

China Warns Tensions on Korean Peninsula at ‘Tipping Point’ After Pyongyang Missile Launch

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China has warned that the situation on the Korean Peninsula has reached “tipping point,” just hours after Pyongyang launched a ballistic missile. Meanwhile, North Korea has accused the US of driving the region towards an “extreme level of explosion.”

Speaking at a regular news briefing on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the situation is “now at a tipping point approaching a crisis. At the same time there is an opportunity to reopen peace talks.

“We hope relevant parties can consider how we can deescalate the situation on the peninsula and realize peace and stability on the peninsula,” she added, as quoted by AFP.

Hua went on to mention joint drills staged by the US and South Korea, the most recent of which began last week, saying the two sides “held one round after another of joint military exercises and they exerted military pressure on the DPRK (North Korea).

“After so many rounds and vicious cycles, do they feel they are nearer to peaceful settlement of the issue?

“The facts have proven that pressure and sanctions cannot fundamentally solve the issue,” Hua said, referring to UN sanctions imposed on Pyongyang.

The remarks came after North Korea launched a missile which, according to the Japanese and South Korean governments, passed through Japan’s northern airspace.

Seoul responded quickly following the launch, [conducting](#) bombing drills to demonstrate its “overwhelming” military force to the North. The show of force involved four F-15K fighter jets dropping Mk84 multipurpose bombs on a shooting range near the inter-Korean border in Taebaek, the presidential press secretary told reporters, according to Yonhap.

Tokyo also staged a pre-planned Patriot surface-to-air missile battery training exercise following the launch.

Hours after the launch, Han Tae-song, North Korea’s ambassador to the UN in Geneva,

stressed Pyongyang's right to defend against "hostile" actions by the US.

"Now that the US has openly declared its hostile intention towards the Democratic People's Republic of [North] Korea, by waging aggressive joint military exercises despite repeated warnings... my country has every reason to respond with tough counter-measures as an exercise of its right to self-defense," Han told the UN Conference on Disarmament, as quoted by Reuters.

"And the US should be wholly responsible for the catastrophic consequences it will entail," he added, while failing to explicitly mention Tuesday's missile launch.

Tensions between Washington and Pyongyang have worsened since US President Donald Trump took office, with the American leader repeatedly vowing to "solve the problem" of North Korea.

During a 40-minute phone call with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe following the Tuesday launch, Trump [stressed](#) that the US is "100 percent with Japan," with the two leaders agreeing to increase pressure on Pyongyang.

Meanwhile, China and Russia have proposed a "double freeze" plan which would see North Korea suspend its missile launches in exchange for a halt in joint US-South Korea military drills.

The plan was rejected by the US, with State Department spokesperson Heather Neuert stating earlier this month that the

"so-called double freeze, that's not going to change. We're allowed to do it (exercises). We're allowed to do it with our ally, South Korea. We will continue to do that and that's just not going to change."

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