
NORTH KOREA THREATENS TO RESUME NUCLEAR, LONG-RANGE MISSILE TESTS

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Pyongyang's warning follows the weekend breakdown of North Korea-US nuclear talks in Sweden.

North Korea has called outside condemnation of its weapons launches a "grave provocation" and has threatened to resume nuclear and long-range missile tests.

The warning on Thursday by Pyongyang's foreign ministry followed the weekend breakdown of North Korea-United States nuclear negotiations in Sweden, the first such talks between the two countries in more than seven months.

North Korea said the talks collapsed because the US didn't have any new proposals, and whether it maintains its moratorium on major weapons tests was up to Washington.

Some observers say North Korea's threat may be a tactic to pressure the US into making concessions as restarting nuclear and long-range missile tests would likely derail negotiations, deepen its international isolation and further dim prospects for rebuilding its moribund economy.

A foreign ministry statement took issue with the condemnation on Tuesday by the European members of the UN Security Council of North Korea's recent ballistic missile and other weapons tests, including its first underwater-launched missile launch in three years on October 2.

North Korea said the tests were meant for self-defence and accused the US of being behind the European condemnation.

The statement said the condemnation is particularly a "grave provocation to us" because the Security Council did not act on the October 2 US test of an unarmed Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missile, which it said was apparently designed to apply pressure on North Korea.

A US Air Force Global Strike Command statement said that such tests demonstrate the capability of the intercontinental ballistic missile system and are not a response to world events or regional tensions.

North Korea said it can respond "on the same level" but is refraining from doing so because it is still unnecessary or premature to do so.

But, the statement said, Pyongyang's "patience has a limit" and European condemnation is pushing the country to reconsider whether to maintain the disarmament steps it has taken to build

confidence with the US.

North Korea last year suspended nuclear and long-range missile tests, partially dismantled its long-range rocket test site and dismantled its only known underground nuclear testing site.

US-led diplomacy aimed at stripping North Korea of its nuclear programme had been stalemated since the second summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Vietnam in February ended without any agreement.

That summit fell apart after Trump rejected Kim's demands for major sanctions relief in return for limited steps towards denuclearisation.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/north-korea-threatens-resume-nuclear-long-range-missile-tests-191010091337349.html>

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