

# Time for talks on N Korea 'is over'

## Says US, urges China, Japan, S Korea to tighten screws on Pyongyang

AFP, Washington

The time for talk on North Korea is "over", the United States said, spurning a UN response to Pyongyang's latest ICBM launch in favour of bomber flights and missile defence system tests.

Nikki Haley, the US envoy to the United Nations, said there was "no point" in holding a fruitless emergency Security Council session, warning that another weak council resolution would be "worse than nothing" in light of the North's repeated violations.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un boasted of his country's ability to strike any target in the US after an intercontinental ballistic missile test Friday which weapons experts said could even bring New York into range -- a major challenge to President Donald Trump.

US strategic bombers on Saturday flew over the Korean peninsula in a direct response to the launch, and on Sunday American forces successfully tested a missile interception system which the US hopes will be installed on the Korean peninsula.

Under Kim's leadership, North Korea has accelerated its drive towards a credible nuclear strike capability, in defiance of international condemnation and multiple sets of UN sanctions. The US Senate passed new bipartisan

sanctions on Pyongyang on Friday. Haley urged China, Japan and South Korea to tighten the screws on Pyongyang.

"An additional Security Council resolution that does not significantly increase the international pressure on North Korea is of no value," she said in a statement late Sunday.

"It sends the message to the North Korean dictator that the international community is unwilling to seriously challenge him.

"China must decide whether it is finally willing to take this vital step. The time for talk is over."

Earlier, Trump warned that he would not allow China -- the impoverished North's sole major ally and economic lifeline -- to "do nothing" about Pyongyang.

"I am very disappointed in China. Our foolish past leaders have allowed them to make hundreds of billions of dollars a year in trade, yet they do NOTHING for us with North Korea, just talk," Trump wrote in tweet.

"The DPRK nuclear issue is not due to China, the settlement of the

minister of US treaty ally Japan, also urged Beijing to act -- along with Moscow -- after telephone talks with Trump yesterday.

The North had "trampled all over" efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the situation and "unilaterally escalated" tensions.

"The international community including China and Russia must take it seriously and step up pressure," Abe told reporters, adding that the two nations would take steps towards concrete action but did not give details.

Beijing also rejected Trump's linkage of trade and the North, with commerce vice-minister Qian Keming telling a briefing yesterday the issues "are not related, and should not be discussed together".

But Shinzo Abe, the prime



DPRK nuclear issue requires the concerted efforts of all parties and the parties should properly recognise this issue," China's foreign ministry said in a statement, using the acronym for North Korea's official name.

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But Shinzo Abe, the prime

# A game of thrones in Pakistan politics

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif has passed the leadership baton to his brother, ensuring the continuation of a dynastic political system in a country where government has long been run as a family enterprise.

In Pakistan's stratified, semi-feudal society, patronage and kinship play a huge role in politics, often dominating ideology.

Some analyst estimates say that more than half of seats -- at both national and provincial level -- have been passed from father to son, brother to brother, keeping the business of politics firmly within the family.

Sharif named his younger brother Shahbaz as his successor to the country's top office in a defiant speech the day after he was disqualified by the Supreme Court on corruption charges.

The move maintains the eponymous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party's hold on power, with Nawaz continuing to act as puppet master from his position at head of the party.

Shahbaz -- currently chief minister of Punjab province -- the family's power base -- is expected to slide into his brother's vacated National Assembly seat before being rubber stamped as prime minister in a parliamentary vote.

Meanwhile local media has reported that Shahbaz is lining up his son Hamza to take his position as Punjab Chief Minister, though he too must first be elected to his father's provincial assembly seat in a by-election.

But some warn that the PML-N will not rally behind Shahbaz -- considered less charismatic than his older brother -- in the same way that it did Nawaz, possibly fracturing the party.

"Nawaz has personal political appeal in a way that his brother doesn't. I think that the dynasty will fray under his brother," said journalist and commentator Omar Waraich.

Another power dynasty, the Bhutto family and its Pakistan People's Party (PPP) lost its footing after the 2007 death of its leader, the country's first female prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

Founded by her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the PPP was once a formidable political force, dominating Pakistani politics for nearly four decades. But since Benazir's assassination and despite being nominally led by her son Bilawal, the PPP has become a shadow of its former self.

"The leaders have a much stronger brand than the parties. Benazir was always a much stronger brand than the Pakistan People's Party. Nawaz Sharif is a much stronger brand than what the PML-N will be without him," said Waraich.

Similarly the country's main opposition party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, which paints itself as a grassroots movement, is ultimately centred around the personality of its leader, cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan.

The outgoing Sharif now has to face down corruption allegations that have swept up three of his children, including his daughter Maryam Nawaz who had long been touted as his presumptive political heir.

"It is a serious blow to dynastic politics that has been the biggest impediment to the development of democratic institutions and values in the country," said political commentator Zahid Hussain in a recent column for the leading English-language daily Dawn, referring to the Supreme Court judgement that ousted Sharif.

But, he concluded, while the death knell of Sharif's political career has arguably been sounded, "one is not sure if the family rule is over".



Hamza Maryam

**NORTH KOREA TENSIONS**

No point in holding fruitless UNSC session: Nikki Haley

Beijing rejects Trump's linkage of trade and North Korea

US, Japan would take steps towards concrete action: Abe



## Scaramucci out as White House communications director

CNN ONLINE

Anthony Scaramucci is out as White House communications director.

It's the latest high-profile departure from the Trump White House. Chief of Staff Reince Priebus resigned at the end of last week, replaced by John Kelly.

"Anthony Scaramucci will be leaving his role as White House Communications Director," White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement yesterday. "Scaramucci felt it was best to give chief of staff John Kelly a clean slate and the ability to build his own team. We wish him all the best."

A White House official said Kelly wanted Scaramucci removed from his new role as the communications director because he did not think he was disciplined and had burned his credibility.

Scaramucci, a colourful and controversial figure, was brought on during the latest in a long list of White House shake ups that have rocked the presidency with a sense of chaos.

He is the third White House communications director to leave the post that had been vacant since late May, when Mike Dubke left after about three months on the job.

Ex-White House press secretary Sean Spicer also assumed some of the communications director role before he quit when Scaramucci was hired on July 21.

Scaramucci's departure came days after he unleashed a vulgar tirade against two top White House officials in a conversation with a reporter.



Anti-government activists drag a police motorbike burnt after the explosion of an explosive device during a protest against the elections for a Constituent Assembly in Caracas on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

## Interim Pak PM nominee faces Rs 220b graft inquiry

PTI, Islamabad

The ruling PML-N party's interim prime minister nominee Shahid Khaqan Abbasi is facing a Rs 220 billion corruption inquiry by Pakistan's National Accountability Bureau over an LNG contract, according to a media report.

Abbasi, the former minister for petroleum and natural resources, is the principal accused in a National Accountability Bureau (NAB) case registered in 2015 over the award of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) import contract, Dawn News reported.

Other suspects in the case include former petroleum secretary Abid Saeed, Inter State Gas Systems (ISGS) managing director Mobin Sault, private firm Engro's chief executive officer Emarul Haq and the Sui Southern Gas Company's (SSGC) ex-CEO Zuhair Ahmed Siddiqui, the report said.

Abbasi is expected to be elected as the new prime minister by Pakistan's Parliament today, replacing ousted premier Nawaz Sharif.

The Supreme Court on Friday disqualified 67-year-old Sharif for dishonesty and ruled that corruption cases be filed against him and

his children over the Panama Papers scandal, forcing the embattled leader out of office.

After Sharif's disqualification, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) nominated Abbasi as its candidate for the prime minister's post for an interim period before Punjab Chief Minister and Nawaz's brother Shehbaz Sharif replaces him for the remaining 10 months of the government's term.

According to NAB documents, the contract for the LNG import and distribution was awarded to the Elengy Terminal, a subsidiary of Engro, in 2013 in violation of the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules and relevant laws.

The bureau registered the case on July 29, 2015, but it is still in the inquiry stage, contrary to NAB Chairman Qamar Zaman Chaudhry's claim that he has introduced a new strategy under which the process of complaint verification, inquiry, investigation and filing of reference takes 10 months, the report said.

It appears that like several cases of the Sharif family, this one has also been dumped by the NAB, it said.



## WHITE HOUSE SHAKEUP

### Trump swears in new chief of staff Kelly

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump swore in his new chief of staff John Kelly yesterday, a retired Marine Corps general who he praised for averting controversy during his tenure overseeing border security issues at the Department of Homeland Security.

Kelly is expected to bring a more disciplined approach to running Trump's White House. He replaced Reince Priebus, who failed to mesh with the president's freewheeling and untraditional management style and grappled with infighting during his six months in the job.

Trump praised Kelly for his work at the DHS, crediting him with reducing the number of people illegally crossing the southern US border.

## RAPE AND MURDER OF TODDLER

### Yemeni man gets public execution

AFP, Sanaa

Thousands of people yesterday gathered in the rebel-held Yemeni capital to witness the public execution of a man convicted of raping and murdering a three-year-old girl.

Mohammed al-Moghrabi, 41, was sentenced to death for the June 25 rape and murder by a court run by the Shiite Huthi rebels who control Sanaa.

The gruesome crime coincided with the first day of Eid al-Fitr, the Muslim holiday that marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan, and sparked anger among the population.

Moghrabi was first given 100 lashes and then made to lie flat, his face on the ground, and killed by multiple gunshots by security forces to cheers from the crowd.

Police said they escorted him to Tahrir square where he was executed amid fears the angry crowd could lynch him.

The public execution was widely aired on Huthi-run media in Yemen, framed as an example of the Shia rebels' efforts to combat crime in their areas.

The Iran-backed Huthis have been locked in war with the Saudi-backed internationally-recognised government of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi for two years.

More than 8,000 people have been killed and millions displaced in the conflict, while nearly 2,000 have died of cholera since April.



## IRAQ INVASION IN 2003

### UK court blocks bid to prosecute Blair

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The High Court has blocked a bid by a former chief of staff of the Iraqi army to bring a private prosecution against Tony Blair over the Iraq War.

General Abdul Wahed Shannan Al Rabbat has accused Blair of committing a "crime of aggression" by invading Iraq in 2003 to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

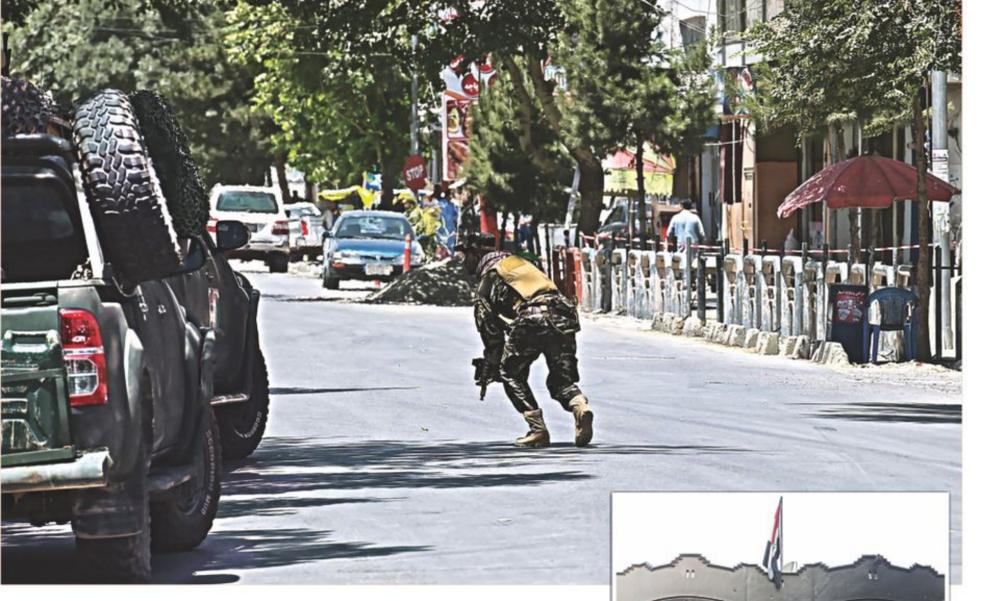
Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, the Lord Chief Justice, and Justice Ouseley dismissed the general's application, saying there was "no prospect" of the case succeeding.

The general wanted to prosecute Blair and two other key ministers at the time -- Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, and Lord Goldsmith, the Attorney General.

He lives in Muscat, Oman, does not possess a passport and travel to the UK.

His lawyers asked London's High Court for permission to seek judicial review in an attempt to get the Supreme Court, now the highest court in the land, to overturn a ruling by the House of Lords in 2006 that there is no such crime as the crime of aggression under the law of England and Wales.

Westminster Magistrates Court refused to issue summonses in November last year on the grounds the ex-ministers had immunity from legal action, and in any event the current Attorney General, Jeremy Wright QC, would have to give consent.



A member of the Afghan security forces walks on the street at the site of a suicide blast near Iraq's embassy in Kabul yesterday. Inset, Iraqi embassy building after the attack. PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

## Forces foil IS attack on Iraq embassy in Kabul

### All four attackers killed after hours-long gunfight

AFP, Kabul

A suicide bomber blew himself up outside the Iraqi embassy in Kabul yesterday and militants breached the compound, Afghan officials said, in a complex hours-long attack claimed by the Islamic State group.

All the attackers had been killed and the compound secured roughly four hours after the assault began, Afghanistan's interior ministry said, adding that all embassy staff were safe and only one policeman wounded "slightly".

Earlier, black smoke billowed into the air above the neighbourhood in northwestern Kabul as the sound of gunfire, blasts and ambulance sirens could be heard. Panicked residents, including women and children, could be seen fleeing the area.

The interior ministry said at least four militants had attacked the embassy, beginning with a suicide bomber who detonated his vest at the compound entrance.

"The quick-response police forces arrived in time and evacuated the Iraqi diplomats to a safe place. No embassy staff have been harmed, only one policeman was wounded slightly," a ministry statement said.

The Iraqi foreign ministry in Baghdad said the charge d'affairs was among those evacuated and that it was monitoring the situation with Afghan authorities, without giving further details.

The Islamic State's propaganda agency Amaq released a statement claiming responsibility for the attack, saying two members "attacked the Iraqi embassy building in the Afghan city of Kabul".

The embassy is located in northwestern Kabul, in a neighbourhood that is home to several hotels and banks as well as large supermarkets and several police compounds.

"I heard a big blast followed by several explosions and small gunfire," said Ahmad Ali, a nearby shopkeeper.

"People were worried and closed their shops to run for safety. The roads are still blocked by security forces."