

Senior Russian Diplomat Urges Restraint Over North Korea

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moscow urged restraint in the Korean Peninsula on Saturday, after North Korea said it was entering a "state of war" with South Korea in a further escalation of its bellicose rhetoric against Seoul and its main ally, Washington.

"We hope that all parties will exercise maximum responsibility and restraint and no one will cross the point of no return," senior Russian Foreign Ministry official Grigory Logvinov told Interfax.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Friday put missile units on standby to attack U.S. military bases in the South and the Pacific, after two nuclear-capable U.S. stealth bombers flew over the Korean Peninsula in a rare show of force.

"We expect that everyone understands that a recurrence of war on the peninsula is definitely unacceptable," Logvinov told RIA-Novosti.

When asked by reporters whether Pyongyang had the same understanding, Logvinov said: "Of course. We were in contact with the North Korean side."

U.S. officials said the B-2 bombers were on a diplomatic sortie aimed at reassuring allies South Korea and Japan, as well as at nudging Pyongyang back to dialogue.

"At least at this point, we see that the statements [of Washington] are rather restrained. The position of the American side is a bit reassuring," Logvinov told RIA-Novosti.

Russia warned on Friday that the heightened military activity was slipping into a "vicious cycle" that could get out of control.

Tension has been high since North Korea conducted a third nuclear weapons test in February in breach of UN sanctions and despite warnings from China for it not to do so.

As tensions rose close to Russia's eastern borders, President Vladimir Putin made staff changes within the Security Council, promoting Yury Averyanov, with experience of Far East affairs, to the first deputy of the top security chief.

Averyanov moved to the Security Council in 2006 after six years as Putin's deputy representative for the Russian Far East.

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