

Failed North Korean missile was headed for Russia before being detonated

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South Korea says that a North Korean missile, not pictured, was headed to Russia by mistake. Photo/AP

North Korea's failed missile was reportedly headed to Russia but was detonated prompting Vladimir Putin to put his country on high alert.

Pyongyang test-fired the ballistic weapon on Saturday despite calls from the US and others to curb its nuclear trials, according to news.com.au.

Seoul Economy Daily reports that the KN-17 weapon travelled 48 kilometres before officials exploded it after fears it was fired at Russia by accident.

"If the ballistic missile that flew to the northeastern region had not failed, it would have been a harbour point or a Russian territory," the paper claims.

"It is for this reason that North Korea intentionally destroyed the missile."

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."

Russia's chairman of defence and security, Victor Ozerov, reportedly

said its air defences in its eastern territories had been put on high alert.

"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," he said.

China wants US, North Korea to make contact

It came as China urged the United States and North Korea to make contact "as soon as possible" and ease tensions over the North's nuclear weapons program.

The call for negotiations from China's Foreign Ministry came after US President Donald Trump opened the door to a possible future meeting with North Korea's Kim Jong Un.

Trump told Bloomberg News during an interview that he would be honoured to meet with Kim at an unspecified future date "if it would be appropriate."

In response, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said Washington and Pyongyang need to take concrete steps toward peace and avoid further escalating a crisis that has quickly spiralled into a top global security concern.



A US missile defence system called Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, is installed at a golf course in Seongju, South Korea. Photo/AP

China has been pushing for the two sides to back down following a string of missile tests by North Korea and a massive live-fire artillery drill last week that was described as its largest ever.

Across the border, South Korea said a US-sponsored missile defence system is now operational - over China's strong objections.

US and South Korean troops conducted joint exercises last month along the North's border.

Against that backdrop, Geng said China has taken note of the more diplomatic messages sent by the Trump administration and considers them constructive.

"Both sides should reach a political resolution as soon as possible," Geng said.

"The most effective way of attaining an improvement is to seek ways to re-establish dialogue and contact."

- news.com.au

North Korea: Four ballistic missiles fired into sea

6 March 2017

From the section

Asia 392Comments

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South Korean TV showed what it said was the path of the missiles

North Korea has launched four ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan.

Three of them fell into Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) after flying some 1,000km (620 miles), in what PM Shinzo Abe called a "new stage of threat".

They were fired from the Tongchang-ri region, near the North's border with China, the South Korean military said.

The type of missile is unclear but the North is banned from any missile or nuclear

tests by the UN.

A South Korean military official said a launch had taken place at 07:36 local time Monday (22:36 GMT Sunday) and was being investigated to determine the type of projectile used.

What is new in North Korea's missile technology?

What will Trump do about North Korea?

More on North Korea's missile programme

North Korea's nuclear tests

The US military said later it had detected and tracked a launch but had determined that it did not pose a threat to North America.

State Department acting spokesperson Mark Toner said in a statement: "The United States strongly condemns the DPRK's ballistic missile launches tonight, which violate UN Security Council Resolutions explicitly prohibiting North Korea's launches using ballistic missile technology," using the official name of the country the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

On Friday, Pyongyang threatened to fire missiles in response to the Foal Eagle military exercises under way between South Korea and the US. The North sees the annual drills as preparation for an invasion against it.

Monday's launches were just the latest in a long series of tests of North Korean missile technology, which experts say is likely to be improving with successive tests. North Korea has repeatedly said its space programme is peaceful but it is believed to be developing an intercontinental ballistic missile that could strike the US. However, most believe the North is still some time away from being able to miniaturise nuclear warheads so they could fit on to a missile.

Last month North Korea said it had successfully test-fired a new kind of ballistic missile in a launch supervised by leader Kim Jong-un.

The first test-firing since Donald Trump became US president, it was condemned by the UN, the US, South Korea and Japan.

Recent activity in the Tongchang-ri region, home to the Sohae Satellite Launching Station, has been a cause for concern for Japanese officials.

Screens have been set up in key areas, probably to deter satellite surveillance, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

On Sunday, South Korea said it would **quadruple the reward** it pays defectors from the North who share information that will help enhance security to \$860,000 (£700,000).

North Korea's

missile launch: Japan, are you watching?

By [Joshua Berlinger](#), CNN

Updated 1228 GMT (2028 HKT) February 12, 2017



Story highlights

South Korean officials says the missile was likely intermediate range
It was the first North Korean missile test of 2017

Hong Kong (CNN) Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was thousands of miles away from home, but Kim Jong Un's message was loud and clear -- think twice before getting too cozy with the new US President.

Abe, who is visiting the United States, and Japan were likely the main audience for North Korea's [Sunday missile launch](#).

"This is clearly directed at Japan," said Carl Schuster, a professor at Hawaii Pacific University and former director of operations at the US Pacific Command's Joint Intelligence Center.

Though South Korea worries about any developments in Pyongyang's missile and nuclear capabilities, experts note that the rhetoric from the North has been much quieter and less hostile since [the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye](#).

"For the last month or so they've been very careful not to do things that could be provocative in South Korea," former US Ambassador Christopher Hill told CNN. "The usual betting is when North Korea provokes in this kind of way, the harder line, the right-of-center, tends to benefit in (South) Korea."

Abe called the test "absolutely intolerable," while Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said it was "a clear provocation to Japan and the region."

South Korean officials say analysis suggests the missile is a modified intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), a Musudan-level missile. It flew 500 kilometers (310 miles) before crashing in the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea, sources said.

IRBMs typically have a range of 3,000 to 5,500 kilometers (1,864 to 3,417 miles) -- much farther than needed to hit South Korea, but not long enough to hit the lower 48 states (though Guam is in its range.)

What could Trump do about North Korea? 02:29

Abductions and conquerors

Japan and North Korea do not have active diplomatic relations, but there has been progress to normalize them in recent years.

One of the big holdups has been the cases of Japanese citizens who were [abducted by North Korea](#) in the 1970s and 1980s.



Photos: Gallery: Japan's abducted

Pyongyang has admitted and apologized for the incidents, but it's yet to provide an explanation that was acceptable to the Japanese -- who say that diplomatic relations can't be normalized until the abduction issue is resolved.

North Korea's hostility toward Japan stems from its close relations to South Korea -- [which Japan calls](#) its "most important neighbor" -- and the United States.

But North Korea demonizes Japan domestically, using World War II-era characterizations focusing on the occupation of the Korean peninsula, according to Schuster.

Just a show?

There's two aspects to every North Korean military test: the technical and the political.

Even if a test is called a failure, there's a lot the North Koreans -- [and its adversaries](#) -- can learn.

"There are a lot of things that those who fire missiles are testing whenever they do these kinds of things," says retired US Lt. General Mark Hertling.

"They're trying to get distance, they're trying to read things like does the missile fall apart. They may have been testing some type of heat shield on the reentry vehicle. They may have been testing whether the missile could withstand G's (gravity forces) given a payload."

What can be learned by not shooting down a North Korean missile

The political aspect is both domestic and international.

At home, it's a way for Kim to prove to his base that he's a strong leader making progress on his promises. Abroad, they serve as provocative messages to Pyongyang's adversaries, reminding foes about North Korea's military capabilities. And they're usually timed to hammer the message home and maximize media coverage.

"They do things as much for political reasons as they do for military reasons," Schuster says. "The launch is more significant politically than operationally -- it's the first shot since Trump took office, it comes just 10 days after (current secretary of defense and retired) Gen. Mattis promised the Japanese and the South Koreans against the North Korean nuclear threat."

If it was an IRBM, the launch distance means it was likely a failure technically -- but not geopolitically, according to Schuster.

"It's very likely that the IRBM they wanted to launch wasn't ready, so they shot what they had. Political intent is the same, operational test probably didn't meet their expectations," he said.

The missile that really keeps US defense officials up at night is the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which -- if working properly -- could deliver a nuclear payload to the United States.

US and South Korean officials [told CNN](#) in January that North Korea might be readying two ICBMs for a test launch in the near future.

Though Kim says his country is in the "final stages" of readying the missile

for a test launch, many analysts believe it's a ways away -- Schuster said he believes it will be another five years before they get one.

The THAAD question

Preparing for a potential ICBM attack -- and hopefully being able to shoot it down -- is a key pillar of US defense policy with regard to North Korea. And every launch by Pyongyang is an impetus for Japan and South Korea to improve missile defense systems.

"The South Korean government will secure the lives of citizens and the national security from North Korea's threat based on a strong joint defense system between the South Korea and the US" Cho June-Hyuck, a spokesman for the South Korean Foreign Ministry, said after the Sunday missile launch.

He's likely referring to the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).

THAAD is designed to detect an ICBM and take it down before it can hit a target.

South Korea announced in July that it planned to deploy the system in Seongju County, about 155 miles (250 kilometers) southeast of Seoul.

"When the North Koreans provoke, more and more Koreans say we need that system," Hill said. "We (the US) need to get those fielded. We need to do whatever we can to support our allies, South Korea and Japan. We need to really step up that kind of cooperation."

THAAD isn't deployed in Japan, but there have been reports that Tokyo is considering it.

That would draw the ire of China and Russia, who are both vehemently opposed to the missile system.

Both countries believe that the US is playing up the defensive nature of the missile system and using its deployment to [geopolitically box them in](#) -- if it

can stop North Korea's missiles, couldn't it stop China's and Russia's too? "Americans only talk about it in a tactical sense, it's a useful tool alongside a bunch of others to deter North Korea or stop a missile mid-flight," says Professor John Delury of Yonsei University. "The Chinese look at THAAD in strategic terms, and what they see is THAAD as part of a bigger picture of a missile defense network along its perimeter."

Sat Feb 11, 2017 | 11:56pm EST

North Korea tests ballistic missile; U.S. to avoid escalation



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North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspects the construction site of Ryomyong Street, in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on January 26, 2017. KCNA via REUTERS

By Ju-min Park and Matt Spetalnick | SEOUL/WASHINGTON
North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the sea off its east coast early on Sunday, the first such test since U.S. President Donald Trump was elected, and his administration indicated that Washington would have a calibrated response to avoid escalating tensions.

The test was of a medium- or intermediate-range missile that landed in the Sea of Japan, according to the U.S. defense department, not an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), which the North has said it could test at any time.

The launch marks the first test of Trump's vow to get tough on a North Korean regime that last year tested nuclear devices and ballistic missiles at an unprecedented rate in violation of United Nations resolutions.

A U.S. official said the Trump administration had been expecting a North Korean "provocation" soon after taking office and will consider a full range of options in a response, but these would be calibrated to show U.S. resolve while avoiding escalation.

The new administration is also likely to step up pressure on China to rein in North Korea, reflecting Trump's previously stated view that Beijing has not done enough on this front, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"This was no surprise," the official said. "The North Korean leader likes to draw attention at times like this."

The latest test comes a day after Trump held a summit meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and said he agreed to work to ensure a strong defense against North Korea's threat, and also follows Trump's phone call last week with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"I just want everybody to understand, and fully know, that the United States of America is behind Japan, our great ally, 100 percent," Trump told reporters in Florida during a joint statement with Abe. He made no further comments.

Abe called the launch "absolutely intolerable" and said North Korea must comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions.

China is North Korea's main ally but has been frustrated by Pyongyang's repeated provocations, although it bristles at pressure from Washington and Seoul to curb the North and its young leader, Kim Jong Un.

China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Sunday morning.

Trump and his aides are likely to weigh a series of possible responses, including new U.S. sanctions to tighten financial controls, an increase in U.S. naval and air assets in and around the Korean peninsula and accelerated installation of new missile defense systems in South Korea, the administration official said.

But the official said that given that the missile was believed not to have been a threatened intercontinental missile and that Pyongyang had not carried out a new nuclear explosion, any response will seek to avoid ratcheting up tensions.

SHOW OF FORCE

The missile was launched from an area called Panghyon in

North Korea's western region just before 8 a.m. (2300 GMT Saturday) and flew about 500 km (300 miles), the South's Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

"Our assessment is that it is part of a show of force in response to the new U.S. administration's hardline position against the North," the office said in a statement.

The South's military said Seoul and Washington were analyzing the details of the launch. Yonhap News Agency said the South Korean military was assessing the launch to confirm whether it was a Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missile, which has a designed range of 3,000 km (1,800 miles).

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The North tried to launch a Musudan eight times last year but most attempts failed. One launch that sent a missile 400 km (250 miles), more than half the distance to Japan, was considered a success by officials and experts in the South and the United States.

Kim said in his New Year speech that the country was close to test-launching an ICBM and state media have said such a launch could come at any time.

Kim's comments prompted a vow of an "overwhelming" response from U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis when he traveled to South Korea earlier this month.

Once fully developed, a North Korean ICBM could threaten the continental United States, which is about 9,000 km (5,500 miles) from North Korea. ICBMs have a minimum range of about 5,500 km (3,400 miles), but some are designed to travel 10,000 km (6,200 miles) or more.

North Korea conducted two nuclear tests and numerous missile-related tests last year and was seen by experts and officials to be making progress in its weapons capabilities, although until Sunday no ballistic missile launch attempt had been detected since October.

Its repeated missile launches have prompted Washington and Seoul to agree to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile battery in South Korea later this year, which is strongly opposed by Beijing, which worries the system's powerful radar undermines its own security.

(Additional reporting by Jack Kim in Seoul, Matt Spetalnick

and Phil Stewart in Washington, Ayesha Rascoe and Kiyoshi Takenaka in Palm Beach, Florida, Elaine Lies in Tokyo, and Ben Blanchard in Beijing; Editing by Tony Munroe and Raju Gopalakrishnan)