

**THE USS *CARL VINSON* STRIKE GROUP:
A SECURITY ANATOMY OF THE
KOREAN PENINSULA CRISIS**

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Executive Summary

1. The topic of peace-making in the Korean Peninsula was first broached by US President Trump and Chinese President Xi at the Xi-Trump Summit (6-7 April 2017) when discussing geopolitical developments.
2. During and after the summit, US President Trump indicated his respect for China, while China is ready to do business with the new administration. The two countries share the worldview of maintaining political stability.
3. On 15 April 2017, North Korea geared up for a major celebration to mark the 105th birthday of its founding father, the late Kim Il Sung.
4. Concerns in the international community that North Korea will also test a nuclear device continues as its officials claim they will test a nuclear weapon device according to their schedule and preferences.
5. Outside North Korea and in its periphery, a Mexican stand-off situation is developing. US destroyer ships are in place with Tomahawk missile tubes ready to fire upon its commander's assessment of possible threats posed by potential missile launches, nuclear test and other "redline" developments.
6. The *Carl Vinson* strike group has been deployed to the Korean Peninsula. It has 90 aircraft on deck standing on a formidable 100,000 tons of steel powered by two nuclear reactors. It carries the Short Take Off and Landing (STOL) F-18 Hornets that are accurate precision fighter bombers and strike fighters.
7. US Vice President Mike Pence made an important effort to communicate US intentions with allies at a meeting in South Korea on 16 April 2017 where he visited the De-Militarised Zone. His presence is reassuring for allies in Seoul and Tokyo.

8. On the other hand, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a press conference with his French counterpart warned of war. In the meantime, Air China has suspended flights to Pyongyang because of the lack of flight demand.
9. Beijing is trying feverishly to pull all parties back from the brink, promising a package that urges Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons ambitions in exchange for Chinese protection.
10. Beijing has urged all parties to desist from actions that can reach a point of no return. The US administration under President Trump is supporting Chinese efforts.
11. Both South Korea and Japan have deployed PAC-3 Patriot missile defence system and the sea-based Aegis destroyer missile system. Patriot anti-missile defence system works well in taking out short range missiles like the former Soviet Scuds and their imitators in the North Korean arsenal. Terminal High Altitude Area Defence was set up in April 2017.