

# North Korea: U.S. Missiles to Spark New 'Cold War'



U.S. President Donald Trump shakes hands with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as they meet at the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas, in Panmunjom, South Korea, June 30, 2019.

SEOUL (Reuters) -- Any move by the United States to place new ground-launched, intermediate-range missiles in South Korea could spark a "new Cold War" and an escalating arms race in the region, North Korean state media said on Wednesday.

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper this month said he was in favor of placing ground-launched, intermediate-range missiles in Asia, a day after the United States withdrew from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty

with Russia. "The U.S. pointed out that it is now examining a plan for deploying ground-to-ground medium-range missiles in the Asian region and South Korea has been singled out as a place for the deployment," North Korea's state news agency KCNA said.

"It is a reckless act of escalating regional tension, an act that may spark off a new Cold War and arms race in the Far Eastern region to deploy a new offensive weapon in South Korea," it

said in a commentary. Other senior U.S. officials have said any deployment of such weaponry would be years away.

South Korea's defense ministry has said there had been no discussion of placing American intermediate-range missiles in the country, and there were no plans to consider the idea.

The KCNA statement also criticized recent moves to improve military sites in South that host U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) systems, which are designed to intercept ballistic missiles.

"It is a hard fact that the deployment of THAAD is pursuant to the U.S. strategy to contain great powers and hold supremacy in Northeast Asia, not the one for 'shielding' South Korea from someone's 'threat'," KCNA said.

North Korea's military has launched a series of missiles in recent weeks to protest what it sees as a military build-up in South Korea, as well as joint military exercises by South Korean and American troops stationed on the peninsula.

The exercises have complicated attempts to restart talks between U.S. and North Korean negotiators over the future of the country's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, which prompted sanctions by the United Nations Security Council.

## China Blasts 'Terrorist-Like' Attacks in Hong Kong



Armed police patrol the departure hall of the airport in Hong Kong after previous night's clashes with protesters, China August 14, 2019.

HONG KONG (Dispatches) -- China reacted furiously Wednesday to "terrorist-like" attacks on its citizens by rioters during a second day of mass disruptions at Hong Kong's airport that turned violent.

The rallies, which had paralyzed one of the world's busiest travel hubs, ended with ugly clashes on Tuesday night that included protesters beating two men.

The Chinese government immediately seized on the attacks to louden its drumbeat of anger and intimidation against the protesters, who have staged 10 weeks of relentless rallies to demand greater freedoms.

"We express the strongest condemnation of these terrorist-like actions," said Xu Luying, spokeswoman at the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs of the State Council, who called the two men who were beaten "mainland China compatriots."

China on Monday said there were signs of "terrorism emerging", as state media published a video of armored personnel carriers driving towards the border with Hong Kong.

The beating of the two men at the

airport on Tuesday, as well as the blocking of passengers from boarding flights could backfire in terms of maintaining support.

The movement has no public leaders, with protests organized anonymously over social media and chat apps. Demonstrators turned on the two men, fuelled by suspicions within their ranks about undercover police or spies.

The first man was held for about two hours and assaulted before eventually being led away in an ambulance.

Riot police briefly deployed pepper spray and batons to beat back rioters while they escorted the vehicle away from the departures hall.

Another man, wearing a yellow journalist vest, was surrounded, zip-tied and then beaten by a small group who accused him of being a spy.

In a tweet, Hu Xijun, the editor of China's state-controlled Global Times tabloid -- which has vociferously condemned the protests -- said the man was a journalist for the paper.

## Pakistani PM: India Plans Military Action in Kashmir



Attendees perform Pakistan's national anthem with Kashmir's flag during a ceremony to celebrate Pakistan's 72nd Independence Day at the Mausoleum of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in Karachi, August 14, 2019.

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI (Reuters) -- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan used an address celebrating Independence Day on Wednesday to accuse India of planning military action in the disputed Kashmir region that has long been a flashpoint between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

India revoked the special status of its portion of Himalayan Kashmir, known as Jammu and Kashmir, on Aug. 5 and moved to quell widespread unrest by shutting down communications and clamping down on freedom of movement.

Islamabad retaliated by suspending bilateral trade and all public

transport links with India, as well as expelling New Delhi's ambassador to Islamabad.

On Wednesday, Khan travelled to Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, making his first visit to the region since becoming Pakistan's leader in 2018.

In a speech he told the region's parliament that India planned more extensive action than that of February, when its fighter jets struck inside Pakistan, following a dramatic escalation in tension between the rivals.

"They have made a more horrendous plan to divert world attention from their move in Kashmir, they plan action in Azad Kashmir," Khan

said, referring to the portion held by Pakistan.

"The Pakistani army is fully aware that they (India) have made a plan of taking action in Azad Kashmir."

Khan also repeated comments comparing the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the ideological parent of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, to the German Nazi Party.

Representatives of India's armed forces and its foreign ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Khan's remarks.

India rules the populous Kashmir Valley and the Hindu-dominated region around Jammu city, while Pakistan controls Azad Kashmir, a wedge of territory in the west. China holds a thinly populated high-altitude area in the north.

India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir since gaining independence from colonial power Great Britain in 1947. They came close to a third in February after a deadly attack on Indian police by a Pakistan-based militant group resulted in air strikes by both countries.

India's revocation of special status for Jammu and Kashmir blocks the state's right to frame its own laws and allows non-residents to buy property there.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has said old laws prohibiting people from outside Kashmir from buying property, settling there and taking up government jobs had hindered its development.

## PM Johnson: MPs Engaged in 'Terrible' Collaboration With EU

LONDON (Reuters) -- Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Wednesday some British lawmakers hoping to block Brexit were engaged in "terrible" collaboration with the European Union by undermining London's negotiating hand and so making no deal more likely.

Hours after senior lawmakers said they would seek to prevent any attempt to ignore parliament over Brexit, Johnson used a question-and-answer session on Facebook to attack them.

"There is a terrible kind of collaboration as it were going on between those who think they can block Brexit in parliament and our European friends," Johnson, who has been hailed by the U.S. president as "Britain's Trump", said on Facebook.

"We need our European friends to compromise and the more they think that there's a chance that Brexit can be blocked in parliament, the more adamant they are in sticking to their position," Johnson said.

Johnson's use of the word "collaborator" has historical echoes for Britons given the use of that epithet for people who cooperated with Nazi Germany during World War Two.

It followed remarks by former finance minister Philip Hammond that parliament will block a no-deal Brexit if unelected people behind Johnson try to wrench Britain out on Oct. 31 without agreement.

The United Kingdom is heading towards a constitutional crisis at home and a showdown with the EU as Johnson has vowed to leave the bloc in 78 days time without a deal unless it agrees to renegotiate a Brexit divorce.

After more than three years of Brexit dominating EU affairs, the bloc has repeatedly refused to reopen the Withdrawal Agreement which includes an Irish border insurance policy that Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, agreed in November.

Hammond, who served as May's finance minister for three years, said unelected people in Johnson's Downing Street office were setting London on an "inevitable" course towards a no-deal Brexit by demanding the Irish backstop be dropped.

"The people behind this know that that means that there will be no deal," Hammond told the BBC. "Parliament is clearly opposed to a no-deal exit, and the prime minister must respect that."

The former minister's first public intervention since resigning indicates the determination of a group of influential lawmakers to thwart Johnson if he goes for a no-deal Brexit.

Hammond said he was confident parliament, where a majority oppose a no-deal Brexit, would find a way to block that outcome.

## New Zealand Mosque Shooting Response Raises Criticism



Ambreen Naeem holds a medal which was posthumously awarded to her husband Mian Naeem Rashid for bravery, after being killed charging the attacker at an attack on Al Noor mosque in March in Christchurch, New Zealand June 13, 2019.

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (Reuters) -- After a lone gunman killed 51 mosque worshippers in March, New Zealand's outpouring of collective grief and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's heartfelt support for the Muslim community won praise around the world.

But months after the attacks in two Christchurch mosques, criticism is mounting over the aftermath, including the prolonged legal process and the handling of a powerful government inquiry.

New Zealand is no stranger to natural disasters, but the unprecedented scale of violence targeting a minority has strained institutions designed to provide answers and deliver justice.

New Zealand is also less experienced in dealing with cultural needs of Muslims, who make up only about 1% of the population.

That has led to cultural blind spots, including scheduling hearings during important religious periods and failing to engage with Muslims in an appropriate way, members of the Muslim community, experts and advocates say.

"What's being done to manage the expectations of victims and how do they actually feel included and ensure they are not re-traumatized through it and re-victimised through that process?" said Pakeeza Rasheed, a lawyer and chairperson of New Zealand Muslim women's organization, the Khadija Leadership Network.

From the beginning, delays and confusion confirming the identities of victims and releasing bodies upset relatives who were unable to bury their loved ones as soon as possible, as is customary in Islam.

Soon after the attack, many Muslims questioned whether security services took the risk of white supremacist violence seriously enough, and whether authorities were overly focused on the danger of Islamic extremism.

Ardern in May announced a wide-ranging inquiry, known as a Royal Commission, seeking answers to such questions.

But at least six human rights advocates and local Muslims contacted by Reuters have become skeptical of the process.

New Zealand's Chief Human Rights Commissioner Paul Hunt called on the Royal Commission to improve inclusion of the Muslim community and said the Commission's public suppression of information from various government agencies was too broad.

Former race relations commissioner Joris De Bres declined to give evidence to the commission last month, saying he too had concerns over undue secrecy and Muslims being sidelined.

The Commission said it needed to ask government agencies direct and probing questions and was working on the assumption that information gathered would be made public later, wherever possible.

### News in Brief

NEW YORK (Reuters) -- Dozens of people in New York state who were victims of sexual abuse as children sued the Roman Catholic Church in New York on Wednesday, the first day a new law temporarily enabled them to file lawsuits over decades-old crimes. More than 70 people have filed lawsuits against the Roman Catholic Church in New York as of early Wednesday, according to the New York County Supreme Court records, most of them accusing priests of sexually abusing them as children and church leaders of covering up the priests' crimes. The state's landmark Child Victims Act, which is effective from Wednesday and will scrap, for one year, a statute of limitations that had barred older complaints and which critics said was too restrictive. The law is expected to lead to hundreds of lawsuits against churches, schools and youth groups. The change in the law means people of any age in New York state have a year to file a retroactive sexual abuse lawsuit against an alleged offender.

DUBLIN (Reuters) -- Unions representing Ryanair cabin crew in Spain on Wednesday announced plans to hold 10 days of strikes in September unless the Irish airline changes its plans to close several bases in the country. Ryanair staff unions in Britain, Ireland and Portugal have already announced plans to strike in the coming weeks over pay and conditions. Ryanair pilots in Spain are also due to vote on possible industrial action. The low-cost carrier, Europe's largest, managed to quell a series of industrial disputes last year by reaching recognition agreements with a number of unions in Europe and deals on pay and conditions with some. But it has yet to move beyond recognition agreements with others and management angered staff two weeks ago by informing them it had 900 more pilots and crew than needed due to delays in the delivery of the grounded Boeing 737 MAX.

BANGKOK (Reuters) -- Thai authorities issued arrest warrants on Wednesday for four more suspects believed to be responsible for a series of bomb attacks as the capital hosted a key diplomatic meeting this month. Six small bombs and six incendiary devices went off on Aug. 2 as the foreign ministers of Southeast Asian nations met in Bangkok, an event also attended by diplomats from China, the United States and other world powers. Four people were wounded, with police saying they were seeking at least 15 suspects over the coordinated attacks that could be linked to political issues. Wednesday's warrants seek four new suspects on charges of organized crime, arson, causing explosion, and illegal possession of explosives, Krisana Pattanacharoen, a deputy police spokesman, told Reuters. "There will be more warrants for others involved," he added, as the investigation continues.

MOSCOW (Reuters) -- The Kremlin said on Wednesday that the existence of the World Trade Organization (WTO) would be in serious doubt if major economies such as the United States left it, a prospect raised a day earlier by U.S. President Donald Trump. The Kremlin made the comment in response to a question about U.S. media reports that said Trump had threatened on Tuesday to pull out of the WTO over what he described as the organization's unfair treatment of the United States. "It is obvious that the existence of keystone international economic organizations (like the WTO) would be called into serious question after the exit of the biggest economies on earth," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call.

ATLANTA (AP) -- Stifling heat smothered states from Texas to South Carolina on Tuesday with temperatures that felt like 120 degrees (49 Celsius), making it difficult to be outside for long, much less work or play. As the entire Southeast baked amid heat warnings and advisories that reached from central Texas to coastal Georgia, construction workers toiled under a blazing sun in Louisiana. Alabama's largest city opened its auditorium as a refuge for anyone needing to cool down. Some schools and coaches limited football practice for players getting ready for the upcoming season, and social media was dotted with photos showing automobile thermometers with triple-digit readings. Forecasters said a cold front and storms could lead to a slight midweek cool down, but for the meantime it was just too hot.

ENGALURUM/MUMBAI (Reuters) -- Floods and landslides have killed more than 270 people in India this month, displaced one million and inundated thousands of homes across six states, authorities said on Wednesday after two weeks of heavy monsoon rains. The rains from June to September are a lifeline for rural India, delivering some 70% of the country's rainfall, but they also cause death and destruction each year. The southern states of Kerala and Karnataka, and Maharashtra and Gujarat in the west, were among the hardest hit by floods that washed away thousands of hectares of summer-sown crops and damaged roads and rail lines. At least 95 people were killed and more than 50 are missing in Kerala, where heavy rainfall triggered dozens of landslides last week and trapped more than 100 people.