
N Korea Launches 2 Projectiles In Thanksgiving Message To Trump

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Seoul: North Korea fired two projectiles on Thursday, using the start of the Thanksgiving holiday in the United States to telegraph its frustration over Washington's refusal to grant sanctions relief.

The short-range projectiles were launched from Ryonpo on the North's east coast around 5 p.m. local time, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. They added that the projectiles, presumed to have been fired from a super-large multiple rocket launcher, traveled a distance of about 235 miles and reached an altitude of 60 miles.

"This type of act from North Korea does not help efforts to alleviate tensions on the Korean Peninsula," the JCS said.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe described Pyongyang's actions as a threat to the region and the world.

"We will remain in close contact with the United States, South Korea and the international community to monitor the situation. We will increase our vigilance to preserve the safety and assets of the Japanese people," he told reporters.

The launch continues a more aggressive posture by North Korea over recent months as talks with Washington hit a stalemate. Pyongyang has warned that its patience is running thin, and has given the United States until the end of the year to change its "hostile" policy and salvage

the dialogue process.

Last month, North Korea test-fired what it said was a new "super-large" multiple rocket launcher. And earlier this week, North Korea said its troops carried out artillery drills near its disputed sea border with South Korea.

Thursday's launches appeared timed to coincide with the Thanksgiving break and the two-year anniversary of Pyongyang's test of an intercontinental ballistic missile known as the Hwasong-15, emphasizing the message to President Trump, said Rachel Minyoung Lee, senior analyst at North Korea-focused website NK Pro.

"All in all, I think North Korea may be on a path toward more militaristic actions until the end of the year," she said. The regime had not issued official pronouncements on the United States since Nov. 19 and appeared to be letting its weapons do the talking, Lee added.

Pyongyang has threatened to resume long-range missile and nuclear tests, which leader Kim Jong Un agreed to freeze after he met with Trump in Singapore last year. Relations deteriorated after a follow-up summit in February ended without an agreement on nuclear disarmament in exchange for sanctions relief.

Earlier this month, North Korea accused the United States of "betrayal" for continuing to hold military exercises with South Korea, and said it no longer felt bound by its previous promises.

Pyongyang has conducted more than a dozen shorter-range ballistic missile tests since April, though Trump has repeatedly played down their significance.

Kim has called for relief from the international sanctions that hobble his economy, but the United States says North Korea has not taken sufficient disarmament steps to justify easing the pressure.

"The deadlock in nuclear talks with the United States is pushing North Korea to ramp up the level of provocation," said Shin Beom-chul, a researcher at Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul.

North Korea has previously used U.S. holidays to send messages to Washington. It launched its first intercontinental ballistic missile on July 4, 2017.
