



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 16, 2013

Kerry Says Nuclear North Korea “Will Not Be Accepted”

During a visit to South Korea on April 12, Secretary of State John Kerry said that the United States will conduct talks with North Korea only if Pyongyang demonstrates a serious effort to negotiate ending its nuclear weapons program.

“North Korea will not be accepted as a nuclear power,” [CNN](#) quoted Kerry after his arrival in Seoul.

“If Kim Jong Un decides to launch a missile, whether it’s across the Sea of Japan or in some other direction, he will be choosing willfully to ignore the entire international community, his own obligations that he has accepted, and it will be a provocative and unwanted act that will raise people’s temperature with respect to this issue,” Kerry also stated.



The CNN report noted that while U.S. officials believe that North Korea is capable of test-launching a mobile ballistic missile at any time, a senior administration official said there is no indication that any such missiles are armed with nuclear material.

Kerry made similar statements in an interview with CNN’s Jill Dougherty in Tokyo on April 15, saying: “The United States has made clear many times what the conditions are for our entering talks and they haven’t changed.”

“The conditions have to be met where the North has to move towards denuclearization, indicate a seriousness in doing so by reducing these threats, stop the testing, and indicate it’s actually prepared to negotiate,” he continued.

During a press briefing conducted by [White House Press Secretary Jay Carney](#) on April 12, journalists asked multiple questions about U.S. relations with North Korea. When a reporter asked if President Obama was concerned about reports that North Korea had the capability to deliver (presumably nuclear) weapons by ballistic missiles and that the unpredictable Kim Jong-un might even employ untested weaponry, Carney replied:

I want to be clear that North Korea has not demonstrated the capability to deploy a nuclear-armed missile. The United States continues to closely monitor the North Korean nuclear program, and calls upon North Korea to honor its international obligations.

In response to your question, ... it is our assessment that North Korea has not demonstrated the capability to deploy a nuclear-armed missile.... we have responded to the series of provocative actions as well as the stepped-up bellicose rhetoric emanating from Pyongyang by taking a series of prudent measures to ensure that our homeland and our allies are defended. That includes steps to enhance our missile defense system as well as a variety of other measures that we’ve taken and



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that have been reported on. So we take this seriously.

When the reporter asked what the Obama administration is looking at in terms of the behavior from Kim Jong-un that would suggest further action on the part of the U.S., Carney replied in a rather general manner:

When North Korea has, as it did not too long ago, taken an action that was flagrantly in violation of its commitments, we, with our fellow members of the United Nations Security Council, have acted, and acted unanimously just last month — increasing sanctions on North Korea, taking other actions. And that process, of course, continues. And it isolates North Korea, punishes North Korea, if you will, for the behavior that is in direct violation of its obligations.

Carney's reference to the United Nations Security Council takes on even greater significance when considering that the UN comprised the command apparatus for the South Korean side in the 1950-1953 conflict that never officially ended (hostilities only ceasing under a cease-fire armistice). Though the United States provided 88 percent of the 341,000 international soldiers that aided South Korean forces during the war, it was later revealed that Soviet communists within the UN structure had been funneling intelligence information to the communist side. This intelligence breach compromised the ability of UN forces to fully liberate the Korean peninsula and led to the stalemate and tense division that exists to this day.

When a reporter asked if National Security Advisor Tom Donilon's trip to Russia would include discussions of "missile defense in relation to North Korea," Carney replied, in part:

We have been discussing with the Russians, as well as the Chinese, what they can do to use their influence with North Korea to persuade North Korea to step back from some of the actions and rhetoric that we have seen from North Korea. They have, and China in particular has, unique influence with North Korea, which is an isolated country with not a great many communicants or others that — nations that it communicates directly with. So that relationship between China and North Korea and also between Russia and North Korea is one that we hope can be utilized to bring about some change in behavior.

In an article for the [antiwar.com](#) website, Jason Ditz cited from a Pew Research poll indicating that large numbers of Americans are following North Korea "very closely" and take that nation's threat "very seriously." Ditz noted, however, that despite widespread interest in and concern about North Korea's military capabilities, Americans' knowledge of the communist state is very limited. For example, the Pew poll shows that roughly half of the U.S. population believes that North Korea can wage a nuclear strike on America right now, with an equally high number believing that it will do so. As Ditz comments:

North Korea threatens attack with nuclear weapons they don't have on targets they can't hit, and the U.S. retorts that they will use a missile defense system they don't have to shoot down the missiles that aren't coming. The story is completely full of holes, but apparently the narrative can still hold an audience, at least for a few weeks.

[CNN reports](#) that North Korea continues to fuel the tension with sabre-rattling statements, such as one published on April 16 by Pyongyang's official news agency, KCNA.

"Our retaliatory action will start without any notice from now," read the North Korean statement, which the regime said was made in response to what it called insults from the "puppet authorities" in the South, claiming that there had been a rally against North Korea in Seoul — a rally it called a



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“monstrous criminal act.”

A report from [Fox News](#) said the “monstrous criminal act” that inspired such strong North Korean rhetoric was a tiny protest by about 250 people in downtown Seoul, where effigies of Kim Il-sung and his late son and successor, Kim Jong-il, were burned.

As if to underscore the hollowness of North Korea’s threats, a rocket launch on April 12 timed to celebrate the 100th birthday of the dead founding president Kim Il-sung and the rise to power of his grandson Kim Jong-un resulted in failure.

A Reuters report carried by the *Fiscal Times* noted that the North admitted in a state television broadcast that its latest satellite had not made it into orbit, as the rocket carrying it exploded after traveling a little more than 100 kilometers.

In response to the launch, Press Secretary Carney stated: “North Korea’s provocative action threatens regional security, violates international law and contravenes its own recent commitments.”

The North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, said the first stage fell into the sea west of South Korea, and the remainder was deemed to have failed, reported Reuters

“No debris fell on land,” NORAD said. “At no time were the missile or the resultant debris a threat.”

Photo of Secretary of State John Kerry: AP Images



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