

North Korea hones Guam strike plans, mocks US president

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People yesterday walk in front of a monitor in Tokyo, Japan, showing news about North Korea.
Photo: Reuters

North Korea yesterday announced a detailed plan to send a salvo of four missiles over Japan and toward the US territory of Guam, raising the stakes in a stand-off with US President Donald Trump, who it said was “bereft of reason.”

The scheme to target the island, a key US military stronghold, was intended to “signal a crucial warning,” as “only absolute force” would have an effect on the US leader, Pyongyang said.

The declaration came after Trump said that the US’ nuclear arsenal was “far stronger and more powerful than ever before.”

The region was facing “a mini Cuban Missile Crisis,” said John Delury, a professor at Yonsei University in Seoul.

Trump’s remarks were “a load of nonsense,” said General Kim Rak-gyom, the commander of the North’s missile forces, according to Pyongyang’s Korean Central News Agency. “Sound dialogue is not possible with such a guy bereft of reason.”

The military would complete the Guam plan by the middle of this month and submit it to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for consideration, he said.

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The statement said the four missiles would be launched simultaneously and overfly the Japanese prefectures of Shimane, Hiroshima and Kochi.

They would have a flight time of 17 minutes, 45 seconds, travel 3,356.7km and come down 30km to 40km from Guam, it said, which would put the impacts just outside US territorial waters.

Japan, which has in the past warned it would shoot down any missiles that threaten its territory, said that it could “never tolerate” provocations from North Korea.

Japanese Minister of Defense Itsunori Onodera told a Japanese parliamentary session that a missile attack on the US territory would breach the US deterrence against an attack on Japan.

He said that would be a Japanese national emergency, because it would threaten its existence as a nation.

Japan in that case can exercise the right to “collective” self-defense and activate its Aegis missile defense system, he said.

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