

Statement on North Korea's Nuclear Test

September 9, 2016

The United States condemns North Korea's September 9 nuclear test in the strongest possible terms as a grave threat to regional security and to international peace and stability. North Korea stands out as the only country to have tested nuclear weapons this century. Today's test, North Korea's second this year, follows an unprecedented campaign of ballistic missile launches, which North Korea claims are intended to serve as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons targeting the United States and our allies, the Republic of Korea and Japan. As Commander in Chief, I have a responsibility to safeguard the American people and ensure that the United States is leading the international community in responding to this threat and North Korea's other provocations with commensurate resolve and condemnation.

To be clear, the United States does not, and never will, accept North Korea as a nuclear state. Far from achieving its stated national security and economic development goals, North Korea's provocative and destabilizing actions have instead served to isolate and impoverish its people through its relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile capabilities. Today's nuclear test, a flagrant violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, makes clear North Korea's disregard for international norms and standards for behavior and demonstrates it has no interest in being a responsible member of the international community.

Last night I returned from the G-20 and East Asia Summit meetings in Asia, where my counterparts and I were united in our call for North Korea to return to the path of denuclearization. Upon hearing the news of the test, I had the opportunity to consult separately via phone with Republic of Korea (R.O.K.) President Park Geun-hye and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. We agreed to work with the U.N. Security Council, our other six-party partners, and the international community to vigorously implement existing measures imposed in previous resolutions and to take additional significant steps, including new sanctions, to demonstrate to North Korea that there are consequences to its unlawful and dangerous actions. I restated to President Park and Prime Minister Abe the unshakable U.S. commitment to take necessary steps to defend our allies in the region, including through our deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery to the R.O.K. and the commitment to provide extended deterrence, guaranteed by the full spectrum of U.S. defense capabilities.

Categories: Statements by the President : North Korea, nuclear weapon test.

Names: Abe, Shinzo; Park Geun-hye.

Subjects: Commerce, international : Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Japan : Prime Minister; North Korea : International and U.S. sanctions; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; North Korea : U.N. Security Council resolutions, noncompliance; South Korea : Defense relationship with U.S; South Korea : President.

DCPD Number: DCPD201600571.