



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 23, 2019

U.S. Officials Say North Korea's Promise of a "Christmas Gift" Could Be Missile Launch

North Korea's "engine test" on December 8  — described by North Korean military officials as "crucial" in its development of long-range missiles — [has U.S. officials worried](#). They worry that it's a sign that all further negotiations over the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula are off the table. They worry that North Korea's "rocket man," Kim Jong-un, will light off a missile to test President Trump's resolve, perceiving Trump to be vulnerable while under pressure from his impeachment threat and his reelection chances next year.

On December 3, Ri Thae Song, North Korea's minister of foreign affairs, said that recent calls by Washington for another round of talks between President Trump and Kim are "nothing but a foolish trick hatched to keep [North Korea] bound to dialogue and use it in favor of the political situation and election in the U.S.... What is left is entirely up to the U.S. [as to] what Christmas gift it will select to get."

North Korea first detonated a nuclear device in 2006. During the early months of the Trump administration, the North Korean dictator decided to test the mettle of the new president by launching a series of missiles, both military and verbal. As Doug Wead discovered during one-on-one conversations with the president (as background for his book "Inside Trump's White House: the real story of his Presidency"), Trump was taken aback at the ferocity of Kim's verbal missiles.

Trump told Wead, "Our language started to get really violent, the toughest. Violent. Nobody had even seen anything like this. But something had to be done. What Americans missed was how he was threatening the whole region."

Trump launched his own verbal missile in response. During a briefing held at his Bedminster country club in New Jersey, he told reporters, "North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States [or] they will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen."

That laid the groundwork for a series of face-to-face meetings between the president and Kim, the first of their kind with the North Korean dictator. An agreement was signed in Singapore in June 2018 that said that Kim "commits to work toward complete nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

U.S. officials arranged for another meeting between top officials of the two countries in Stockholm in October, but no progress was made and the meeting ended.

The United States tried again, but Kim laid down conditions that were unacceptable. He wanted the United States to back off its sanctions in exchange for another promise to reduce its military nuclear development. Through foreign minister Kim Kye Gwan, the North Korean dictator made clear his position. Said Gwan:



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Three rounds of DPRK-U.S. summit meetings and talks were held since June last year, but no particular improvement has been achieved in [our] relations. The U.S. only seeks to [gain] time, pretending that it has made progress in settling the issue of the Korean Peninsula.

We are no longer interested in such talks that bring nothing to us. As we have got nothing in return, we will no longer gift the U.S. president with something he can boast of.

As the impeachment scandal continues and the 2020 election season draws nearer, Kim has apparently decided to test the mettle of the president again, hoping perhaps to find a vulnerability that wasn't there before. According to the U.S. military, North Korea has launched more than 20 missiles this year, including new types such as a submarine-launched ballistic missile and a solid-fuel rocket booster.

The president isn't likely to be intimidated by Kim's change of heart, or his new test of the president's mettle. As Peter Huessy, a senior defense consultant at the Mitchel Institute for Aerospace Studies, told the Epoch Times:

The North is playing the game of, "Let's see if we can beat up the United States and get concessions", because that is what they do. They are like a bully or kind of a criminal gang that extorts people. We [the United States under the Trump administration] are just not playing the extortion game anymore.

Observers of relations between Trump and "rocket man" should watch for the delivery of Kim's "Christmas Gift." It might be delivered by e-mail, or airmail.

Photo: AP Images

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