



COMMITTEE ON
**HOMELAND
SECURITY**
DEMOCRATS

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, *Ranking member*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Empty Threat or Serious Danger: Assessing North Korea's Risk to the Homeland

Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency

October 12, 2017

Undoubtedly, the threat posed by North Korea is one of the most complex challenges to our national security. Daily, we hear of North Korea's targeting our nation—including our way of life. These threats, if carried out, could cause unprecedented devastation to our nation.

Under the Kim Jong Un regime, North Korea has executed 98 ballistic missile tests and six underground nuclear tests overall. This year alone, North Korea has fired 22 missiles during 15 tests, including an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)—a missile that is reported to reach anywhere in the world-- launched on July 4, 2017.

Given the relationship between the U.S. and North Korea, it can be concluded that the purpose of the tests is producing missiles capable of reaching this country. North Korea's cyber capabilities also raise serious concerns, as the effects of cyber warfare can be crippling.

Along with Russia, U.S. intelligence officials have long considered North Korea among the world's most dangerous cyber actors in terms of their ability to inflict damage via computer networks. The Intelligence Community has warned that North Korea has plans to execute a large scale cyber-attack on our critical infrastructure.

Furthermore, according to a recent and alarming CNN article, a Russian telecommunications firm is now providing North Korea a new internet connection, thus potentially augmenting North Korea's cyberattacking capabilities while deepening its ties to the nation responsible for hacking the 2016 U.S. election.

Today, I see that there is an effort in this body to place a serious focus on this threat. That sentiment is not shared down the street at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Unfortunately, President Trump seemingly is uninterested in handling this threat in a diplomatic fashion.

Instead, the President engages in a public "war of words" with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, escalating tensions at a time when the need for appropriate sanctions and strategic diplomacy could not be greater. What is also appalling is the President's focus on disparaging the nation's top diplomat and challenging his IQ.

Instead, the President should devote his attention to the North Korean threat rather than tweeting and hurling insults all for the sake of attention.

I look forward to having a productive discussion on the threats posed by North Korea to the U.S. and the steps the Department of Homeland Security can take to mitigate those threats.

#

Media contact: Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

