

North Korea Warns Trump Against Committing “Act of War” with Naval Blockade, Threatens “Merciless” Response

By John Haltiwanger

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North Korea warned President Donald Trump on Thursday that establishing a naval blockade would represent an “act of war” and would lead the state to take “merciless” countermeasures.

The Trump administration has [proposed setting up a blockade](#) as a consequence of North Korea’s repeated long-range missile tests and refusal to give up its nuclear program. A spokesman for North Korea’s foreign ministry said a blockade would constitute a [“wanton violation”](#) of its sovereignty.

North Korea’s state-run news agency accused Trump of taking a “big step” toward nuclear war by “recklessly seeking the naval blockade against our country, neglecting the strategic prestige of our country that has achieved the great historic cause of completing the state nuclear force.

“Should the United States and its followers try to enforce the naval blockade against our country, we will see it as an act of war and respond with merciless self-defensive countermeasures as we have warned repeatedly,” the agency added.

North Korea and the U.S. have been enemies for decades, but tensions in 2017 have reached historic heights as Kim Jong Un’s regime ramps up its missile tests, including [its most powerful long-range missile test yet](#), in November. Trump has responded with harsh economic sanctions, threats of total destruction and numerous insults directed at Kim, whom the president often refers to as “Rocket Man.”

Last week, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson suggested the U.S. would be open to discussions with North Korea without demanding it give up its nuclear arsenal. But the White House has not backed Tillerson and reportedly believes it’s [“not the right time”](#) for such talks.

President Trump also undermined Tillerson’s belief in a diplomatic solution to his war of words with the North earlier this year, tweeting, “Save your energy Rex, we’ll do what has to be done!”

Meanwhile, China has urged all parties involved to embrace pragmatism and move away from threats of war. On Thursday, Chinese President Xi Jinping said war must never be allowed on the Korean Peninsula. “The peninsula issue must, in the end, be resolved via dialogue and consultation,” [Xi said](#) as South Korean President Moon Jae-in visited Beijing.