
From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2009 10:24 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: North Korea to move intercontinental missile: report

From: Gorog, Andrea
To: NEWS-Mahogany; NEWS-EAP; NEWS-Korea
Cc: SES-O_Shift-III
Sent: Fri May 29 21:47:25 2009
Subject: North Korea to move intercontinental missile: report

North Korea to move intercontinental missile: report

Fri May 29, 2009 9:40pm EDT

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea is preparing to move an intercontinental ballistic missile from a factory near Pyongyang to a launch site on the east coast, a South Korean newspaper quoted a source in Washington as saying on Saturday.

The factory north of Pyongyang is the same place where the North manufactured the long-range rocket it fired on April 5 before moving it to the east-coast Musudan-ri missile range for assembly and launch, the Dong-a Ilbo newspaper said.

Regional powers are waiting to see what the North might do next after it conducted a nuclear test on Monday. South Korea is on alert on the assessment Pyongyang may make provocative moves using conventional weapons at their heavily armed border.

North Korea has warned of an intercontinental ballistic missile test in anger over U.N. Security Council punishment of what Pyongyang said was a satellite launch on April 5.

"Preparations to move an ICBM from the Saneum Weapons Research Center near Pyongyang by train have been captured by U.S. spy satellites," Dong-a Ilbo quoted a source in Washington knowledgeable about the issue as saying.

The research lab is the North's main center of research and manufacture of long-range missiles, the newspaper said.

South Korea's defense ministry could not immediately comment on the report.

North Korea fired a short-range missile on Friday from the Musudan-ri missile base, South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted an unnamed government source as saying. The missile appeared to be a modified surface-to-air missile with a range of up to 160 km (99 miles), Dong-a Ilbo said.

The two Koreas have fought two deadly naval clashes on their disputed maritime border in the past 10 years and the North has warned another could happen.

U.S. Defense Department spokesman Geoff Morrell said on Friday there had been no sign of stepped-up North Korean military activity.

But a U.S. defense official said the United States had observed "above average activity" in the past 24 hours at a site in North Korea that has previously been used to test fire long-range missiles.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said it had seen the number of Chinese fishing boats near the peninsula in the Yellow Sea drop sharply in recent days and is watching the North's activities for indications of aggression.

In Singapore, defense ministers of South Korea, Japan and the United States will meet to discuss responses to North Korea's further provocations, South Korea's defense ministry said.

Andrea Görög
Watch Officer
Department of State Operations Center
202-647-1512