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## **NORTH KOREA 'DELIBERATELY DETONATED MISSILE DURING FAILED WEEKEND TEST BECAUSE IT WAS HEADING FOR RUSSIA'**

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Daily Mail (02 May 2017)

North Korea deliberately detonated a missile during its failed weekend test because the rocket was heading for Russia, it has been claimed.

Pyongyang test-fired a ballistic weapon on Saturday despite warnings from the US that failure to curb its nuclear and rocket trials could lead to 'catastrophic consequences'.

The missile travelled 30 miles before crashing down on an inland part of North Korea.

But it has since been claimed that Kim Jong-un's spooked officials deliberately exploded the KN-17 device shortly after launch fearing it had been fired towards Russia by accident.

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According to South Korea's SE Daily, the ballistic missile would have struck 'a harbour point or a Russian territory' if it had not failed.

'It is for this reason that North Korea intentionally destroyed the missile,' the website reportedly said.

A source is quoted as saying the launch target was 'different from the previous direction' and that 'in the past, we fired 89-90 degrees to the east, and the projectile fell off the East Sea. But the angle of this shot was 49 degrees.'

In the wake of the launch Russia's chairman of defence and security, Victor Ozerov, reportedly said its air defences in its eastern territories had been put on high alert.

He said: 'The air defence of the Russian Federation in the Far East has been put on high alert. We control the airspace in the zone of responsibility of the Russian air forces.'

On Saturday, Japan said the missile is believed to have traveled about 30 miles and fallen on an inland part of North Korea.

Analysts say the KN-17 is a new Scud-type missile developed by North Korea. The North fired the same type of missile April 16, just a day after a massive military parade where it showed off its expanding missile arsenal, but U.S. officials called that launch a failure.

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Some analysts say a missile the North test fired April 5, which U.S. officials identified as a Scud variant, also might have been a KN-17. American officials said that missile spun out of control and crashed into the sea.

It comes days after Vladimir Putin sent troops and equipment to Russia's border with North Korea.

The Russian President reportedly fears a huge exodus of North Korean refugees if his American counterpart, Donald Trump, launches military action against Pyongyang.

Footage emerged showing Putin reinforcing his 11-mile border with North Korea by relocating troops and equipment.

The deployment came days after it emerged that China is also sending 150,000 soldiers to its southern frontier to cope with the tidal wave of North Koreans Beijing fears would flee across the border if war breaks out.

Tensions remain high in the area amid fears North Korea is plotting a sixth nuclear weapon.

This morning North Korea accused the US of pushing the Korean peninsula to the brink of nuclear war after a pair of strategic American bombers flew training drills with the South Korean and Japanese air forces in another show of strength.

The two supersonic B-1B Lancer bombers were deployed amid rising tensions over North Korea's pursuit of its nuclear and missile programmes in defiance of U.N. sanctions and pressure from the United States.

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The flight of the two bombers on Monday came as U.S. President Donald Trump said he would be 'honoured' to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in the right circumstances, and as his CIA director landed in South Korea for talks.

South Korean Defence Ministry spokesman Moon Sang-gyun told a briefing in Seoul that Monday's joint drill was conducted to deter provocations by the North.

North Korea said the bombers conducted 'a nuclear bomb dropping drill against major objects' in its territory at a time when Trump and 'other U.S. warmongers are crying out for making a preemptive nuclear strike' on the North.

'The reckless military provocation is pushing the situation on the Korean peninsula closer to the brink of nuclear war,' the North's official KCNA news agency said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military's THAAD anti-missile defence system has reached initial operational capacity in South Korea, U.S. officials told Reuters, although they cautioned that it would not be fully operational for some months.

China has repeatedly expressed its opposition to the system, whose powerful radar it fears could reach inside Chinese territory. Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang again denounced THAAD on Tuesday.

'We will resolutely take necessary measures to defend our interests,' Geng said, without elaborating.

Trump warned in an interview with Reuters on Thursday that a 'major, major conflict' with North Korea was possible, while China said last week the situation on the Korean peninsula could escalate or slip out of control.

In a show of force, the United States has already sent an aircraft carrier strike group, led by the USS Carl Vinson, to waters off the Korean peninsula to conduct drills with South Korea and Japan.

The North is technically still at war with the South after their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a treaty, and regularly threatens to destroy the United States, Japan and South Korea.

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Kaynak/Source: