
USA Says it Takes North Korea's Attack Threats Seriously

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"We do take those threats seriously and again call on Pyongyang to cease with the provocative rhetoric, cease with the threats and, quite frankly more critically, cease the provocative behavior," State Department spokesman John Kirby said in his daily press conference Monday.

North Korea said earlier that its People's Army "will execute preventive neutralization acts that could pose deadly and merciless blows" against the USA and South Korea.

According to Pyongyang, the North Korean forces have South Korean military bases within range as well as U.S. bases in the Asia-Pacific region.

North Korea's threats came in response to the largest ever joint military drills of the USA and South Korea, executed at a time of increased tension on the Korean peninsula after Pyongyang's recent weapons tests and fresh UN sanctions imposed afterwards as punishment.

"There would not be as compelling a reason to improve alliance capabilities if Pyongyang wasn't so intent on raising the stakes on the peninsula and decreasing any sense of security or stability there," Kirby said.

The exercises 'Key Resolve' and 'Foal Eagle' will last until 30 April and will be the largest ever maneuvers executed by the USA and South Korea.

More than 300,000 South Korean and some 15,000 American troops participate in this year's exercise.