilities but it is unclear if it has successfully miniaturised a nuclear weapon it can load on to a missile.

The North has previously claimed to have miniaturised a nuclear weapon but experts have cast doubt on this. There is also scepticism about the North's claims to have developed a hydrogen bomb, which is more powerful than an atomic bomb.

Hydrogen bombs use fusion - the merging of atoms - to unleash huge amounts of energy, whereas atomic bombs use nuclear fission, or the splitting of atoms.

**Previous nuclear tests**

![Map of North Korea with test sites marked.](source: USGS)
South Korea released footage of its own missile tests it says were conducted last week in a response to Tuesday's North Korean missile launch. / AP
The United States flew some of its most advanced warplanes in bombing drills with ally South Korea, a clear warning after North Korea launched a mid-range ballistic missile designed to carry nuclear bombs over Japan earlier this week, the US and South Korean militaries said.

North Korea hates such displays of US military might at close range and will likely respond with fury, AP reports.

Two US B-1B supersonic bombers and four F-35B stealth fighter jets joined four South Korean F-15 fighters in live-fire exercises at a military field in eastern South Korea that simulated precision strikes against the North's "core facilities", according to the US Pacific Command and South Korea's Defence Ministry.
The B-1Bs were flown in from Andersen Air Force Base in Guam while the F-35Bs came from a US base in Iwakuni, Japan.

North Korea, which claims Washington has long threatened it by flaunting the powerful US nuclear arsenal, describes the long-range B-1Bs as "nuclear strategic bombers" although the United States no longer arms them with
nuclear weapons.

Hours after the announcements by Washington and Seoul, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency issued a short statement calling the exercises a "rash act of those taken aback" by North Korea's recent missile launch.

Kim's blast came as he ordered his troops to prepare for an "imminent war" with the US.

Officers are ordering their troops to supplement their meagre food rations by plundering local fields, in order to keep up their strength for battle, according to a report in the Daily NK.

"The military officers are instructing their soldiers, exhausted after training, to eat corn in the fields because war is imminent," a source in North Hamgyong Province told the news website.

"They are even threatening their soldiers, saying: if you become malnourished despite permission to eat the corn, you will face difficulties."

The duelling military displays open up the risk that things will get worse as each side seeks to show it won't be intimidated.
North Korea has made it clear that it sees its weapons programme, which demands regular testing to perfect, as the only way to contest decades of US hostility, by which it means the huge US military presence in South Korea, Japan and the Pacific.

Washington, in turn, seeks with its joint drills with Seoul and bomber flights to show that it will not be pushed from its traditional role of supremacy in the region.

More missile tests, more bomber flyovers and three angry armies facing each other across the world's most heavily armed border raises the possibility that a miscalculation could lead to real fighting.
The US Pacific Command said the exercises were conducted in response to North Korea's recent missile launch.

Over the course of a 10-hour mission, the B-1Bs, F-35Bs and two Japanese F-15 fighters first flew together over waters near Kyushu, Japan. The US and South Korean warplanes then flew across the Korean Peninsula and participated in the live-fire training before returning to their respective home stations, according to the Pacific Command.

"North Korea's actions are a threat to our allies, partners and homeland, and their destabilising actions will be met accordingly," General Terrence J O'Shaughnessy, commander of the US Pacific Air Forces, said in a statement.
"This complex mission clearly demonstrates our solidarity with our allies and underscores the broadening co-operation to defend against this common regional threat. Our forward-deployed force will be the first to the fight, ready to deliver a lethal response at a moment's notice if our nation calls."

In Beijing, North Korea's ally China warned that war is not an option in finding a solution to the North's growing nuclear capabilities.

Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Ren Guoqiang told reporters that all parties should exercise restraint and avoid words and actions that escalate tension.
The bombing exercise came as the United States and South Korea wrapped up their annual Ulchi Freedom Guardian joint military drills that involved tens of thousands of soldiers. North Korea condemns the annual US-South Korea war games as rehearsals for an invasion and described Tuesday's missile launch over Japan as a response to the drills. Washington and Seoul faced calls to postpone or downsize this year's drills.

The United States often sends its warplanes to South Korea, mostly for patrols, when animosity rises on the Korean Peninsula - which is technically in a state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

North Korea on Tuesday flew a potentially nuclear-capable Hwasong-12 intermediate range missile over northern Japan and later called it a "meaningful prelude" to containing the US territory of Guam.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said the launch was a "curtainraiser of its resolute countermeasures" against the US-South Korea war games and called for his military to conduct more ballistic missile launches targeting the Pacific Ocean.
North Korea has been maintaining a torrid pace in weapons tests this year as it openly pursues an arsenal of nuclear-armed, intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching deep into the US mainland.

Experts say Kim wants a real nuclear deterrent against the United States to ensure the survival of his government and likely believes that it will strengthen his negotiating position when North Korea returns to talks.

North Korea had earlier threatened to fire a salvo of Hwasong-12s toward Guam, which is home to key US military bases and strategic long-range bombers the North
finds threatening. It also flight-tested a pair of developmental ICBMs in July.

South Korean analysts said North Korea's threat against Guam and the launch over Japan on Tuesday are likely attempts to make launches over Japan an accepted norm and win itself greater military space in a region dominated by enemies.

The US and South Korean militaries say the Hwasong-12 fired over Japan's northern island of Hokkaido flew about 2700 kilometres. South Korean Vice Defence Minister Suh Choo-suk told politicians on Thursday that North Korea might have fired the missile at about half its maximum range.

North Korea: US 'never out of diplomatic solutions'

5 hours ago
US Defence Secretary James Mattis has said the US is "never out of diplomatic solutions" in dealing with North Korea.

It comes after President Donald Trump tweeted that "talking is not the answer" to the country's military ambitions.

Russia has also warned the US against taking military action, saying it would be "fraught with unpredictable consequences".

North Korea caused alarm by firing a missile over Japan on Tuesday. The missile, which Japan called an "unprecedented" threat, crossed the northern Hokkaido region early on Tuesday, triggering public alerts to take cover, before landing in the sea about 1,180km (730 miles) off the coast.

North Korea later said it was "the first step of wider military operations" in the Pacific, and repeated its threats to the US Pacific island of Guam.

In a commentary piece, the North's state news agency KCNA described Japan as a "sworn enemy", warning that Tokyo's co-operation with the US was only "accelerating self-destruction".
The U.S. has been talking to North Korea, and paying them extortion money, for 25 years. Talking is not the answer!

12:47 AM - Aug 31, 2017
9,005,005 Replies
11,189,118 Retweets
94,164,164 likes

Just days ago, Mr Trump had said he believed North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was "starting to respect" the US.
But in a tweet late on Wednesday, he said: "The US has been talking to North Korea, and paying them extortion money, for 25 years. Talking is not the answer!"

- **Can the world live with a nuclear North Korea?**
- 'Most serious missile launch yet'
- **What does 'provocative' test show?**
- **Contain, strike or invade: The military options**

But when asked whether it was true that the US had lost hope in diplomacy, Mr Mattis openly disagreed with the president saying: "No. We are never out of diplomatic solutions."

He was speaking as he met his South Korean counterpart, Song Young-moo, at the Pentagon.
"We continue to work together, and the minister and I share a responsibility to provide for the protection of our nations, our populations and our interests."
Russia, which shares a tiny border with North Korea and a maritime border with Japan, has said that US military activity in the region is partly to blame for the increase in tensions.

In a phone call on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that diplomacy was the only way to overcome tensions on the Korean peninsula, which have been escalating in recent months. A military solution would be "fraught with unpredictable consequences," Reuters quoted Mr Lavrov as saying.

He also said any further strengthening of sanctions against North Korea by the UN would be counter-productive.

Meeting on Tuesday, the UN Security Council had unanimously condemned the launch and again demanded North Korea cease all missile testing. But it did not push for new sanctions.

Speaking in Geneva at a UN Conference on Disarmament, North Korean diplomat Ju Yong-chol insisted the North would not be stifled and "will not hesitate to take further tougher counter-measures."

He said Pyongyang strongly rejected the "fabricated" stories that it was to blame for the tensions of the Korean peninsula.
North Korea's missile programme:

North Korea has been working on its missile programme for decades, with weapons based on the Soviet-developed Scud. It has conducted short- and medium-range tests on many occasions, sometimes to mark domestic events or at times of regional tension. In recent months the pace of testing has increased; experts say North Korea appears to be making significant advances towards its goal of building a reliable long-range nuclear-capable weapon.

In July, North Korea launched two missiles which it said were Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) capable of hitting the US; experts believe they put parts of the US in range.

There is no consensus on how close North Korea is to miniaturising a nuclear warhead to put on a missile.

Trump
administration's mixed North Korea signals raise questions about US strategy

By Zachary Cohen and Nicole Gaouette, CNN

Updated 1919 GMT (0319 HKT) August 30, 2017

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Trump’s suggestion seems to break with comments made by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson
North Korea successfully launched a missile over Japan earlier this week

Washington (CNN)President Donald Trump said Wednesday that "talking is not the answer" when it comes to reining in North Korea -- seeming to contradict some of his top Cabinet officials who insist the US will continue to seek a peaceful resolution to tensions with Pyongyang, despite its
provocative missile tests.

"The U.S. has been talking to North Korea, and paying them extortion money, for 25 years. Talking is not the answer!" Trump tweeted, just days after North Korea launched a missile that flew over northern Japan.

It was not immediately clear what Trump meant by "extortion money," though previous administrations have tried to defuse nuclear tensions by offering the North Korean regime food and aid packages, some of it in exchange for Pyongyang's commitment to curb its nuclear programs -- promises that have always been broken.

The North Korean launch was "the first step of the military operation of the (North Korean military) in the Pacific and a meaningful prelude to containing Guam," North Korean state media said, doubling down on Pyongyang's threats in early August to strike the US territory, home to a large US military
base.

Trump's chest thumping suggestion that some undefined action -- not talk -- is needed is just the latest signal sent by the President that seems to contradict the Cabinet officials most involved in finding a way to defuse a nuclear showdown in a region that's home to billions, vital to the global economy, and the location of strategic US military bases.

While some US officials hint that it might be part of a good cop, bad cop effort to increase pressure on North Korea, one former US official said the administration’s signals are too incoherent for that to be likely.

"The idea that this is part of a "good cop, bad cop" strategy seems to be an attempt to excuse the reality that the Trump administration is in chaos when it comes to North Korea," said Abraham Denmark, a former assistant secretary of defense for East Asia, who sees no coherent administration strategy on Pyongyang.

Next target Guam, North Korea says

"If the President has made up his mind against talks with North Korea, that should be the end of the conversation," Denmark said. "This dramatically undercuts the State Department - any offer of talks to North Korea has zero credibility if the President is not on board."

And without a decision on whether talks will be pursued, "no diplomacy or military decision can be made," Denmark said. And he adds another
thought. "The President’s tweet left an obvious question go unanswered: if the President feels talks will not solve this issue, what does he believe will solve it?"

Trump spoke in early August of visiting "fire and fury" on North Korea if it so much as threatened the US -- which it promptly did. He issued that threat as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson continued to emphasize a "peaceful pressure" campaign aimed at systematically cutting off Pyongyang’s sources of financial and diplomatic support.

"We do view it as a provocative act against the United States and our allies," Tillerson told "Fox News Sunday," after North Korea fired three short range missiles on Friday [Aug 25]. "We’re going to continue our peaceful pressure campaign as I have described it, working with allies, working with China as well to see if we can bring the regime in Pyongyang to the negotiating table."

On Wednesday, Defense Secretary James Mattis, asked about Trump’s tweet, reiterated the call for diplomacy while speaking before a meeting with South Korean Defense Minister Song Young-moo.

Asked if the US was out of diplomatic solutions when it comes to North Korea, Mattis simply replied, "No."

He then elaborated, "We’re never out of diplomatic solutions. We continue to work together and the minister and I share a responsibility to provide for the protection of our nations, our populations and our interests, which is what we are here to discuss today, and look for all the areas with we can collaborate."

As North Korea hones its ability to deliver nuclear weapons far enough to reach US territory, some analysts and US officials suggest that the tough talk from Trump isn’t a contradiction of his most senior officials, but part of a plan to ratchet up pressure.
"There's no shift away from the pressure strategy," said Bruce Klingner, a former CIA deputy division chief for Korea who is now a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation. "The administration is affirming what every new administration has said -- negotiations have been tried and they have failed."

One US official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss North Korea strategy, said that in the administration's view, "economic, diplomatic, military, all of these options are on the table." While Tillerson works on increasing financial pressure on the DPRK and isolating it further, Trump's role might be to apply the diplomatic pressure with his angry, tweeted denunciations.

Trump, the official said, "is making it very clear: North Korea needs to choose a new path." But the official added that in order to reach the US goal of a nuclear free Korean peninsula, "we will continue to increase the weight of our peaceful pressure campaign."

That campaign, spearheaded by Tillerson, is about exerting maximum economic pressure on North Korea by severing its trade ties with other countries, and increasing its diplomatic isolation. Speaking to the UN in April, the top US diplomat delivered a message about North Korea's nuclear programs that was a gentler version of Trump's angry tweet. "For the past 20 years, well-intentioned diplomatic efforts to halt these programs have failed," Tillerson said. "the policy of strategic patience is over." He added, "The more we bide our time, the sooner we will run out of it."

Anthony Ruggiero, a former deputy director of the US Treasury Department, suggests that Trump's more recent rhetoric might have a particular aim.

"The exchange of words between North Korea and the US would not prevent Pyongyang from continuing its missile tests," said Ruggiero, an
expert on the use of targeted financial measures for the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "The goal was deterring North Korea from launching missiles toward Guam or attacking South Korea, which has not happened."

Trump's Wednesday post came just hours after North Korea's state-run media reported that leader Kim Jong-Un presided over the dawn launch Tuesday of the "ultra-modern rocket system," the first missile ever fired from Pyongyang, the nation's capital.

North Korean officials told CNN in Pyongyang that Kim was "very satisfied with the performance of the missile."

The intermediate-range missile, identified by the North Koreans as the Hwasong-12, flew over Japan, further fueling tensions between North Korea and the United States and its allies, Japan and South Korea.

"The world has received North Korea's latest message loud and clear: this regime has signaled its contempt for its neighbors, for all members of the United Nations, and for minimum standards of acceptable international behavior," Trump said in an initial statement on Tuesday, taking a more measured tone than in his previous remarks or in the tweet he'd send Wednesday.

"Threatening and destabilizing actions only increase the North Korean regime's isolation in the region and among all nations of the world. All options are on the table."

Early Wednesday, the US conducted a test intercept of a medium range ballistic missile off the coast of Hawaii, according to a statement from the US Missile Defense Agency.
tests shooting down ballistic missile

By Daniella Diaz, CNN

Updated 1222 GMT (2022 HKT) August 30, 2017

Moment North Korea fired missile over Japan 00:48

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

The US Missile Defense Agency called the test "a key milestone"
The test comes amid heightened tensions between North Korea and the US

Washington (CNN) The United States conducted a successful missile defense test that intercepted a medium-range ballistic missile off the coast of Hawaii early Wednesday morning, according to a statement from the US Missile Defense Agency.

The Standard Missile-6, built by major US defense contractor Raytheon, intercepted the missile target at sea in its final seconds of flight after being fired from the USS John Paul Jones.

The test comes amid heightened tensions between North Korea and the
US. Earlier this week, an intermediate-range missile, identified by the North Koreans as a Hwasong-12, was fired over Japan.

A US official, however, told CNN the test had been planned for a long time and before North Korea's latest provocation.

The agency's director said the test was "a key milestone."

"We are working closely with the fleet to develop this important new capability, and this was a key milestone in giving our Aegis BMD ships an enhanced capability to defeat ballistic missiles in their terminal phase," MDA Director Lt. Gen. Sam Greaves said in the statement. "We will continue developing ballistic missile defense technologies to stay ahead of the threat as it evolves."

In another statement, Raytheon's SM-6 senior program director, Mike Campisi, said that the US government requested this technology earlier this year. It normally takes one to two years to create, but Raytheon said in the statement that it took them seven months.

"Earlier this year, our customer requested an enhanced capability to deal with a sophisticated medium-range ballistic missile threat," he said in a statement "We did all this -- the analysis, coding and testing -- in seven months; a process that normally takes one to two years."

CNN's Michael Callahan contributed to this report.

North Korea: 'Japan missile was first step in Pacific operation'

30 August 2017
North Korea says its firing of a missile over Japan was "the first step" of military operations in the Pacific, signalling plans for more launches.

State media also repeated threats to the US Pacific island of Guam, which it called "an advanced base of invasion".

The missile launched on Tuesday crossed Japan's northern Hokkaido island, triggering public alerts to take cover, before landing in the sea.

The UN Security Council has unanimously condemned North Korea for its actions. Meeting late on Tuesday in New York, the council called the launch "outrageous", demanding North Korea cease all missile testing.

While the statement said the regime's actions were a threat to all UN member states, it did not threaten new sanctions against Pyongyang.

Russia and China said US military activity in the region was partly to blame for the increase in tensions, and urged negotiations.

Arriving for a visit to Japan, British Prime Minister Theresa May on Wednesday called on China to put more pressure on North Korea, saying that Beijing had a key role in the international response to Pyongyang's "reckless provocation".

**Can the world live with a nuclear North Korea?**

**'Most serious missile launch yet'**

**North Korea: What does 'provocative' test show?**

North Korea has repeatedly conducted missile launches in recent months, despite being barred from doing so under UN rules.

The latest, a domestically made Hwasong-12, was launched early on Tuesday Korean time from a site near Pyongyang.
It travelled some 2,700km (1,678 miles), at an unusually low height for North Korean missile tests, over Hokkaido before crashing about 1,180km off Japan's eastern coast.

Japan sent out alerts telling people in Hokkaido to take cover. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe later called it "unprecedented, serious and a grave threat".

Source: Japan Ministry of Defence

Japanese citizens are trying not to think about a missile attack.
For the first time, North Korea's official news agency KCNA admitted deliberately firing a ballistic missile across Japan. Previous projectiles which crossed the mainland were later claimed to have been satellite launches.

It said the launch was in direct response to joint US-South Korean military drills which are currently taking place, as well as to mark the anniversary of the Japan-Korea treaty of 1910, which saw Japanese forces annex the Korean peninsula. KCNA, quoting leader Kim Jong-un, said that, "like a real war", the latest drill was "the first step of the military operation of the KPA [Korean People's Army] in the Pacific and a meaningful prelude to containing Guam".

Mr Kim has also ordered more rocket drills targeting the region, it said. North Korea first threatened to fire missiles towards Guam - a major US military centre in the Pacific and where some 160,000 US citizens live - earlier this month. US officials had suggested that the fact it had not carried out its threat so far was a sign of possible progress.

US President Donald Trump, in a statement released by the White House, said the world had "received North Korea's latest message loud and clear". "This regime has signalled its contempt for its neighbours, for all members of the United Nations, and for minimum standards of acceptable international behaviour," he said. "Threatening and destabilising actions only increase the North Korean regime's isolation in the region and among all nations of the world. All options are on the table."

Earlier this month, President Trump warned Pyongyang would face "fire and
North Korea’s missile programme:

North Korea has been working on its missile programme for decades, with weapons based on the Soviet-developed Scud. It has conducted short- and medium-range tests on many occasions, sometimes to mark domestic events or at times of regional tension. In recent months, the pace of testing has increased; experts say North Korea appears to be making significant advances towards its goal of building a reliable long-range nuclear-capable weapon. In July, North Korea launched two missiles which it said were Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) capable of hitting the US; experts believe they put parts of the US in range. There is no consensus on how close North Korea is to miniaturising a nuclear warhead to put on a missile.

United Nations condemns North Korea missile firing

30 Aug, 2017 5:49pm

AP’s news director for Japan and the Koreas explains that Pyongyang’s launch of a ballistic missile seems designed to show that North Korea can back up its threat to target the U.S. territory of Guam.

AAP
The United Nations has condemned North Korea's "outrageous" firing of a ballistic missile over Japan, demanding Pyongyang halt its weapons programme, but holding back on any threat of new sanctions on the isolated regime.

North Korea said the launch of an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) was to counter US and South Korean military drills and was a first step in military action in the Pacific to "contain" the US territory of Guam.

The North's leader Kim Jong Un ordered the launch to be conducted for the first time from its capital, Pyongyang, and said more exercises with the Pacific as the target were needed, the North's KCNA news agency said on Wednesday.

"The current ballistic rocket launching drill like a real war is the first step of the military operation of the KPA in the Pacific and a meaningful prelude to containing Guam," KCNA quoted Kim as saying. The Korean People's Army or KPA is the North's military.

Earlier this month, North Korea threatened to fire four missiles into the sea near Guam, home to a major US military presence, after President Donald Trump said the North would face "fire and fury" if it threatened the United States.

In a statement the 15-member Security Council said it was
of "vital importance" that North Korea take immediate, concrete actions to reduce tensions and called on all states to implement UN sanctions on Pyongyang.

However, the US-drafted statement, which was agreed by consensus, does not threaten new sanctions on North Korea.

China and Russia's ambassadors to the United Nations said they opposed any unilateral sanctions on North Korea and reiterated calls to halt deployment of a US missile defence system in South Korea.

Speaking in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China is currently discussing the situation with other Security Council members and will make a "necessary response" based on the consensus reached.

"Any measures against North Korea should be under the UN Security Council framework, and should be carried out according to Security Council resolutions," he told a news briefing.

Tuesday's test was of the same Hwasong-12 missile Kim had threatened to use on Guam, but the test flight took it in another direction, over northern Japan's Hokkaido and into the sea.

Trump, who has vowed not to let North Korea develop nuclear missiles that can hit the mainland United States, said the world had received North Korea's latest message
"loud and clear".

"Threatening and destabilising actions only increase the North Korean regime's isolation in the region and among all nations of the world. All options are on the table," Trump said in a statement on Tuesday.

The North's latest test launch came as US and South Korean forces conducted annual military exercises on the Korean peninsula, angering Pyongyang which sees the war games as a preparation for invasion.

Kim Dong-yup, professor at the Institute for Far East Studies of Kyungnam University in Seoul said firing the missile from a densely populated area near Pyongyang and over Japan suggested North Korea was confident in the missile's stability.

"I do not think North Korea factored in much military meaning behind yesterday's missile launch, rather yesterday's launch was all about North Korea being stubborn," he said.

"At the same time, North Korea is hinting that there is room for negotiation if the US and South Korea ends the joint military exercises."

The UN Security Council has condemned North Korea's launch of a ballistic missile over Japan.

Kim Jong-Un's
'madman strategy' and how North Korea could win deterrence war with US

30 Aug, 2017 2:57pm
6 minutes to read

AP's news director for Japan and the Koreas explains that Pyongyang's launch of a ballistic missile seems designed to show that North Korea can back up its threat to target the U.S. territory of Guam. AP

Conventional wisdom says if North Korea were ever to use its nuclear weapons, it would be an act of suicide.

But brace yourself for what deterrence experts call the "theory of victory".

To many who have studied how nuclear strategies actually work, it's conceivable North Korea could escalate to a nuclear war and still survive.
The latest missile test suggests once again it may be racing to prepare itself to do just that - but only if forced into a corner.

Every missile North Korean leader Kim Jong Un launches comes at a high cost. North Korea doesn't have an unlimited supply, and they aren't easy or cheap to build.

So when Kim orders his strategic forces to launch, it's safe to assume it's a move calculated to achieve maximum political, technical and training value.

Yesterday's launch of a ballistic missile over Japan and into the open Pacific Ocean, once again blowing past warnings from the United States and its allies, is a prime example.
There is a solid strategy hidden in each launch.

From Kim's perspective, here's what it looks like.

New undated photos released by North Korea show Kim Jong-un during the recent Hwasong-12 IRBM launch. Photo / KCNA

HOW THE NORTH COULD SURVIVE

North Korea has never suggested it would use its nuclear weapons to attack the United States or its allies completely out of the blue. But, like Washington, it has stated quite explicitly that if it is either attacked or has reason to believe an attack is imminent, it has the right to launch a retaliatory or even a pre-emptive first strike.
The trigger for North Korea could be unusual troop movements in South Korea, suspicious activity at US bases in Japan or - as the North has recently warned - flights near its airspace by US Air Force B-1B bombers out of their home base on the island of Guam.

If Kim deemed any of those an imminent attack, one North Korean strategy would be to immediately target US bases in Japan.

A more violent move would be to attack a Japanese city, such as Tokyo, though that would probably be unnecessary since at this point the objective would be to weaken the US military's command and control.

Going nuclear would send the strongest message, but chemical weapons would be an alternative.
North Korea's ability to next hit the US mainland with nuclear-tipped missiles is the key to how it would survive in this scenario. And that's why Kim has been rushing to perfect and show them off to the world.

"The whole reason they developed the ICBM was to deter American nuclear retaliation because if you can hold an American city or cities at risk the American calculation always changes," said Vipin Narang, an associate professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a nuclear strategy specialist.

"Are we really willing to risk Los Angeles or Chicago in retaliation for an attack on a US military base in the region?" he asks. "Probably not."

That, right there, is Kim's big wager.
If "no" actually is the answer, then North Korea has a chance - though slim and risky - of staving off a full-scale conventional attack by the United States to survive another day.

“The early warning was great, but where am I supposed to seek shelter? My wife decided that under the stairwell was the spot. I decided making coffee in the kitchen was probably just as good.”

ROSS COOPER, NYT COMMENTER ON FACEBOOK
Reacting to an article about a North Korean missile that was fired over Japan
Twitter Ads info and privacy
USE 'EM OR LOSE 'EM

Kim isn't paranoid. He has good reason to fear an attack by the United States.

It's highly unlikely Washington would unilaterally start a war.

But if it did, North Korea would face a far stronger and better equipped enemy able to - literally - bring the fight right to Kim's front door.

A successful US first strike could within hours or days take out North Korea's leadership, or at least seriously disrupt its chain of command, and destroy a good portion of the country's fighting power.

So North Korea has a very strong incentive to escalate fast, before all is lost.

Under Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il - Kim's grandfather and father - North Korea relied on conventional artillery just north of the Demilitarised Zone to keep Washington at bay, figuring the US wouldn't make any moves that might risk an attack on South Korea's capital, Seoul, and the tremendous casualties and destruction that would bring.

Kim, fearing "decapitation strikes," has brought missiles and
nukes into the mix for an added layer of protection.

His strategy is to neutralise Washington's military option by holding both Seoul and an American city hostage while building up his own ability to withstand a first strike or a massive wave of retaliation.

To do that, North Korea is developing an array of missiles that can be launched by land or from submarines and easily hidden and transported to remote, hard-to-detect sites.

Reasonably enough, countries with big arsenals are generally considered less likely to feel the need to use them or lose them.

North Korea is believed to have an arsenal of perhaps several dozen nuclear weapons, growing by maybe a dozen or so each year. That's a lot, but some analysts believe it may take a few hundred to cure Kim of the itchy trigger finger syndrome.

View image on Twitter
After his "fire and fury" remarks, US President Trump's North Korea approach comes full circle

http://cnn.it/2vCtLeN

11:01 AM - Aug 30, 2017
168168 Replies
112112 Retweets
199199 likes
THE 'MADMAN STRATEGY'

In deterrence circles, ambiguity is considered a must. But confusion can be deadly.

In any confrontation, it's best that an opponent knows better than to cross the line - but not to know exactly where that line is. That fosters caution.

Confusion, on the other hand, creates the incentive to make a move either out of frightened self-defence or confident opportunism.

That's what North Korea appears to be doing now, though it's not clear whether the motive is fear or arrogance.

Over the past several weeks, US President Donald Trump has promised fire, fury and power like the world has never seen should North Korea issue even a vocal threat - which it did almost immediately, with no major consequences.

Trump's Cabinet members walked that back, but in the process set or seemed to erase red lines of their own.

Some have suggested this is a deliberate "madman strategy".

inspired by the writings of Machiavelli, President Richard Nixon gave this ploy a go against Vietnam in the late 1960s. His idea was to make the Vietnamese and their Communist allies think Nixon would do anything, including use his nuclear weapons, to end the war.
But if Trump is doing the same, he isn't doing it very well, Narang said.

While Kim's Government speaks with one voice and maintains consistency, which is what gives the madman approach its credibility, it's "really hard for Trump to make these crazy statements and not have them walked back by someone in his Administration.

"At some point," Narang said, "the blurriness goes away and we just look incoherent."

- Eric Talmadge has been the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief since 2013.