

Latest ballistic launches by DPR Korea raise risk of regional arms race, UN Security Council warns

8 March 2017 – Expressing strong condemnation of the most recent ballistic missile launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the United Nations Security Council reiterated that the country should refrain from any actions, including nuclear tests, in violation of the relevant Council resolutions, and comply fully with its obligations under those resolutions.

“Such [ballistic missile] activities contribute to the DPR Korea's development of nuclear weapons delivery systems and increase tension in the region and beyond as well as the risk of a regional arms race,” stressed the 15-member Security Council in a statement issued late yesterday.

“[We regret] that the [country] is diverting resources to the pursuit of ballistic missiles while [its] citizens have great unmet needs,” the members added.

Three of the ballistic missiles launched on 5 March landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone.

These latest ballistic missile firing follows at least 14 launches between April last year and February this year, as well as a nuclear test in September 2016. These actions are also in violation of a number of Security Council resolutions, including one adopted in March last year that had imposed fresh sanctions on the country.

Further in the statement, Security Council members underscored the importance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in north-east Asian region at large and expressed their commitment to a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the situation.

They also welcomed efforts by Council members, as well as other States, to facilitate a peaceful and comprehensive solution through dialogue, emphasised the importance of DPR Korea showing “sincere commitment” to denuclearisation, and stressed the importance of working to reduce tensions in the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

Earlier this week, UN Secretary-General António Guterres had also condemned the missile launches and reiterated his call for the DPR Korean leadership to refrain from further provocations and return to full compliance with its international obligations.

Budget 2017 – Not much changes

Lots of money moved around in the Budget arithmetic. Practically all of the changes resulted from new forecasts. At last the Treasury and OBR have thrown off the inaccurate gloom they were enveloped in from the time of Brexit vote, and have brought their figures more into line with reality. As a result revenues leapt £10.5bn for 2016-17 compared to the November forecast! Borrowing is now scheduled to be £51.7bn instead of the £68bn estimated in November, as spending is down a bit as well. I assume they have at last got their 2016-17 forecasts broadly right, as they must know most of the numbers by now.

I raised the issue of wildly inaccurate forecasts and the danger that they drag Ministers into policy responses that are not warranted by the underlying situation.

The Chancellor himself moved very little money around for next year. He took us through a number of detailed spending pledges, itemising £5m for a commemoration for women's voting rights, £25 million for small business rate relief recipients, £25 million for a one off pubs rates relief, and £20 million for free schools capital. The one major item which is also welcome is the £1200 million more for social care. There is also £250 million for NHS improvements.

The Budget also proposed tax changes for later years, including an increase in Self employed rates of NIC and a reduction in the tax free dividend payable from a company. I would be interested in opinions on those measures, which come in during the likely run up to the next election.

Transparency data: HMNB Devonport maintenance dredging variation

On 6 March 2017 the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) announced a new disposal site was open for marine licence applications for the disposal of dredged material. The MMO has now varied the Defence Infrastructure Organisation's (DIO) licence, which licences the navigational maintenance dredging in and adjacent to Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Devonport, Plymouth.

The variation has changed the disposal site from Rame Head South (PL031) to Plymouth Deep (PL035). Due to increased regulatory burden surrounding the Rame Head South disposal site and in light of the continued requirement for dredging and disposal operations, the MMO has been working with the main users of the site in leading a disposal site characterisation study to

identify an optimal, sustainable alternative site for long-term dredged material disposal operations within the River Tamar and Plymouth Sound area. Further information on the [South West Disposal Site Characterisation Project](#).

The marine licence for the maintenance dredge at HMNB Devonport allows DIO to complete one maintenance dredge campaign of the dockyard's critical areas between now and March 2017. The dredge is required in order to maintain the operational capacity of the Naval Base.

The MMO has now determined the application and a copy of the licence and the supporting assessments have been attached for reference.

Further Information

All marine licence applications are available from the [marine licensing public register](#).

Contact information

Marine Licensing Team

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[News story: Licence variation for South West disposal](#)

This follows the announcement that the new disposal site is open for marine licence applications for the disposal of dredged material.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation's (DIO) licence has now been [varied to change disposal activities to Plymouth Deep](#). The variation changed the disposal site from Rame Head and conditions referencing Rame Head South have been amended.

No changes to the dredging methodology have been made. The marine licence for the maintenance dredge at HMNB Devonport allows DIO to complete one maintenance dredge campaign of the dockyard's critical areas between now and the end of March 2017.

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