RUSSIA CALLS TRUMP'S NORTH KOREA REMARKS A DANGEROUS STEP TOWARD INSTABILITY

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President Donald Trump's vow that the United States may have to "totally destroy" North Korea if it feels threatened sent shockwaves across the world Tuesday.

Trump's statements at the United Nations General Assembly came in the middle of the night for Koreans, but they prompted late-evening rebuttals from leaders in Russia, a country with which Trump had hoped to foster a breakthrough in relations.

In this month alone, North Korea has tested a hydrogen bomb and launched an intercontinental ballistic capable of striking the United States on a test run over the Japanese island of Hokkaido. The United Nations Security Council responded with toughened sanctions earlier this month.

In Russia, which has largely defended North Korea's interests although it supported sanctions against the country earlier this month, Trump's remarks were seen as a dangerous harbinger of instability.

Leading members of the Russian foreign policy establishment said that Trump's statements echoed his inexperience and were potentially dangerous for U.S. allies.

"Any military conflict means deaths of civilians. It is especially odd as the U.S. considers South Korea and Japan its allies and they could be affected in case of a strike," Andrei Klimov, chairman of the Foreign Affairs committee in Russia's upper house of parliament, told the Interfax news agency in an interview on Tuesday.

While Russian officials were initially excited about Trump's readiness to overturn the international order, a promised detente with Russia has failed to materialize while bellicose rhetoric against Russian partners like North Korea and Iran has stepped up.

U.N. chief: Nuclear threat at highest level since Cold War

At least "unlike his predecessors, he didn't put Russia among the main threats to mankind and even praised our country for cooperating with the Security Council on North Korea," wrote Konstantin Kosachyov, another senior member of Russia's upper house of parliament, in a post on Facebook.

But Trump's speech was "disappointing," said Kosachyov, who was in New York for this week's summit, particularly for "the extremely dangerous statements about the readiness to 'totally

destroy North Korea' and exit the Iran deal as 'one of the worst for the U.S. and an embarassment.' Plus Syria, Cuba and Venezuela as though they were the worst dictatorships in the history of mankind."

Trump's attack on North Korea came hours after Spain announced that it has given the North Korean ambassador assigned to Madrid until the end of September to leave, becoming the fourth country this month to expel Pyongyang's representative in the wake of the regime's sixth nuclear test.

The move follows similar steps by Mexico, Peru and Kuwait.

The expulsion will please Trump administration officials, who have been asking countries with diplomatic relations with North Korea to scale them back as a way to further isolate Kim Jong Un's regime.

The United States has been leading efforts to punish the regime for its repeated missile launches this year, which Pyongyang says are part of an effort to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile aimed at reaching the U.S. mainland.

But these efforts have intensified following North Korea's huge nuclear test Sept. 3, which experts say appears to have been the detonation of a hydrogen bomb, as Pyongyang claimed, rather than the relatively smaller atomic bombs it had previously exploded.

Why Trump's threat to 'totally destroy' North Korea is extraordinary

The Spanish Foreign Ministry said it was expelling Kim Hyok Chol, who became North Korea's first ambassador to Spain when the country opened an embassy in Madrid at the beginning of 2014.

"Today, the North Korean ambassador was summoned and was told of the decision to consider him as a persona non grata, therefore he must stop working and abandon the country before 30 September," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement, according to Reuters. It also announced the move on Twitter.

This month, just four days after the nuclear test, Mexico's Foreign Ministry said it had given the North Korean ambassador to that country, Kim Hyong Gil, 72 hours to leave the country.

"With this diplomatic step, Mexico expresses to the North Korean government its categorical repudiation of its recent nuclear activity, which is an increasingly brazen violation of international law and which poses a serious threat to the Asian region and to the world," the ministry said in a statement.

North Korea is a growing threat to the world but particularly to key allies of Mexico such as Japan and South Korea, it said.

Before leaving, Kim Hyong Gil sharply criticized the decision.

"Mexico took an ignorant measure to declare an ambassador of a revolutionary regime from an independent country as persona non grata," he said in a statement to the Mexican news media, as reported by the specialist website NK News. "I condemned and totally rejected the U.N. Security Council's sanctions resolution as an infringement on our independence."

Trump defends America first foreign policy at U.N., threatens to totally destroy North Korea

The Security Council approved the latest set of sanctions against North Korea on Sept. 11.

Peru also took extra steps to limit the North Korean presence in Lima. The Peruvian government had said in July that it would reduce the number of diplomats accredited there, in accordance with a U.N. Security Council resolution passed late last year.

That resolution, No. 2321, required member states to reduce the number of staff members at North Korean diplomatic missions and consular posts, and to limit the number of bank accounts to one per diplomatic mission and one per diplomat.

During a trip to Latin America in August, Vice President Mike Pence called on Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Peru to sever all diplomatic relations with North Korea.

The day after the latest nuclear test the same day that the U.N. Security Council passed its latest resolution the Peruvian government told North Korea's ambassador in Lima, Kim Hak Chol, he had five days to leave. He had been in Lima since the end of 2013.

These moves follow an announcement from Kuwait that it would expel the North Korean ambassador there, So Chang Sik, as part of a move to scale down Pyongyang's diplomatic presence in Kuwait City.

Kaynak/Source: