
NORTH KOREA BERATES US FOR CRITICIZING ITS MISSILE TESTS

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North Korea accused the United States of hostile provocation on Thursday for criticizing its ballistic missile tests during a United Nations Security Council meeting and warned that the Trump administration may have blown its chance to salvage nuclear negotiations.

An unnamed Foreign Ministry spokesman said the foolish U.S. comments helped North Korea reach a definite decision about its next steps as it approaches an end-of-year deadline set by leader Kim Jong Un for Washington to offer mutually acceptable terms to revive the nuclear talks. The North did not specify what those steps were.

At a Security Council meeting on Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador Kelly Craft said North Korea's deeply counterproductive ballistic missile tests risk closing the door on prospects for negotiating peace but said the Trump administration is prepared to be flexible and take concrete, parallel steps toward an agreement on resuming talks.

The U.S. talks about dialogue, whenever it opens its mouth, but it is too natural that the U.S. has nothing to present before us though dialogue may open, the spokesman said in a statement released through North Korean state media.

He said North Korea's tests are aimed at improving its self-defense and pointed out that the United States tests ICBMs freely. U.S. criticism of the North Korean tests demonstrate a bandit-like intent to disarm the North completely, he said.

U.S. did a foolish thing which will boomerang on it, and decisively helped us make a definite decision on what way to choose, the statement said.

Negotiations faltered after the United States rejected North Korean demands for broad sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities at Kim's second summit with U.S. President Donald Trump in Vietnam in February.

Trump and Kim met for a third time in June at the border between North and South Korea and agreed to resume talks. But an October working-level meeting in Sweden broke down over what the North Koreans described as the Americans' old stance and attitude.

Kim, who unilaterally suspended nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests last year while initiating diplomacy with Washington and Seoul, has said North Korea could seek a new path if the

United States persists with sanctions and pressure against the North.

North Korea has conducted 13 rounds of ballistic missile and rocket artillery tests since May to pressure Washington, and has hinted at lifting its moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests if the Trump administration fails to make substantial concessions before the new year.

Read more at: <https://apnews.com/0b9fc18a32b3e97872b4f7281d164a8d>

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