

North Korea's Kim Jong Un calls Donald Trump 'deranged', says he will 'pay dearly' for his threats

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Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, in an extraordinary and direct rebuke, called President Donald Trump "deranged" and said he will "pay dearly" for his threats, a possible indication of more powerful weapons tests on the horizon.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un

Kim said Trump is "unfit to hold the prerogative of supreme command of a country." He also described the U.S. president as "a rogue and a gangster fond of playing with fire."

The dispatch was unusual in that it was written in the first person, albeit filtered through the North's state media, which is part of propaganda efforts meant to glorify Kim. South Korean media called it the first such direct address to the world by Kim.

Some analysts saw a clear announcement that North Korea would ramp up its already brisk pace of weapons testing, which has included missiles meant to target U.S. forces throughout Asia and the U.S. mainland.

"I will make the man holding the prerogative of the supreme command in the U.S. pay dearly for his speech calling for totally destroying the DPRK," said the statement carried by North's official Korean Central News Agency on Friday morning.

DPRK is the abbreviation of the country's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The statement responded to Trump's combative speech at the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday where he mocked Kim as a "Rocket Man" on a "suicide mission," and said that if "forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea."

Kim characterized Trump's speech to the world body as "mentally deranged behaviour."

He said Trump's remarks "have convinced me, rather than frightening or stopping me, that the path I chose is correct and that it is the one I have to follow to the last."

Kim said he is "thinking hard" about his response and that Trump "will face results beyond his expectation."

Kim Dong-yub, a former South Korean military official who is now an analyst at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said Kim Jong Un's statement indicated that North Korea will respond to Trump with its most aggressive missile test yet. That might include firing a Hwasong-14 intercontinental ballistic missile over Japan to a range of around 7,000 kilometers (4,349 miles) to display a capability to reach Hawaii or Alaska.

The statement will further escalate the war of words between the adversaries as the North moves closer to perfecting a nuclear-tipped missile that could strike America.

In recent months, the North has launched a pair of still-developmental ICBMs it said were capable of striking the continental United States and a pair of intermediate-range missiles that soared over Japanese territory. Earlier this month, North Korea conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test to date drawing stiffer U.N. sanctions.

- AP