

S. Korea won't respond to North's rocket

by UPI

SEOUL -- South Korean President Lee Myung-bak says he won't order any military action in response to a planned rocket firing by North Korea.

Speaking to the Financial Times newspaper, Lee said that while Japan is "rightly" concerned about its citizens' safety, a military response from Seoul isn't appropriate.

"What I do oppose is to militarily respond to these kind of actions because it is also not in their interest to test-fire anything," Lee told the Financial Times, referring Pyongyang's much-anticipated launch, possibly set for next week, which North Korea claims is to send a communications satellite into orbit but which Seoul suspects is a test-launch for the North's long-range missile program.

The North's preparations have prompted Japan to lay plans to intercept the rocket if it enters its territory but Lee emphasized that Tokyo isn't coordinating its activities with him.

"Whether they will do so when it travels through their own airspace we do not know -- no country should say we support it or not because this is a decision made by Japanese government with the sole purpose of protecting its own citizens," Lee told the Financial Times.

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