



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on December 21, 2022

North Korea Claims Sanctions Won't Deter Missile Buildup

SINGAPORE — On Tuesday, Dec. 20, North Korea slammed South Korea for impeding its weapons development, claiming additional sanctions will not deter its missile buildup, state media KCNA said.

Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said the isolated country's attempt to build a spy satellite is a "pressing priority directly linked to our security."

South Korea would "cry out for some kind of international cooperation and try hard to impose additional sanctions on us," she said in a statement carried by KCNA. "But with our right to survival and development being threatened, why are we afraid of sanctions which we have seen repeatedly so far and is not even the first time, and why would we stop?"

Her remarks came days following Pyongyang's launch of two midrange ballistic missiles, which it deemed an "important" test for the construction of a spy satellite.

Although Kim insisted that North Korea had built advanced technologies to snap images from space using a spy satellite, observers derided the black-and-white images apparently taken from space in a weekend launch.

In a lengthy and acerbic response, Kim said it was "inappropriate and careless" to evaluate Pyongyang's satellite development progress and capability based on the two images. She asserted that a camera installed on the satellite had the "reliability of ground control, including altitude control and shooting control command, in a suitable space flight environment."

Moreover, she affirmed the reliability of the satellite's data-transmission devices and encryption-processing technology. "We carried out a necessary test and reported the significant and satisfying result, which was not lacking," she added.

The development of a military reconnaissance satellite was one of Pyongyang's major defense projects listed by her brother in 2021.

Kim rebuffed allegations that the North's satellite launches were thinly disguised firings of banned intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). "If we develop ICBMs, we will fire ICBMs, and not test long-range rockets disguised as satellites," she said.

She also refuted analysts questioning the North's technological ability to ensure that the rocket survives re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere, saying she would explain it in "an easy-to-understand



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manner” to doubters. “If the atmospheric re-entry technology was insufficient, it would not be possible to receive remote data from the pilot combat unit until the moment of impact,” she said.

The weekend’s launch comes after a year of record-breaking weapons tests by North Korea, including the launch of its most advanced ICBMs. North Korea is under various international sanctions for its nuclear weapon programs, but peaceful satellite launches are not subject to the same degree of sanctions.

Nonetheless, observers say developing such a satellite will offer North Korea cover for testing banned ICBMs, as they have much of the same technology. Earlier in 2022, Pyongyang conducted two launches alleging it was testing components for a reconnaissance satellite, which the United States and South Korea said likely entailed parts of its new Hwasong-17 ICBM.

Recently, North Korea lashed out at Japan’s increased military spending, warning of the possible consequences. The remarks by a spokesman for Pyongyang’s Foreign Ministry came days after Japan announced its largest military buildup since World War II as regional tensions with China, North Korea, and Russia raise concerns.

Pyongyang’s spokesman said Japan’s new security strategy basically formalized a “new aggression policy” and would bring a fundamental shift in East Asia’s security environment, and lambasted the United States for “exalting and instigating Japan’s rearmament and re-invasion plan.”

“We will continue to demonstrate, through practical actions, how much we are concerned and displeased with Japan’s unjust and greedy attempts to realize its ambitions,” the spokesman warned in a statement carried by KCNA.

Last month, U.S. President Joe Biden claimed that the U.S., Japan, and South Korea are “more aligned than ever” on North Korea’s “provocative behavior.”

Speaking in Cambodia after a trilateral meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, Biden labeled their countries key allies that share concerns about North Korea’s missile tests.

Yoon said North Korea’s recent actions displayed its regime’s “nature against humanitarianism,” while Kishida said the North’s provocations were unprecedented and more could be expected from Pyongyang.

“This trilateral summit is timely given we are expecting further provocation,” Kishida said in opening remarks at the three-way meeting. “I look forward to strengthening the coordination between the US, South Korea and Japan to respond firmly” to North Korea’s actions.

White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters aboard Air Force One that the three leaders discussed a coordinated response should the North conduct a seventh nuclear test, but did not elaborate further.

“The three leaders did coordinate on a joint response and in the event that there would be a seventh nuclear test by the DPRK [Democratic People’s Republic of Korea], and they tasked their teams to work out the elements of that response in real detail,” he said.

“You can expect a trilateral response, well-coordinated among the three countries,” he continued, elaborating that the response could include security, economic, and diplomatic components.

North Korea has long been forbidden from conducting nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches by the



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United Nations Security Council, which has increased sanctions on Pyongyang over the years to halt funding for those programs.

Biden said he also talked to Yoon and Kishida about increasing coordinated support for Ukraine in the conflict with Russia, ensuring peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, and working toward “common goals of a free and open Indo-Pacific.”



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