



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on May 29, 2009

More North Korean Missiles, South Remains Calm

These missile tests come on the heels of other short-range missile tests earlier this week and the test explosion of a nuclear device on May 25. North Korea accompanied these displays of military prowess with a vow on May 29 to retaliate if the United Nations responds to these tests with punitive sanctions. Pyongyang has also declared that they won't honor the truce that ended the Korean War, but since the truce was merely a cease-fire agreement and the North has not begun to fire directly at South Korean forces again, this rhetoric is largely meaningless. U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has said that, in Washington's view, the current state of affairs does not warrant sending any more U.S. troops to South Korea.



Washington isn't alone in staying calm. The title of [a May 28 Times Online article](#) describes just how unconcerned the average South Korean is about it all: "South Koreans are now almost blasé about nuclear blasts and missiles." The article notes that there are no signs of South Koreans leaving the country en masse, no panic buying, and no angry demonstrations. "We are not worried," said Ahn Hae Kyun, who is a vice-president at Daewoo Securities, as he sat in a pub enjoying a drink with colleagues. "We have been living for over 50 years under the same conditions." Co-worker Chris Jung added: "North Koreans are the same blood as us. They are showing their power to foreigners — not us." Times Online punctuates their assessment of the ability of South Koreans to "separate rhetoric from reality" with the fact that "the leading stock index fell only 0.7 per cent." South Koreans appear to be following the advice of their President Lee Myung Bak to maintain a calm response.

This isn't to say that it is business as usual for the South Korean military. Times Online noted that South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff have issued a statement saying they will "counteract sternly" any provocation by the North. South Korea's military is also on a heightened state of surveillance to better monitor the North's activities. But it appears that the South is taking this in stride, and that can only help to defuse a potentially volatile situation.

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