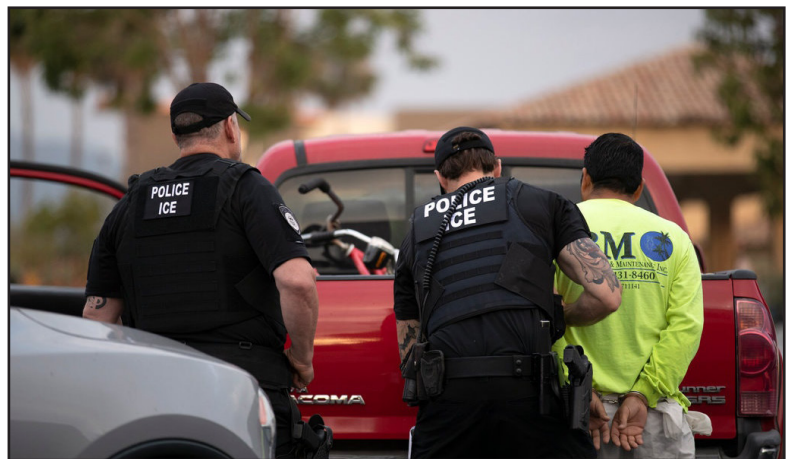


ACLU Blasts U.S. Expansion of Deportation Powers



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks at a meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Foreign Ministers at the State Department in Washington.

CHICAGO (AP) — The American Civil Liberties Union challenged the Trump administration’s broad expansion of deportation powers, alleging in a federal lawsuit that it violates constitutional rights and could lead to errors, including deporting U.S. citizens.

The lawsuit called the extension of the policy allowing immigration officers to deport migrants without requiring them to appear before judges as “dramatic” and “illegal.” Previously, the policy applied to those caught within 100 miles (160 kilometers) of the U.S. border and who had been in the country under two weeks. Last month the Trump administration announced that immigration

agents can now apply it anywhere nationwide to those in the country illegally less than two years.

The ACLU, along with the American Immigration Council, argued in the lawsuit that the expansion essentially gives low-level immigration officers the power to indiscriminately deport anyone without meaningful review, like a hearing or having an attorney.

“A closed proceeding without any external scrutiny will always be arbitrary,” said Anand Balakrishnan, an attorney with the ACLU’s Immigrants’ Rights Project. “It will always be unchecked and create too much room for error.”

The complaint cites several instances

where federal agents using the initial “expedited removal” authority wrongly deported U.S. citizens, including a case in 2000 involving a U.S. citizen who was mentally disabled. The woman was unable to convince immigration agents that she was an American citizen after returning from visiting relatives in Jamaica and was deported.

Filed on behalf of immigrant advocacy groups in Texas, New York and Florida, the lawsuit names the heads of the Department of Homeland Security and several agencies it oversees. That includes Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection. Messages left with agency spokesmen weren’t immediately returned Tuesday.

So-called “expedited removal” authority gives immigration authorities wide deportation power with limited exceptions, including if individuals express fear of returning home and pass an initial interview for asylum. The policy, which has been around since 1996, has become a central part of immigration enforcement in the last decade.

President Donald Trump first announced he would expand such powers just after taking office as part of his promise to crack down on illegal immigration. Last month, Acting DHS Secretary Kevin McAleenan touted the expansion as a way to address an “ongoing crisis on the southern border” by freeing up beds in detention centers and reducing the immigration courts backlog.

India-Controlled Kashmir Seethes Under Clampdown



A woman, who was protesting against the scrapping of special constitutional status for Kashmir, argues with people who were celebrating the removal of the special status, during a gathering in New Delhi, India, August 7, 2019.

SRINAGAR, India (Reuters) -- Thousands of Indian security forces kept a lid on protests in disputed Kashmir on Wednesday, helped by the continued suspension of telephone and internet services after the Himalayan region’s special status was scrapped this week.

Neighbors China and Pakistan, which both claim parts of the region, have voiced fierce opposition to India’s move dropping a constitutional provision that had allowed the country’s only Muslim-majority state to make its own laws.

Streets in the region’s main city of Srinagar were deserted for a third day,

with almost all shops shut, barring some chemists. Armed federal police manned mobile checkpoints across the city, limiting people’s movement.

Knots of young protesters threw stones at soldiers, police and a witness said, amid anger over the telecoms clampdown that began on Sunday.

“These (protests) are mostly localized because of the heavy troop deployment,” said a police officer who sought anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media, adding that police used tear gas and pepper spray to scatter the protesters.

A witness described an episode of

hours of stone-throwing on Tuesday in the Old Barzullah area near the city center, saying, “I saw around 100 boys, in small groups, pelting stones.”

He added, “The police fired tear gas to beat them back.”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government detained regional leaders and heads of separatist groups before Monday’s announcement, which also split the state into two federal territories to ensure greater control.

India has been fighting an armed revolt in Kashmir since 1989, which it blames Pakistan for stoking. In reply, Islamabad says it only gives moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self-determination.

All telephone, television, and internet connections stayed severed. By night, police vans had patrolled the streets, with loudspeakers warning residents to stay indoors.

Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal had asked officials to ensure people had enough supplies and assured them of their security, Reuters partner ANI said in a report.

Local authorities have not declared a curfew, but instead clamped down on non-essential travel and gatherings of four or more, effectively keeping restive people in their homes.

South Kashmir, the epicenter of the insurgency in recent years, was completely locked down, said a state government official who visited the area.

Hong Kong Facing Worst Crisis Since 1997: Official

HONG KONG (Reuters) -- Hong Kong is facing its worst crisis since it returned from British to Chinese rule in 1997, the head of China’s Hong Kong and Macau Affairs office said on Wednesday, as more anti-government protests rocked the Asian financial hub.

“Hong Kong’s crisis ... has continued for 60 days, and is getting worse and worse,” Zhang Xiaoming, one of the most senior Chinese officials overseeing Hong Kong affairs, said during a meeting in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen.

“Violent activities are intensifying and the impact on society is spreading wider. It can be said that Hong Kong is now facing the most severe situation since its handover,” he said.

Hong Kong has faced months of sometimes violent protests that began with opposition to a now-suspended extradition law and which have evolved into a direct challenge to the government of embattled leader Carrie Lam.

Zhang held a forum on Wednesday to discuss the political crisis in Hong Kong which included Hong Kong delegates to China’s parliament, the National People’s Congress and China’s main consultative body, the CPPCC. No opposition democratic figures or protest representatives were invited.

Speaking after the meeting, several attendees said Zhang

cited speeches by former Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping in 1984 and 1987 in which he said if “turmoil” occurs in Hong Kong, “the central government must intervene.”

No specific mention, however, was made of deploying the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), which has a garrison in Hong Kong, to quell the unrest, with Zhang cited as saying Beijing remained confident in the Hong Kong government and local police.

Elsie Leung, a former justice secretary, said she felt that even if the PLA were deployed it would not conflict with Hong Kong’s “one country, two systems” by which it has been governed since 1997. “One country, two systems would continue,” she said.

In China’s sharpest rebuke yet of the protesters, the government warned them on Tuesday not to “play with fire” and called on Hong Kong citizens to protect their homeland.

The Global Times, a Chinese tabloid published by the Communist Party’s People’s Daily, showed a video on its official Twitter feed of thousands of police officers taking part in an anti-riot training drill in Shenzhen, which borders Hong Kong.

North Korean Leader: Missile Tests, a Warning to U.S., South Korea



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un watches the test-fire of two short-range ballistic missiles in this undated picture released by North Korea’s Central News Agency (KCNA) on July 26, 2019.

SEOUL (AFP) -- North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un says the country’s latest missile launches were a warning to Washington and Seoul over their joint war games, state news agency KCNA reported on Wednesday, as tensions rise on the Korean peninsula.

The latest launch by the nuclear-armed North came after the South Korean and U.S. militaries began mainly computer-simulated joint exercises on Monday to test Seoul’s ability to take operational control in wartime.

Those drills are taking place despite Pyongyang’s warnings that the exercises would jeopardize nuclear negotiations between the United States and North Korea.

KCNA said Kim had watched the launches early Tuesday, which verified the “war capacity” of the “new-type tactical guided missiles”.

With the launches carried out satisfactorily, “Kim Jong Un noted that the said military action would be an occasion to send an adequate warning to the joint military drill now underway by the US and South Korean authorities,” KCNA said.

Pyongyang on Tuesday fired two projectiles that “are assumed to be short-range ballistic missiles” into the sea, the South’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said earlier.

The latest weapons tests were the fourth pair of projectiles fired in less than two weeks, and the North has threatened more.

U.S. President Donald Trump last week downplayed the North’s launches, saying Kim would not want to “disappoint” him.

Trump and Kim held a historic summit in Singapore last year, where the North made a vague pledge on denuclearization.

A second summit in Hanoi this February broke up amid disagreements over sanctions relief and what Pyongyang might be willing to give up in return.

The two agreed to resume nuclear talks during their impromptu June meeting in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula, but working-level dialogue has yet to begin.

Analysts say the military maneuvers on both sides could see discussions pushed back until the autumn, and Pyongyang signaled Tuesday that it was in no mood to talk.

It called the process a “flagrant violation” of the diplomatic drills between Pyongyang, Washington and Seoul.

Pyongyang has always been infuriated by military exercises between the South and U.S., seeing them as rehearsals for invasion, but in the past it has tended to avoid carrying out missile tests while the war games were taking place.

Stoltenberg: NATO Needs to Address China’s Rise



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks at a meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Foreign Ministers at the State Department in Washington.

SYDNEY (Reuters) -- NATO needs to understand the implications of China’s rise as Beijing expands its power around the world, including areas that may challenge members of the North Atlantic security body, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on Wednesday.

“This is not about moving NATO into the Pacific, but this is about responding to the fact that China is coming closer to us,” Stoltenberg told Reuters in an interview in Sydney.

“Investing heavily in critical infrastructure in Europe, increased presence in the Arctic and also increased presence in Africa, and in cyberspace,” he added.

“So all of this makes it important for NATO to address the rise of China, and we do that not least by working closely with our partners in this region – Australia, New Zealand, but also Japan and South Korea,” Stoltenberg said.

Beijing has said the country’s economic and military advancements are no threat to other nations.

However, tensions have risen as a trade war between Washington and Beijing escalates, and U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said he would like to place intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region.

On Sunday, while on a visit to Sydney, Esper said China was destabilizing the Indo-Pacific region, accusing Beijing of predatory economics, intel-

lectual property theft and “weaponizing the global commons”.

“I spoke with Secretary Esper yesterday and he said clearly that it would take time to develop new intermediate range weapons, and any potential deployment in this part of the world will take time and no decision has been taken,” Stoltenberg said.

He spoke after meeting Australia’s Prime Minister Scott Morrison and its foreign and defense ministers to discuss China, the war in Afghanistan, terrorism and cyber security.

“For me it is extremely useful to listen to Australia, with the knowledge, the experience and just the presence in this region, that provides you with an understanding which is important for NATO,” he said.

China is Australia’s largest trading partner but the diplomatic and trade relationship has cooled significantly as Canberra raised concerns about China’s influence in the country and banned Chinese telecom firm Huawei from Australia’s 5G network.

“NATO also believes 5G technology will be building block of society and the organization is now working on formulating a way to secure its own technology,” Stoltenberg said.

“5G technology is extremely important as it will affect all wakes of life, Industry, communications, energy, in a much more fundamental way than 4G does today,” he added.

News in Brief

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine’s new leader said he called Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday to urge him to help halt fighting in eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he asked the Russian leader to “influence the other side so that they stop killing our people.” Zelenskyy’s call came a day after four Ukrainian soldiers were killed by pro-Russia insurgents. Separatist rebels said they were returning fire after Ukrainian shelling of a school. The Kremlin said in its take on the call that Putin emphasized that the Ukrainian troops should stop shelling residential areas since that results in civilian casualties. The conflict in eastern Ukraine erupted in April 2014 after Russia’s annexation of Crimea and has killed more than 13,000 people. Germany and France helped broker a 2015 agreement signed in Minsk that helped reduce fighting, but clashes have continued and peace efforts have stalled.

BEIJING (Reuters) -- China’s rare earths association said it would support Chinese counter-measures in the escalating trade row with the United States, which it accused on Wednesday of “bullying.” The Association of China Rare Earth Industry issued a statement after a special working meeting on Monday to discuss the “guidance” given by Chinese President Xi Jinping during a visit to a rare earth plant in Jiangxi in May. Xi’s visit stoked fears China would use its dominance over production of rare earths, a group of 17 chemical elements prized for their use in consumer electronics and military equipment, in the escalating trade war, although no restrictions on supplies have so far been announced. U.S. President Donald Trump said last week he would impose further tariffs on another \$300 billion of Chinese goods, although a previous list avoided rare earths, for which the United States relies heavily on China.

MOSCOW (Reuters) -- Russia called outgoing U.S. Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman a professional diplomat late on Tuesday, but said he had been unable to improve battered Russia-U.S. ties because he had been hamstrung by domestic U.S. politics, TASS news agency reported. Huntsman, who was appointed by U.S. President Donald Trump in 2017, said in a resignation letter circulated by U.S. media that he was stepping down after a two-year tenure overshadowed by U.S. sanctions on Moscow and tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions. His stint in Russia came at a time when relations between Washington and Moscow hit a post-Cold War low and were strained over everything from Syria to arms control and allegations, denied by Russia, that Moscow meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election to help Trump win. “Huntsman is a professional, TASS cited the foreign ministry as saying. “Unfortunately, the domestic political situation in the United States did not make it possible to realize the existing potential in bilateral relations,” it said.

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Wednesday that South Korea has agreed to pay the United States “substantially more” for protection against North Korea and that talks have begun to further increase payments. Trump tweeted the U.S. “has been paid very little” for decades but last year “South Korea paid \$990,000,000.” South Korea and the U.S. in March signed a deal to increase Seoul’s payments for U.S. troop deployment there from \$850 million in 2018 to \$924 million in 2019. The White House, when asked about the apparent discrepancy between Trump’s tweet and those figures, said it would look into it. Trump’s financial demands have triggered worries in South Korea that he might withdraw some of the 28,500 U.S. troops. South Korea’s Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that the cost-sharing talks had not officially started.

DUBLIN (Reuters) -- Britain will leave the European Union in October without a divorce deal, an Irish government minister predicted, causing a severe economic shock that could require pan-EU financial support for countries including Ireland. The remarks, among the most frank yet from an Irish minister, underscore the growing sense of alarm about a hard Brexit in Ireland, Britain’s closest EU neighbor and one with whom it has important trading and historical ties. “Some people in the UK have convinced themselves that no deal is a good thing and that there are no circumstances that the European Union would allow the UK to crash out,” Michael D’Arcy, the minister in charge of financial services, told Reuters. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said that he will take the United Kingdom out of the European Union on Oct. 31 come what may, even without a transitional deal needed to pave the way for future relations with the EU.

BRASILIA (AFP) -- Deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon increased 278 percent year-over-year in July, according to official data released by a government institute embroiled in a row with President Jair Bolsonaro over the scale of the problem. The National Institute for Space Research, known by its initials INPE, said that deforestation had cleared 870 square miles (around 2,250 square kilometers) of rainforest over the month. The Brazilian president, a climate change skeptic, and his environment minister Ricardo Salles have previously accused the INPE of publishing misleading data, claiming the figures “don’t correspond to the truth” and were damaging to the institute and the country. Data from INPE, an institution of international repute, shows that deforestation has increased 40 percent in the last twelve months compared with the same period a year ago.