

Mattis: North Korean Missiles Not a 'Capable Threat' Against US

Says Data From North Korea Test Doesn't Support Capacity to Hit US Mainland

By [Jason Ditz](#)

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Most reports have presented North Korea's nuclear retaliatory capabilities as a rapidly advancing part of their military, and one which may preclude a unilateral US attack against them. Secretary of Defense James Mattis has rejected that idea.

On Friday, Mattis said analysis of the most recent North Korean test launch, the one that led many to conclude they could reach anywhere in the mainland United States, [was not "shown to be a capable threat against us right now."](#)

Mattis did not elaborate on what about the North Korean tests was lacking as far as presenting them as a capable threat. Past reports, however, questioned North Korea's capacity to steer such weapons accurately at long range.

Some officials also questioned whether North Korea had the ability to shield a nuclear warhead during re-entry, with South Korea saying the North needed to "prove" that. How they'd prove that short of legitimately firing an above-ground nuclear ICBM, is not clear.

Mattis' disavowal of North Korea's capabilities may be informing the White House opposition to the State Department's diplomatic overtures to North Korea, convincing Trump that direct talks aren't an immediate priority.

Jason Ditz is news editor of Antiwar.com.

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