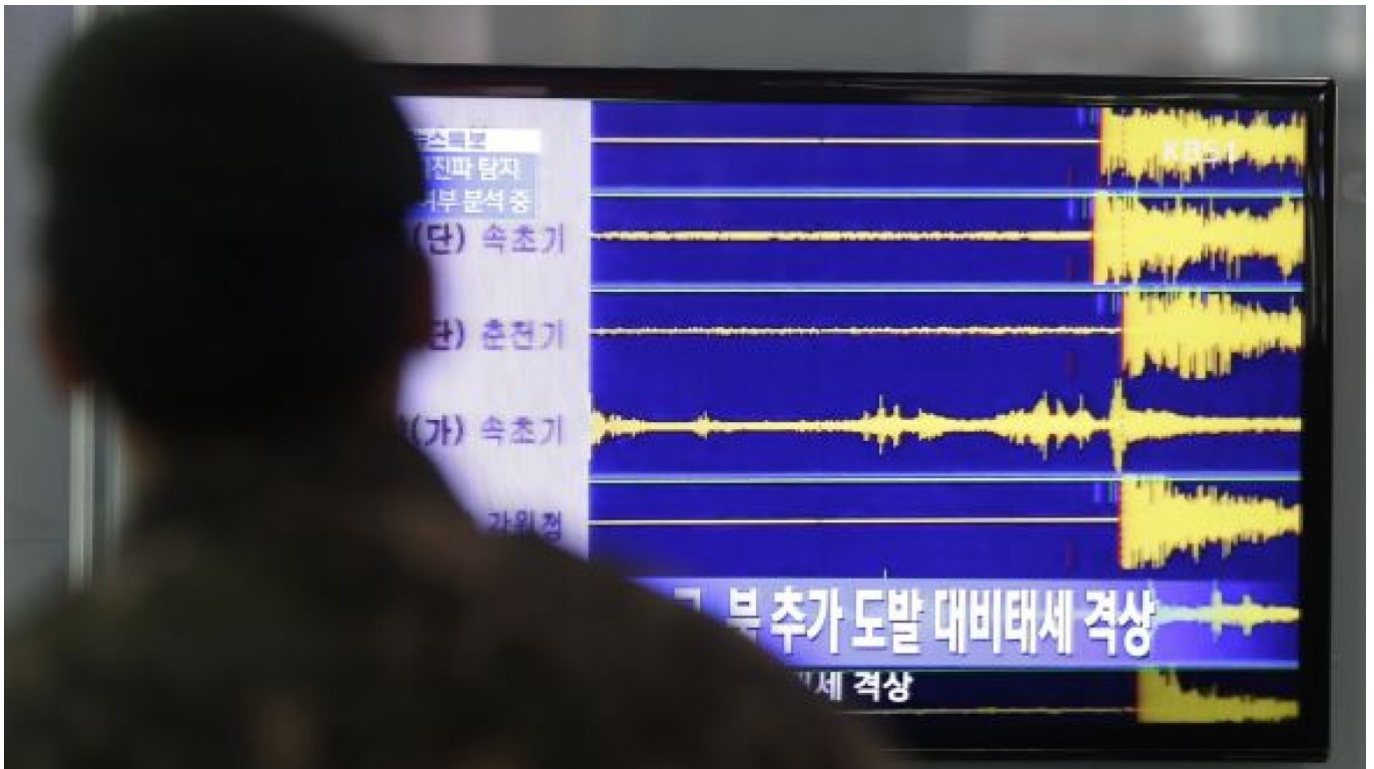


North Korean Nuke Blast Condemned

By [Ivan Nechepurenko](#)

February 12, 2013



A South Korean soldier watching a TV screen Tuesday reporting seismic waves from North Korea's nuclear test. **Lee Jin-man**

Russia joined a chorus of nations in condemning North Korea's third-known detonation of a nuclear weapon, but it insisted that the situation "should not be used as an excuse to increase military activity around the Korean Peninsula."

Although the issue "deserves an adequate reaction," it "must be countered within the framework of international law," the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday in a statement, adding that the two countries had a long-enduring tradition of being "good neighbors."

North Korea announced earlier Tuesday that it had conducted an underground detonation of an atomic bomb that was "smaller and lighter" than the previous two, "yet with great explosive power." Russia's Federal Meteorological Service reported around 4 p.m. that background radiation along the border with North Korea remained within the normal range.

"Russia has a special role in resolving all international conflicts, including ones on the Korean

Peninsula,” Alexei Pushkov, head of the State Duma’s International Affairs Committee, told The Moscow Times. “Russia can act as a force that puts the international system in balance, and regarding North Korea, our position is very close to that of our Western colleagues.”

But Pushkov said he does not believe that imposing sanctions is an effective way to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear program. He said it is better to engage the country’s leadership in dialogue.

Vyacheslav Nikonov, first deputy head of the same committee, said “the main reason behind these nuclear tests is to make the Americans take North Korea seriously and provide it with security guarantees. The Korean leadership wants to acquire more leverage vis-a-vis the U.S.”

Estimates by the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization suggested that the explosion was twice as powerful as the previous one in 2009.

News of the test provoked a torrent of international condemnation. The White House issued a statement saying it was “a highly provocative act that, following its [North Korea’s] Dec. 12 ballistic missile launch, undermines regional stability [and] violates North Korea’s obligations under numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions.”

Pyongyang’s main ally, Beijing, summoned the North Korean ambassador to express its protest of the blast. The Chinese government also called on all concerned parties to respond in a “cool-headed manner and persist in resolving the issue of denuclearization of the peninsula through dialogue and consultation within the context of the six-party talks,” which include North and South Korea, Japan, China, the U.S. and Russia.

Commenting on Russia’s possible role in dealing with the North Korean nuclear threat, Alexei Arbatov of the Carnegie Moscow Center told The Moscow Times that Russia would likely support “some symbolic sanctions,” but that it would “certainly oppose a complete economic blockade, up to executing its veto right.”

In his view, “Russia now plays a much smaller role in North Korea than China. Even though the Russians provide some economic help, China is Korea’s main sponsor. However, Russia is the only great power that is interested in the re-unification of the two Koreas into a single state. This will provide the Kremlin with more leeway in the overall region and also bring in lucrative investments to the Russian Far East. A unified Korea could also become Russia’s strategic ally.”

Igor Linge, deputy director of the Institute for Safe Development of Atomic Energy, said “it will take years for Korea to acquire the status of a full-fledged nuclear power” and “underground nuclear tests will surely not affect Russia in terms of radiation.”

Contact the author at nechepurenko@imedia.ru

Related articles:

- [World Powers Seek Iran Nuke Talks in February](#)

- [U.S.-Russia in Nuclear Arms Reduction Talks](#)
- [Medvedev Warns on Nuclear Proliferation, Global Warming](#)

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/02/12/north-korean-nuke-blast-condemned-a21486>