

North Korea may be Capable of Nuclear Missile Attack in 2018



Summary: South Korea made a surprising statement about the advanced stage of North Korea's nuclear program a day before the country tested another missile of the Sea of Japan.

South Korea warns that North Korea will likely be capable of launching a long-range ballistic missile with an attached nuclear warhead by next year. During a surprisingly candid assessment of Pyongyang's weapons program, the South Korean minister discussed their northern neighbor's advancements in building a nuclear program.

South Korea believes that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will do whatever possible to make a launch possible by the country's 70th anniversary of founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is in September.

Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon said at a news conference Tuesday, "They have been developing their nuclear capabilities faster than expected. We cannot rule out the possibility of North Korea declaring the completion of their nuclear program next year."

An anonymous US official told CNN a few months ago that they believe the country will reach their goal by early 2018. US Defense Intelligence Agency leader Lt. Gen. Vincent Stewart said in May that North Korea was trying to get past the last hurdle before the nuclear missile can be successful. Making it so the nuclear warhead survives the extreme heat from reentering the earth's atmosphere is proving to be a tricky step for North Korea. Stewart explained that the perfecting the step is "a matter of enough trial and error to make that work. They understand the physics, so it's just a matter of design."

Since the country is so exclusive and secretive, analysts fear that no one will know for certain if they can pair a missile with a nuclear warhead until they launch it. Reports have come in that North Korea launched another unidentified ballistic missile today. This is the first launch since September and the 16th of the year. The latest tests are a more advanced version of its intercontinental ballistic missile.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho alluded to the chance that Pyongyang may test nuclear warheads over the Pacific Ocean by dropping a warhead from a missile or an airplane. However, the country has slowed down its test, perhaps for mundane reasons like reaching annual domestic production quotas each year.

The launch of a missile today was confirmed to have come from Sain Ni, a location near the capital of Pyongyang. The missile traveled around 600 miles before landing in the Sea of Japan, which was in are inside Japan's Economic Exclusion Zone. The missile was never a threat to North America or any U.S. territories.

Pentagon spokesman Col. Robert Manning said, "We remain prepared to defend ourselves and our allies from any attack or provocation." White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said President Trump was briefed "while (the) missile was still in the air."

Do you think we should be worried about a nuclear attack by North Korea? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

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