

Trump wants plan to destroy nukes

Cameron Stewart, The Australian, 10:31AM April 11, 2017

Donald Trump has asked for military options to destroy North Korea's nuclear program, as fears rise the rogue regime of Kim Jong-un is preparing a test within days to mark the 105th birthday of his grandfather and the nation's founding leader Kim Il-sung.

The US President has ordered a US naval strike group to the region, raising the stakes against the hermit state. The USS Carl Vinson super aircraft carrier and its battle group was due to visit Australia but is now steaming north from Singapore towards the western Pacific near the Korean peninsula in a show of force aimed at North Korea.

A joint command centre of Russian, Iranian and militia forces supporting Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad said last week's US missile strike on a Syrian airfield had crossed a red line. It's feared Pyongyang may conduct another nuclear test as it prepares its first intercontinental ballistic missile test this year — a move that will eventually bring Australia and the US within range.

"The President has asked to be prepared to give him a full range of options to remove that threat (to) the American people and to our allies and partners in the region" Mr Trump's national security adviser HR McMaster said. He said it was a "prudent" move against "a rogue regime that is now nuclear capable ... North Korea has been engaged in a pattern of provocative behaviour."

Mr Trump "agreed this was unacceptable, that what must happen is the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula".

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson yesterday directly linked Friday's missile strike in Syria to North Korea, saying it illustrated America's willingness to strike at rogue regimes. "The message that any nation can take is, 'If you violate international norms, if you violate international agreements, if you fail to live up to commitments, if you become a threat to others, at some point a response is likely to be undertaken'," he said "In terms of North Korea we've been very clear that our objective is a denuclearised Korean peninsula."

Mr Tillerson said China's President Xi Jinping and Mr Trump, who held a summit in Florida at the weekend, agreed something needed to be done to cut North Korea's weapons program. North Korea has staged five nuclear tests, two of them in the past year, and satellite imagery suggests its may be preparing for a sixth.

North Korea lashed out at the US over the Syrian strike, describing it as "an unforgivable act of aggression" that justified Pyongyang's decision to acquire nuclear weapons.

China's Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Affairs, Wu Dawei, has travelled to Seoul for talks on the North Korean threat. The US has urged China to do more to prevent

the North from developing its nuclear weapons and missile programs and Mr Tillerson said at the weekend it was prepared to go it alone on North Korea.

Mr Trump said last week the US was willing to “solve” the problem of North Korea.