

Pompeo's North Korea Meeting a Disaster: Report



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (C) arrives for a lunch with Kim Yong Chol, a North Korean senior ruling party official and former intelligence chief, at the Park Hwa Guest House in Pyongyang on July 7, 2018.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- **It began with great expectations, an eagerly-anticipated meeting with the North Korean leader, and a gift bag that included an Elton John CD.**

It ended with a scuttled rendezvous, statements declaring disappointment and stalemate.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's overnight visit to Pyongyang last week failed to demonstrate any progress on denuclearization talks, leading one source with knowledge of the discussions to say the White House felt it went "as badly as it could have gone."

"The North Koreans were just messing around, not serious about

moving forward," the source told CNN's Michelle Kosinski, adding that Pompeo had been promised a meeting with North Korea's Kim Jong Un, and so not getting that meeting sent a big message.

"By now it's abundantly clear that this approach is a dead end," said Adam Mount, a senior fellow and director of the Defense Posture Project at the Federation of American Scientists, where he covers U.S. nuclear strategy, deterrence and North Korea.

"The White House has essentially tried to shoot for the moon and total disarmament, and it's clear that North Korea is not only not willing to do that, but sees very little reason

to take steps in that direction," he told CNN.

Pompeo himself sought to mitigate any frustration that North Korea has still not publicly declared what it will or will not do in regards to its own nuclear weapons program.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday as he arrived in Brussels to attend the NATO summit with President Donald Trump, Pompeo said the road ahead was long and that it was on the North Koreans for change to occur.

While Pompeo declared the two sides were making progress, North Korea labeled the Americans' attitude as "regrettable" and said it differed from the spirit that buoyed both leaders when they met in Singapore on June 12.

"We expected the U.S. to bring constructive measures to build confidence in accordance with the spirit of the U.S.-NK summit," said a statement from state-run news agency KCNA. "However, the attitude of the U.S. in the first high-level talks held on the 6th and 7th was indeed regrettable."

The comments showed "the gulf that does exist between the demands the United States and other nations are making and what North Korea is willing to do," said Australian Senator Penny Wong. She spoke to Australia's ABC radio from Washington, DC.

"That is why it is so important that we agree that ... it is so important to continue the economic pressure through the sanctions regime," she said.

Russia to Expel Two Greek Diplomats in Retaliation



Greek police and army officers stand by Greek, Russian and EU flags as they wait for the arrival of Russian President Vladimir Putin in Athens, Greece airport, May 27, 2016.

MOSCOW (Reuters) -- **Russia will expel two Greek diplomats in response to Athens' decision to throw out two of Moscow's envoys, Russian news agency RIA reported Wednesday, citing a senior lawmaker.**

Greek media reported earlier that Athens had decided to expel the Russian envoys and ban entry to another two over suspicions they had tried to undermine an agreement with neighboring Macedonia.

The Greek government did not respond directly to the reports but its spokesman said it would not tolerate any behavior which violates international law. None of the

reports said whether the expulsions had actually taken place, although the Greek spokesman suggested some kind of action had been taken.

Greece's Kathimerini newspaper said Athens authorities ordered the expulsions after suspected attempts by the Russian diplomats to undermine an agreement Greece brokered with the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia last month which ended a decades-old diplomatic standoff over its name.

The deal between Greece and Macedonia is expected to ease the admission of the small but strategically-important state into NATO, in a region where Russia and

the West are jostling for influence.

Kathimerini said Greek authorities were investigating intrusion into domestic policy issues and quoted diplomatic sources as saying the suspicions were solely focused on those four individuals. Greece's Skai TV also reported Athens had decided to expel the Russians.

A member of Russia's upper house of parliament, Andrei Klimov, said Russia would expel two Greek diplomats in response, without mentioning Macedonia or going into further detail about the reasons for the actions.

Greek government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos did not comment on the Russian report but said: "Greece has proven as part of a multifaceted foreign policy that it seeks good relations with all states. From there on, all states and authorities should respect international law, but also us, the Greek government and the Greek state."

"It is within that framework, and whenever required, measures have been taken. That has also occurred this time," Tzanakopoulos said.

Greece has long said Macedonia's name implies a territorial claim over its northern province with the same name, and has previously blocked its neighbor's attempts to join NATO.

After a period of political crisis, the two governments have agreed name of Republic of North Macedonia, though that still has to be put to a referendum in the Balkan state.

Ethiopia: Re-Opening Roads to Eritrea a Priority

ADDIS ABABA (Reuters) -- **Landlocked Ethiopia wants to make the re-opening of two roads connecting it to two of Eritrea's Red Sea ports a priority in the two nations' reconciliation process, a government spokesman said on Wednesday.**

In a move that ended a 20-year military stand-off, the Horn of African neighbors agreed on Monday to open embassies, develop ports and resume flights.

The historic reconciliation could transform politics and security in the volatile Horn region, which lies along one of the world's busiest shipping

routes.

Ethiopian government spokesman Ahmed Shide said on Wednesday that the reopening of two critical roads leading to the ports of Assab in Eritrea's south and Massawa in the north would benefit the whole region.

"The unfolding developments will not only benefit our peoples, but the entire Horn of Africa region will be a part of these developments," Shide was quoted as saying in an interview published on the Eritrean information ministry's website.

Also on Wednesday, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's chief of staff wrote on Twitter that Ethiopian

and Eritrean passport holders would be able to travel to the other country and obtain visas on arrival.

The changes are sweeping away years of hostility and raising hopes in both countries for a lucrative peace dividend.

Access to the ports of Assab and Massawa could greatly help Ethiopia's push to boost their exports and increase hard currency earnings, analysts say.

The country of 100 million is heavily dependent on ports in tiny neighbor Djibouti, but since Abiy took office, has also negotiated access to a port in Sudan.

Trump Accuses Germany of Being 'Captive' of Russia



U.S. President Donald Trump joins other leaders for a "family photo" in Brussels where the NATO summit meeting began on June 11, 2018.

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) -- **U.S. President Donald Trump accused Germany of being a "captive" of Russia Wednesday as Western leaders gathered in Brussels for a NATO summit where Trump wants Europeans to pay up more for their own defense.**

In a startling public outburst, Trump told NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg that Germany was wrong to support a new \$11-billion Baltic Sea pipeline to import Russian gas while being slow to meet targets for contributing to NATO military spending that was intended to protect Europe from Russia.

"We're supposed to be guarding against Russia and Germany goes out and pays billions and billions of dollars a year to Russia," Trump said in the presence of reporters at a pre-summit meeting at the residence of the U.S. ambassador to Belgium.

His comments appeared to substantially overstate German reliance on Russian energy and to imply the German government was funding the pipeline, which is a commercial venture.

With tensions in the Western military alliance already running high over Trump's demands for more contributions to ease the burden on U.S. taxpayers, and a nationalistic stance that has seen

trade disputes threaten economic growth in Europe, the latest remarks will fuel concerns among allies over the U.S. role in the military alliance.

After the two-day summit in Brussels, Trump will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki on Monday.

German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen hit back almost immediately: "We have a lot of issues with Russia without any doubt," she told reporters in English. "On the other hand, you should keep the communication line between countries or alliances and opponents without any question."

Stoltenberg later told reporters that Trump had used "very direct language" but that all NATO allies were agreed that the cost of military spending must be spread around and that last year had seen the biggest increase in a generation.

Trump said Germany had shut down coal and nuclear power plants on environmental grounds, increasing dependence, like much of the rest of Europe, on Russian gas.

Trump said: "We're protecting Germany, we're protecting France, we're protecting all of these countries. And then numerous of the countries go out and make a pipeline deal with Russia where they're paying billions of dollars into the coffers of Russia ... I think that's very inappropriate."

About 70 Deaths Linked to Heat Wave in Canada



Leading Seaman Rafer Duhme stands for guard duty, while Master Seaman Jamie Hamilton provides some cooling relief with water from a spray bottle, as a heat wave blasts the City of Ottawa on July 4th, 2018.

TORONTO (NPR) -- **An estimated 70 deaths have been connected to the scorching temperatures and humidity that rolled over Canada's Quebec province last week, and officials say the number may rise as hospital and nursing home records are reviewed.**

Most of the people who died as the region reached temperatures up to 95 degrees are elderly men and women living alone in apartments with no air conditioning, and many had chronic health conditions.

David Kaiser, a physician manager at the Montreal Regional Department of Public Health, confirmed to NPR that 34 of the deaths occurred in the city from June 29 through July 7. With few exceptions, he said, the people were over the age of 50, many between 65 to 85. About 60% were men and most had an underlying medical or mental health condition, Kaiser added.

He explained the death toll has continued to rise despite a return to more normal seasonal temperatures, as the public health department continues to collect data from a variety of sources. Officials plan to issue an updated report next week.

And now that the immediate crisis is over,

the department will soon embark on an even deeper dive into the records of every person who died during the eight-day window, including coroner reports and medical charts, a Montreal public health spokesman told NPR.

"We do this because it's always possible that we may have missed someone who maybe didn't die of heatstroke but died due to heat-related complications ... those can be hard to tell sometimes," Kaiser said.

It is a practice that was implemented after Montreal's 2010 heat wave that left 106 people dead. In that case, authorities discovered a handful heat-related hospital deaths that had previously gone unreported, Kaiser recalled.

Paul Brunet, president of the Council for the Protection of the Sick, a patient advocacy group, called for an independent investigation into the abrupt deaths of all people who recently died in a hospital, public nursing home or a public long-term care residential facility known as a CHSLD.

"Some figures that we have had in recent years do not always correspond to reality," Paul Brunet explained in an interview with LCN on Saturday.



MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's defense minister, in a newspaper interview published on Wednesday as NATO began a two-day summit, criticized the United States and the U.S.-led military alliance for moving up forces and bases close to the Russian border. "I have long wanted to give American colleagues a globe so they can look at it and explain why the declared 'enemies of America,' are located in the Middle East and the Far East and all their military bases and forces are smuggled up to Russian borders," Sergei Shoigu was quoted as saying in the interview with Italian newspaper Il Giornale. Shoigu appeared to be referring to the U.S. missile defense shield, which Washington says is intended to protect against attacks by Iran. Elements of that system are located in eastern Europe, near Russia's western borders. He said that NATO expanded eastwards to Russian borders in spite of promises given to Soviet leaders during German unification. Shoigu also said Russia was ready to return to the idea of supplying advanced S-300 ground-to-air missiles to Syria but Damascus had not made any requests to Russia. "Today, after the aggression of the United States, Great Britain and France against Syria, showing the need for a modern air defense system for Syrians, we are ready to return to looking at this question," Shoigu was quoted as saying.

PARIS (Reuters) -- **Time is running dangerously low for Britain to reach an agreement on its post-Brexit relations with Europe, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Wednesday. Speaking at a financial services conference in Paris, Le Maire said that London's detailed Brexit proposals last week were positive but uncertainty remained. "Time is running out, and the ongoing uncertainty is no good for anyone, in particular for business," Le Maire said. "We want an agreement with the UK but let's be clear: this agreement has to fully respect the EU's integrity and rules." He added that for financial services that meant "the only way forward is one based on reviewed and improved equivalence mechanisms."**

LONDON (AP) -- Facebook is facing its first financial penalty for allowing the data-mining firm Cambridge Analytica to forage through the personal data of millions of unknowing Facebook users. A UK government office announced its intention to fine Facebook 500,000 pounds (\$663,000), the maximum possible, for failing to safeguard that user information. The penalty is a pittance for Facebook. But it would represent the first tangible punishment for the company's privacy scandal, which tarnished its reputation, temporarily pushed down its shares and forced CEO Mark Zuckerberg to testify before Congress, but otherwise had few lasting repercussions. Cambridge Analytica, a London firm financed by wealthy Republican Party donors, worked for the 2016 Trump campaign and for a while employed Steve Bannon, who managed President Donald Trump's campaign and later became a White House adviser.

SUN PRAIRIE, Wis. (AP) -- **A police lieutenant in a suburb of Madison, Wisconsin, says no deaths have been reported after an explosion rocked the downtown area but that authorities will be searching buildings. Lt. Kevin Konopacki says two firefighters and a police officer were injured Tuesday in Sun Prairie when the blast occurred. He says some civilians suffered minor injuries but none needed to be hospitalized. He didn't know the exact number of civilians hurt. The explosion happened after a contractor struck a natural gas main. Firefighters and police in the community of about 30,000 had responded and Konopacki says an evacuation was underway when the blast occurred. A WE Energies spokeswoman says workers for a contractor apparently punctured a natural gas main, sending gas leaking into a building ahead of the explosion.**

CHIANG RAI, Thailand (Reuters) -- The 12 boys and their soccer coach rescued from inside a flooded Thai cave lost an average of 2 kg during their 17-day ordeal but were generally in good condition and showed no signs of stress, a senior health official said on Wednesday. Thais reacted with relief, gratitude and exhilaration after the last group of the "Wild Boars" soccer team was rescued from the Tham Luang cave, near the border with Myanmar, on Tuesday night, ending an ordeal that gripped Thailand and the world. They were taken by helicopter to a hospital about 70 km away to join their team mates in quarantine for the time being. "From our assessment, they are in good condition and not stressed. The children were well taken care of in the cave. Most of the boys lost an average of 2 kg," Thongchai Lerwilairattanapong, an inspector for Thailand's health department, told reporters. Parents of the first four boys freed on Sunday have been able to visit them but had to wear protective suits and stand 2 meters away as a precaution.

MUNICH (Dispatches) -- **A German woman was sentenced to life in prison Wednesday for her part in the murders of 10 people during a seven-year campaign of violence by a neo-Nazi gang. The Higher Regional Court in Munich ruled that Beate Zschaepe was part of the National Socialist Underground (NSU), whose members killed eight Turks, a Greek and a German policewoman. Zschaepe had denied taking part in the murders with two men, Uwe Boehnhardt and Uwe Mundlos. They killed themselves in 2011 when police discovered the gang by chance. During the trial she said through her lawyer that she felt morally guilty for not stopping them. The NSU attacks were the most violent of their kind in Germany since the end of the far-left Red Army Faction's two-decade killing spree in 1991, which left at least 34 dead.**