Investigators now claim Hawaii employee who sent false alert thought attack was real

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Federal and Hawaii state officials investigating the January 13 alert of an impending nuclear missile attack are now asserting that the employee allegedly responsible sent out the message because he thought a real attack had been launched. This directly contradicts previous claims that the employee, who is still unnamed, sent the warning inadvertently.

The false alarm was sent to the cell phones of hundreds of thousands of Hawaiian residents and was also transmitted over television and radio. For 38 minutes—the time between the initial message and a second message rescinding it—the population of the entire state thought that a nuclear explosion was imminent.

The story was quickly buried by the media, which accepted uncritically the initial claim of state officials that the mass terror was the result of a single employee who apparently clicked a wrong button, and then confirmed this initial error. Officials attributed the 38 minutes before a correction was notified to the failure of the state to have adequate procedures to correct a false alarm.

Preliminary findings released on Tuesday by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) now assert that the employee deliberately sent the alarm.

The FCC report states that an unnamed midnight shift supervisor at the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) initiated a "no-notice ballistic missile defense drill" during the shift change at around 8:00 a.m. on January 13. The drill involved the placement of a call to warn officers purportedly from US Pacific Command announcing an attack. The FCC report asserts that the call began and ended with the words "exercise, exercise, exercise," but it "also erroneously contains the text of an EAS [Emergency Alert System] message for a live ballistic missile alert."

Specifically, the call included the line, "THIS IS NOT A DRILL."

The FCC report acknowledges that "the recording does not follow the script contained in HI-EMA's standard operating procedure for this drill." Concluding from this language that the warning was real, the report states, the "warning officer at the alert origination terminal… responds, as trained for a real event, by transmitting a live incoming ballistic missile alert to the State of Hawaii."

The report exposes the media for parroting the initial, unbelievable story that a message broadcast to the entire state was produced by a single employee making two mistakes in accidentally sending out the message. The media clearly had no interest in probing the actual circumstances behind the event.

The new account also raises more questions than it answers. Why did the call that was reportedly sent by the shift manager contain language that deviated from the standard operating script? Why would a drill message contain the words, "This is not a drill"? Who is this shift manager and under whose authority was he operating?

The state of Hawaii has sought to focus blame on the individual who sent the warning. A separate report released by state officials on Tuesday confirmed that the employee (referred to only as "Employee 1"), has been fired. The employee had supposedly been a "source of concern" for more than a decade and was "unable to comprehend the situation at hand and has confused real life event and drills on at least two separate occasions."

If this is true, why did this employee have the authority to send out a warning message of a live attack?

Perhaps most significantly, the new story does not

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shed more light on why it took 38 minutes before a cancellation could be issued. The period would certainly have been used by Pentagon and intelligence officials to monitor the reaction of the population to a nuclear missile alert, and to observe the responses of other countries to an announcement of a nuclear missile exchange.

In the weeks since the alert, the US government has taken measures indicating that it is preparing to launch strikes against North Korea, which could include a nuclear exchange. Earlier this month, the US military deployed nuclear-capable B-52H bombers to Guam.

In a speech last week, CIA Director Mike Pompeo announced that the agency was working with the Pentagon to “prepare a series of options to make sure that we can deliver a range of things so the president will have the full suite of possibilities” for an attack, and that he would “leave it to others to address the capacity or the wisdom of a preemptive strike.”

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