



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 24, 2017

North Korea Threatens to Attack U.S. Carrier Group; Detains U.S. Citizen

The *Korea Herald* — a South Korean newspaper — on April 24 quoted statements posted on North Korea's state-run website, Uriminzokkiri, stating that the Pyongyang regime threatened to “bury [the USS *Carl Vinson*] at sea,” saying the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier's redirection demonstrates a looming invasion of the country.



“The world would clearly see how the US' rash, arrogant aircraft carriers turn into a lump of scrap metal and [get] buried at sea, and how the country vanishes from the Earth,” boasted the North Korean propaganda machine.

“Our super-hard-line responses include sudden, pre-emptive strikes involving land, naval, underwater and airmobile assets.”

Radio Pyongyang also said, “If the U.S. starts a reckless provocation, we will respond to all-out war with all-out war, and to a nuclear war with our own nuclear strikes.”

The North Korean threats — which are mostly bravado considering the relatively puny military strength of Pyongyang compared to the mammoth conventional and nuclear weapons arsenal of the United States — echoed similar statements made by a spokesman for the Pyongyang regime's foreign ministry following the U.S. decision earlier this month to divert the U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group 1, which includes the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson*, from Australia to the western Pacific Ocean near the Korean peninsula. The statement, announced on North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), said: “The DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] is ready to react to any mode of war desired by the U.S.”

“We will take the toughest counteraction against the provocateurs in order to defend ourselves by powerful force of arms,” the foreign ministry spokesman continued. “We will hold the U.S. wholly accountable for the catastrophic consequences to be entailed by its outrageous actions.”

Hwang Pyong-So, the director of the political bureau of North Korea's army, made similar threats in a speech: “If they [the United States and South Korea] try to ignite the spark of war, we will wipe out all of the invaders without a trace with ... our strong pre-emptive nuclear strike.”

NPR reported that the USS *Carl Vinson's* strike group is currently in the Philippine Sea, where it's taking part in joint exercises with Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force.

Meanwhile, *Business Insider* has just reported that the USS *Michigan*, a nuclear-powered submarine armed with guided Tomahawk cruise missiles, will join the carrier strike group off the Korean peninsula. *BI* reported that the *Michigan*, which is armed with more than 150 Tomahawks, should arrive in the area on April 25, the same day that North Korea will commemorate the 85th anniversary of the



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founding of its army.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported on April 24 that Chinese President Xi Jinping has urged President Trump that day to show restraint and show patience toward North Korea amidst indications that the rogue state is preparing for another nuclear test. However, *Business Insider* reported that Trump and Xi spoke on the phone about North Korea's "continued belligerence" on that same day.

The *Times* quoted from a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement reporting that Xi said China is "firmly opposed to any [North Korean] violations of the U.N. Security Council resolutions," and is willing to work with the United States.

Xi also expressed "hope that all sides exercise restraint and avoid intensifying the situation on the peninsula. Only when each side takes responsibility and works together, can we can solve the nuclear issue."

As North Korea fires verbal broadsides at the United States and the U.S. Navy's strike force moves closer to the Korean peninsula, another diplomatic dimension has been added to the equation. A North Korean university has reported that one of its lecturers, who holds U.S. and South Korean citizenship, has been detained.

"In a statement quoted by NPR's Anthony Kuhn, [Pyongyang University of Science and Technology] said that its adjunct professor, 58-year-old Tony Kim, who also goes by Kim Sang-duk, was detained at the airport in Pyongyang as he was about to leave the country on [April 22] local time. The university said Kim's detention had nothing to do with his academic work. So far, North Korea has remained silent about Kim's detention."

Al Jazeera reported that the university's chancellor, Park Chan-mo, confirmed that Kim was detained by officials as he was trying to leave the country from Pyongyang's international airport. A university spokesperson said Kim was trying to leave with his wife on a flight to China.

"It's usually a tactic held by North Korea when they want to get the attention of high level U.S. officials. South Korea says they are now looking into this detention," said Al Jazeera's Divya Gopala, reporting from Seoul.

Photo of USS Carl Vinson: AP Images

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