

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Pyongyang challenge: Should US shoot Kim's missiles down?

SEOUL, South Korea — With North Korea threatening to send a salvo of ballistic missiles close to Guam, a U.S. military hub in the Pacific, pressure could grow for Washington to put its multi-billion-dollar missile defense system into use and shoot them out of the air.

If U.S. territory is threatened, countermeasures are a no-brainer. But if the missiles aren't expected to hit the island — the stated goal is to have them hit waters well offshore — should it? Could it? It's not an easy call.

North Korea claims it is in the final stages of preparing a plan to launch four intermediate-range ballistic missiles over Japan and into waters off the tiny island of Guam, where about 7,000 U.S. troops are based and 160,000 U.S. civilians live.

Guam is a launching point for U.S. strategic bombers that the North, virtually flattened by U.S. bombs during the 1950-53 Korean War, sees as particularly threatening. U.S. bombers have flown over the Korean Peninsula several times to show American strength after Pyongyang's missile tests.

As North plans missile launch, US, S. Korea ready war games

SEOUL, South Korea — Military officials said Friday they plan to move ahead with large-scale U.S.-South Korea exercises later this month that North Korea, now finalizing plans to launch a salvo of missiles toward Guam, claims are a rehearsal for war.

The exercises are an annual event, but come as Pyongyang says it is readying a plan to fire off four Hwasong-12 missiles toward the tiny island, which is U.S. territory and major military hub. The plan would be sent to leader Kim Jong Un for approval just before or as the U.S.-South Korea drills begin.

Called Ulchi-Freedom Guardian, the exercises are expected to run from Aug. 21-31 and involve tens of thousands of American and South Korean troops on the ground and in the sea and air. Washington and Seoul say the exercises are defensive in nature and



AP Photo
In this image made from video, pedestrians walk beneath portraits of Kim Il Sung, left, and Kim Jong Il, at Kim Il Sung square in Pyongyang, North Korea, Friday. Despite tensions and talk of war, life on the streets of the North Korean capital Pyongyang remained calm.

crucial to maintaining a deterrent against North Korean aggression.

The exercises were scheduled well before tensions began to rise over President Donald Trump's increasingly fiery rhetoric and North Korea's announcement of the missile plan, which if carried out would be its most provocative launch yet. Along with a bigger set of maneuvers held every spring, the exercises are routinely met by strong condemnation and threats of countermeasures from North Korea.

While tensions typically spike around the dates of the exercises — North Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test just days after last year's maneuvers — the situation generally calms afterward as the North needs to focus on its farms and the approach of the fall harvest.

Poll: Most say time to end effort to repeal Obama health law

WASHINGTON — Message to President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans: It's time to make the Obama health care law more effective. Stop trying to scuttle it.

That's the resounding word from a national poll released Fri-

day by the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. The survey was taken following last month's Senate derailment of the GOP drive to supplant much of President Barack Obama's statute with a diminished federal role in health care.

Around 4 in 5 want the Trump administration to take actions that help Obama's law function properly, rather than trying to undermine it. Trump has suggested steps like halting subsidies to insurers who reduce out-of-pockets health costs for millions of consumers. His administration has discussed other moves like curbing outreach programs that persuade people to buy coverage and not enforcing the tax penalty the statute imposes on those who remain uninsured.

Just 3 in 10 want Trump and Republicans to continue their drive to repeal and replace the statute. Most prefer that they instead move to shore up the law's marketplaces, which are seeing rising premiums and in some areas few insurers willing to sell policies.

Ominously for the GOP, 6 in 10 say Trump and congressional Republicans are responsible for any upcoming health care problems since they control government. That could be a bad sign for Republicans as they prepare to defend their House and Senate majorities in the 2018 elections.

Google CEO Pichai cancels 'town hall' on gender dispute

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Google CEO Sundar Pichai has canceled an internal town hall meant to address gender discrimination on Thursday after employee questions for management began to leak online from the company's internal messaging service.

Pichai said in an email to staff that several Google employees became fearful for their safety and grew concerned about being outed for speaking up at the town hall.

He said the company will aim to create several other forums "where people can feel comfortable to speak freely." Pichai's email was sent about an hour before the event was to start Thursday afternoon.

The town hall was meant to hear out employee grievances over a flareup that has consumed Google for much of the week. It began last weekend after engineer James Damore circulated a memo that claimed biological gender differences helped explain why women are underrepresented at the company.

Salmon: Environmental groups call the request a publicity stunt

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The irrigators association is frustrated with court rulings it says favor fish over people, claiming the committee could end years of legal challenges over dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers and bring stability for irrigators, power generators and other businesses that rely on the water.

Environmental groups call the request a publicity stunt and say it could hurt fishing companies and others that rely on healthy runs of federally protected salmon and steelhead.

Hope in Trump

The association sees hope in a series of pro-industry environmental decisions by President Donald Trump. His administration has rescinded an Obama-era rule that would shield many small streams and

other bodies of water from pollution and development, enacted policies to increase coal mining on federal lands and proposed giving Western states greater flexibility to allow development in habitat of sage grouse, a threatened bird.

Darryll Olsen, association board representative, said the irrigators requested the committee during former President Barack Obama's tenure but got nowhere. He said the Trump administration has been encouraging during talks, leading to a formal request last month for a meeting with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

"What we're asking for is that the secretary give direction to the (Interior) Department to work with us to review the steps for implementing the God squad," Olsen said.

Zinke can gather the com-

mittee, which he would chair and would include other natural resource agencies, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It also would include representatives from Washington state, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

If five of the federal committee members agree, they could exempt federal agencies from Endangered Species Act requirements for one or more of the thirteen species of salmon and steelhead listed since the early 1990s.

Meeting soon

The irrigators group, which has 120 members growing food crops in Washington state and Oregon, expects to meet with Zinke soon, Olsen said.

Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said in an email that the agency could not comment on a committee that had not been formed and that she

had no information about Zinke's meetings.

Joseph Bogaard, executive director of a coalition of conservation, commercial, sport fishing and business groups called Save Our Wild Salmon, blasted the irrigation association's request.

"It's a terrible idea that will deliver great harm to the people and businesses of the Pacific Northwest," said Bogaard, whose coalition relies on the fish to produce millions of dollars of revenue.

A federal judge ruled last year that the government had not done enough to improve salmon runs despite spending billions of dollars and

urged it to consider removing four dams on the lower Snake River.

Todd True, a lawyer with the environmental law firm Earthjustice who represented some plaintiffs in that 2016 ruling, said the God squad request should go nowhere.

"There isn't any basis to convene the committee because there are reasonable alternatives to save the fish," he said, pointing to the dam removal option. "Their removal would be a big step forward."

Fish counts

This year, fish counts at dams on the Columbia and

Snake rivers have been well below the 10-year average, which biologists blame on droughts in 2014 and 2015 and warming ocean conditions.

Various results have emerged the three times the God squad has convened. It refused to grant an exemption for a Tennessee dam in the 1970s over a fish called the snail darter. Regarding crane protection in the Midwest, a settlement was reached before the panel offered a decision.

In 1992, it voted to side-step protections for the northern spotted owl and allow the Interior Department to sell timber on land in Oregon.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

A competitor goes diving for a dig during an 18 and under match at the Seaside beach volleyball tournament on Thursday.

Seaside: Brothers will be back next year

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"I feel like we have more chemistry because we know each other," said Erik, who started playing volleyball in his high school physical education class.

"It's pretty fun because we see each other every day," Max said.

But sometimes it is harder for family members to control their emotions when mistakes are made.

"As brothers we get more on each other," Max said.

However, the two learned to work well together and move on after errors to get ready for the next play, Erik said.

They said they have learned a lot during the beach volleyball tournament and will be back next year.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Seaside beach volleyball tournament kicked off this week as teams from across the country gathered to compete in what is billed as the largest tournament of its kind in the world.

September 9, 2017

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What: 5K walk/run or 10K run, followed by a bonfire on the beach

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How: Register online at www.RaceToTheBar.com.

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