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Springhill Care Group: South Korea, US Warns of DPRK Launch by [Springhill Care](#)

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Satellite images have surfaced recently revealing North Korea's digging of a tunnel in what seems to be a preparation for a new nuclear test.

According to reports from intelligence officials, the excavation at northeastern Punggye-ri, where previous nuclear tests were done in 2009 and 2006, is already in the final stages. What observers are anxious of is a repeat of an incident in 2009 when the country walked out from nuclear negotiations and subsequently conducted a nuclear test.

This report has come just as North Korea is prepping for their missile launch that the rest of the world suspects to be a missile test in disguise.

US has said on Monday that an underground nuclear test along with the rocket launch are acts that will leave North Korea more isolated.

Experts say the only reason for them to dig a new tunnel on that area will be to conduct a nuclear test. Moreover, nuclear tests done consist of closing the tunnel with dirt, which is the last step before the detonation.

According to an analyst from Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, DPRK is in need of a new tunnel if they are planning on a nuclear test because the 2 tunnels they used have already caved in and became contaminated with radiation after previous tests. Moreover, if the upcoming launch is already deemed as "highly provocative" by the international community, a nuclear test will be worse.

South Korea and Japan has been making preparations to shoot down the rocket if it threatens their territory, claiming their right to self-defense.

Apparently, the Defense Minister of South Korea has been contacted by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to discuss North Korea's plans and according to a spokesman of Pentagon, both of them regards the launch as a "serious provocation".

United States, Britain and Japan have been reiterating their demand that North Korea cancel the launch, with the warning that shooting a long-range rocket violates UN resolutions and its own promise of halting nuclear activity. China is also being urged by the US to dissuade DPRK from proceeding with the launch.

North Korea has previously announced its plans to launch an "observation satellite" through a 3-stage rocket for the centennial celebration of their founder Kim Il Sung's birthday this April.

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