

Trump talks tough on North Korea

PANMUNJOM, South Korea (AP) — The White House displayed a tough and unyielding approach to North Korea and its nuclear ambitions Monday, with President Donald Trump warning that Kim Jong Un has “gotta behave” and Vice President Mike Pence sternly advising Kim not to test America’s resolve and military power.

Trump, in Washington, and Pence at the tense Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea, signaled a forceful U.S. stance on North Korea’s recent actions and threats. But no one was predicting what might come next.

Behind the heated rhetoric, in fact, Trump’s strategy in the region looks somewhat similar to predecessor Barack Obama’s — albeit with the added unpredictability of a new president who has shown he’s willing to use force.

Pence, inspecting the DMZ, warned Pyongyang that after years of testing the U.S. and South Korea with its nuclear ambitions, “the era of strategic patience is over.” Appearing later with South Korea’s acting president, Hwang Kyo-ahn, the vice president pointed to Trump’s recent military actions in Syria and Afghanistan as signs that the new



U.S. Vice President Mike Pence looks at the North side from Observation Post Ouellette in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), near the border village of Panmunjom, which has separated the two Koreas since the Korean War, South Korea, Monday.

administration would not shrink from acting against the North.

“North Korea would do well not to test his resolve — or the strength of the armed forces of the United States in this region,” Pence said at the start of a 10-day trip to Asia.

Pence’s remarks also came with hope for a diplomatic path. Washington, he said, was looking for security “through peaceable means, through negotiations.”

In the meantime, North Korea’s deputy U.N. ambassador accused the United States of turning the Korean peninsula into “the world’s biggest hotspot” and creating

“a dangerous situation in which a thermonuclear war may break out at any moment.”

Kim In Ryong told a news conference Monday that U.S.-South Korean military exercises being staged now are the largest-ever “aggressive war drill.” He said North Korea’s measures to bolster its nuclear forces are self-defensive “to cope with the U.S. vicious nuclear threat and blackmail,” and he said his country “is ready to react to any mode of war desired by the U.S.”

America’s implied threat of force isn’t new, nor is hope for engagement. Previous presidents have repeatedly

left all options on the table while trying to enlist China’s help to pressure North Korea to pursue diplomatic solutions. The Trump administration has labeled this policy “maximum pressure and engagement,” although officials acknowledge there is no current engagement with Pyongyang.

Until recently, it has been Trump’s confrontational tone that has drawn attention rather than his action. But then he ordered the unilateral missile strike against Syria, even after dismissing talk of deeper U.S. involvement in that nation’s civil war.

“There is both greater unpredictability and decisiveness from President Trump,” said Victor Cha, the director of Asian Studies at Georgetown University and a former adviser to President George W. Bush.

Cha noted Pence’s reference to “strategic patience,” an Obama administration strategy in which diplomatic and economic pressure from sanctions were given time to change the North’s behavior.

“Strategic patience signaled indecision and predictability — not a good combination in Trump’s eyes,” Cha said.

The White House did not offer a sense of when Trump’s patience might run out.



In this photo provided by Jim Best/University of Illinois, taken in 2016, a close-up view of the ice-walled canyon at the terminus of the Kaskawulsh Glacier, with recently collapsed ice blocks. This canyon now carries almost all meltwater from the toe of the glacier down the Kaskawulsh Valley and toward the Gulf of Alaska and the Pacific Ocean instead of the Bering Sea.

Canada glacier melt rerouted in rare case of ‘river piracy’

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists have witnessed the first modern case of what they call “river piracy” and they blame global warming. Most of the water gushing from a large glacier in northwest Canada last year suddenly switched from one river to another.

That changed the Slims River from a 10-foot deep, raging river to something so shallow that it barely was above a scientist’s high top sneakers at midstream. The melt from the Yukon’s Kaskawulsh glacier now flows mostly into the Alsek River and ends up in the Pacific Ocean instead of the Arctic’s Bering Sea.

It seemed to all happen in about one day — last May 26 — based on river gauge data, said Dan Shugar, a University of Washington Tacoma professor who studies how land changes. A 100-foot tall canyon formed at the end of the glacier, rerouting the melting water, Shugar and his colleagues wrote in a study published in Monday’s journal Nature Geoscience.

The term “river piracy” is usually used to describe events that take a long time to occur, such as tens of thousands of years, and had not been seen in modern times, especially not this quickly, said study co-author Jim Best of the University of Illinois. It’s different from something like the Mississippi River changing course at its delta and it involves more than one river and occurs at the beginning of a waterway, not the end.

The scientists had been to the edge of the Kaskawulsh glacier in 2013. Then the

Slims River was “swift, cold and deep” and flowing fast enough that it could be dangerous to wade through, Shugar said. They returned last year to find the river shallow and as still as a lake, while the Alsek, was deeper and flowing faster.

“We were really surprised when we got there and there was basically no water in the river,” Shugar said of the Slims. “We could walk across it and we wouldn’t get our shirts wet. It was like a snake-shaped lake rather than a river.”

What had been a river delta at the edge of the Slims River had changed into a place full of “afternoon dust storms with this fine dust getting into your nose and your mouth,” Best said.

The lack of water in the Slims wasn’t because of changes in rainfall, Shugar said. They know that because it’s a river fed mostly by glacial melt, not rain, and the Alsek increased in amounts similar to what disappeared from the Slims.

The Kaskawulsh glacier covers about 9,650 square miles, about the size of Vermont. The front of the glacier has retreated nearly 1.2 miles since 1899, Shugar said.

The scientists calculate that there is only a 1 in 200 chance that the retreating glacier and river piracy is completely natural without man-made global warming. They used weather and ice observations and a computer simulation that models how likely the glacier retreat would be with current conditions and without heat-trapping greenhouse gases.

Turkey’s president Erdogan expands his powers

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has finally fulfilled his long-held ambition to expand his powers after Sunday’s referendum handed him the reins of his country’s governance. But success did not come without a cost.

His victory leaves the nation deeply divided and facing increasing tension with former allies abroad, while international monitors and opposition parties have reported numerous voting irregularities.

An unofficial tally carried by the country’s state-run news agency gave Erdogan’s “yes” vote a narrow win, with 51.4 percent approving a series of constitutional changes converting Turkey’s political system from a parliamentary to a presidential one. Critics argue the reforms will hand extensive power to a man with an increasingly autocratic bent, leaving few checks and balances in place.

Opposition parties called foul, complaining of a series of irregularities. They were particularly outraged by an electoral board decision to accept ballots that did not bear official stamps, as required by Turkish law, and called for the vote to be annulled. International monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, who also listed numerous irregularities, said the move undermined safeguards against fraud.

The referendum campaign was heavily weighted in favor of the “yes” campaign,



Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, gestures while delivering a speech during a rally of supporters a day after the referendum, outside the Presidential Palace, in Ankara, Turkey, Monday.

with Erdogan drawing on the full powers of the state and government to dominate the airwaves and billboards. The “no” campaign complained of intimidation, detentions and beatings.

In Istanbul, hundreds of “no” supporters demonstrated in the streets on Monday, chanting “thief, murderer, Erdogan” and banging pots and pans.

“We are protesting today because the results announced by the government are not the real ones. Because actually the ‘no’ we voted won. But the government is announcing it as ‘yes’ has won,” Damla Atalay, a 35-year-old lawyer, said of the voting irregularities.

Erdogan was unfazed by the criticism as he spoke to flag-waving supporters in the

Turkish capital, Ankara.

“We have put up a fight against the powerful nations of the world,” he said as he arrived at the airport from Istanbul. “The crusader mentality attacked us abroad. ... We did not succumb. As a nation, we stood strong.”

In a speech before a massive crowd at his sprawling presidential palace complex, Erdogan insisted Turkey’s referendum was “the most democratic election ... ever seen in any Western country” and admonished the OSCE monitors to “know your place.”

The increasing polarization of Turkish society has long worried Turkey observers, who note the dangers of deepening societal divisions in a country with a history of political instability.

The referendum was held with a state of emergency still in place, imposed after an attempted coup in July. About 100,000 people have been fired from their jobs in the crackdown that followed on supporters of a U.S.-based Islamic cleric and former Erdogan ally who the presi-

dent blamed for the attempted putsch. Tens of thousands have been arrested or imprisoned, including lawmakers, judges, journalists and businessmen.

On Monday, the country’s Council of Ministers decided to extend the state of emergency, which grants greater powers of detention and arrest to security forces, for a further three months. It had been due to expire April 19. The decision was to be sent to parliament for approval.

“The way (Erdogan) has closed the door on the opposition, there is likely to be increased political unrest,” said Howard Eissenstat, associate professor of Middle East history at St. Lawrence University in upstate New York. “Forty-eight percent of the population is being told that their voices don’t matter.”

There is also the risk of increased international isolation, with Erdogan appealing to patriotic sentiments by casting himself as a champion of a proud Turkish nation that will not be dictated to by foreign powers in general, and the European Union in particular.



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