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Nuclear weapons expert: North Korea's progress poses serious threat

By Martha Raddatz, Richard Coolidge, Sherisse Pham & Jordyn Phelps | [Power Players](#) – 4 hrs ago

On the Radar

Following North Korea's nuclear test on Tuesday, nuclear security expert Joe Cirincione tells On the Radar that North Korea's main motivation is to gain stature in the international community and says the U.S. should engage diplomatically with Pyongyang to stave off further weapons testing.

"In large part, this is to get our attention," says Cirincione, president of the nuclear security foundation Ploughshares Fund. "It's aimed at us. They want to increase their bargaining value, they want to increase their prestige. I think there's a deal here to be made, if we're willing to talk to them directly."

In calling for diplomatic discussions with North Korea, Cirincione points out that over the past 12 years, Pyongyang has only conducted missile and nuclear tests during times when the United States has not been in discussions with the isolated country. And the time to talk is now, as Cirincione says Pyongyang is only a matter of "several years away" from developing a weapon that could be more menacing.

"North Koreans are making steady progress towards a long-range missile, that could go out of the region, potentially threatening North America, and a device that might be small enough to put on that missile," Cirincione says.

Though Tuesday's test posed no tangible threat to the U.S., it has had a destabilizing effect, causing alarm in the region and international community. Even China, North Korea's longtime ally, strongly denounced the test and is calling on Pyongyang to stop.

"China is not happy," Cirincione says. "They don't mind when this is a hobby for North Korea, but now it's getting serious. Now you're really starting to alarm South Korea and Japan. They don't want instability on their borders."

To hear more of Cirincione's analysis of North Korea's weapons testing, and to find out just how much damage the weapon tested on Tuesday has the potential to

cause, check out this week's On the Radar.

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