

## Russia: U.S. War With North Korea 'Is Not an Option'

By Tom O'Connor

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One of Russia's highest-ranking diplomats warned Thursday that a U.S. attack on North Korea would have serious repercussions across the globe and stressed his country's opposition to such a move. He wasn't alone.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov and officials from multiple countries around the world are rejecting President Donald Trump's promise Wednesday to "[totally destroy](#)" North Korea. Trump's fiery U.N. speech came after months of mounting tensions between his administration and an increasingly bellicose, nuclear-capable North Korea, led by Kim Jong Un. While Russia has [also criticized Kim's nuclear ambitions and routine ballistic missile tests](#), Gatilov emphasized that Moscow would not stand for a direct U.S. assault on North Korea—something Trump's administration has repeatedly touted as a possibility.

"This is their long-running thesis that all options remain on the table, including military ones. But we believe this will have dire consequences both for North and South Korea, and the region in general, and for all international relations in general. This is not an option," Gatilov told the state-run [Tass Russian News Agency](#), adding that he believed Washington should be savvy enough to know not to launch such a bold move.

"Still, common sense should prevail here. We should think not about military methods but how to start talks and dialogue," he said.

Russia wasn't the only country frustrated by the rhetoric of Trump's first U.N. General Assembly address, in which he called Kim a "Rocket Man" who is "on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime." Representatives of North Korea, the target of the Republican leader's attacks, had [walked out of the room](#) prior to Trump's threats, but the country's foreign minister, Ri Yong Ho, later likened the speech to "[dog-barking sounds](#)" that did not surprise Pyongyang.

Like previous U.S. leaders, Trump has rejected North Korea's self-proclaimed right to possess nuclear weapons, which the country argues are crucial for guarding the reclusive, communist state's sovereignty. Since conducting its first nuclear test in 2006, North Korea's military has advanced rapidly, especially after Kim became the third generation of his family to lead the country following his father's death in 2011.

This year alone, North Korea launched its first ever intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) tests and its sixth nuclear test, believed to have been a hydrogen bomb [more powerful than all previous tests combined](#). These developments, along with reports that North Korea has potentially achieved the technology to fit warheads onto its missiles, could place much of the world, including parts of the U.S., in Kim's scope.

A war between the U.S. and North Korea has been projected as [killing at least a million people](#)—without the use of nuclear weapons. [The fatalities would increase significantly](#) if North Korea were to successfully launch a nuclear strike on the U.S., which it has promised to do if attacked. As [tensions between Trump and Kim mount](#), some U.S. allies and foes alike have attempted to step in to defuse the situation.

A series of North Korean-flagged vessels that left Russia for China between March and June ended up off North Korean ports, Reuters tracking data shows in this graphic dated September 18. Changing destinations mid-journey is not forbidden, but U.S. authorities reportedly say the tactic could be an attempt to undermine severe international sanctions lobbed against North Korea over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Thompson Reuters Eikon

Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom called Trump's U.N. address "the wrong speech, at the wrong time, to the wrong audience," and German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel warned last month that a war between the U.S. and North Korea "[could result in more victims than World War II](#)," which would make it the deadliest conflict in human history.

China, North Korea's closest ally since its founding and during subsequent [conflict with its U.S.-backed southern neighbor in the 1950s](#), has [joined forces with Russia](#) in trying to establish a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The countries, both traditional critics of U.S. foreign policy, have called on Trump and Kim to renounce their current brinkmanship and engage one another in dialogue.

Pacific U.S. allies South Korea and Japan, however, have mostly welcomed Trump's hardline tactics. A South Korean presidential spokesperson, Park Soo-hyun, praised Trump's "firm and specific stance regarding the important issue of maintaining peace and security now facing the international community and the United Nations," according to [The Washington Post](#).