

**New Leader Sees Gains From Test**  
**By Choe Sang Hoon, The New York Times.**  
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By announcing the detonation of a nuclear device, Kim Jong-un, the young leader of North Korea, seemed to be attempting to raise his status as a worthy leader at home and as a foe to be taken seriously among the countries his government considers its enemies.



Seismic activity was reported near the site of previous tests.

Mr. Kim — believed to be in his late 20s when he took over the militaristic government after the death of his father, Kim Jong-il, in late 2011 — has recently emphasized a better living standard for his long-suffering people, generating hopes that he might lead the country out of its isolation. But at the same time, he has shown himself to be his father's son, launching a long-range rocket in December and threatening more missile and nuclear tests in the face of sanctions.

With the test Tuesday, Mr. Kim appeared to have chosen his path for now, and analysts said there were good reasons for that.

"Now is a particularly opportune time for Kim Jong-un to reset his relations with the powers in the region," said Lee Sung-yoon, a North Korea specialist at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Massachusetts. "Pyongyang will calculate that after a decent interval of three or four months, its adversaries will return to negotiations, possibly with bigger blandishments in tow."

North Korea's attempts to unsettle the region started in December, when the government successfully launched the long-range rocket, putting a satellite into orbit, the first for the impoverished country. That prompted the United Nations to tighten sanctions and even led China, its sole major protector at the United Nations Security Council, to support the sanctions and chide the government.

But the satellite success also appeared to have emboldened Mr. Kim.

"He seems intent on pushing what he may see as his advantage, both domestically and internationally," said Jonathan D. Pollack, a North Korea expert at the Brookings Institution. "Regardless of warnings from China, it is clear that Kim is not paying serious heed to more cautionary voices. This is someone who seems intent on conveying that he is running the show."

North Korea's nuclear and rocket programs represent the biggest achievements Mr. Kim can show to his people to prove his leadership and to legitimize the dynastic rule of his family as a significant national holiday approaches, the birthday of his father, on Saturday.

Hours before Tuesday's test, North Korea's state-run news media reported a decision by the powerful Politburo of its governing Workers' Party to demand the launching of more long-range rockets, which Washington considers a cover for developing intercontinental ballistic missiles.

North Korea has recently declared that there will be no more talks on “denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula,” though it said it was interested in discussing “a peace treaty” with Washington, a longstanding goal. North Korea’s recent provocations led analysts to believe that its missile programs were more than a bargaining chip aimed at Washington. Rather, they were deeply tied with its survival strategy.

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