

Trump's America

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Donald Trump warns United States will 'totally destroy' North Korea if threatened at UN debut

Posted 33 minutes ago

US President Donald Trump has vowed to "totally destroy" North Korea unless it backs down from its weapons programs, mocking Pyongyang's leader Kim Jong-un as a "rocket man on a suicide mission".

It was Mr Trump's most direct threat to attack North Korea for its hostile activities that have included launching ballistic missiles over Japan and conducting underground nuclear tests.

His comments rattled the world leaders gathered before him in the green-marbled UN General Assembly hall, where just minutes earlier, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres had appealed for statesmanship and diplomacy.

"The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea," Mr Trump said.

As loud, startled murmurs filled the hall, Mr Trump doubled down, oddly referring to Mr Kim by nickname "rocket man" — which he first used on Sunday in a Twitter post — despite the international forum and gravity of the situation.

"Rocket man is on a suicide mission for himself and his regime."

One man in the audience covered his face with his hands shortly after Mr Trump made his "totally destroy" comment, while Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom crossed her arms.

North Korea's mission to the United Nations — who had a junior diplomat in the front row — did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Mr Trump's remarks.

Mr Trump's sabre-rattling rhetoric was in contrast to the comments of some of his own administration who have stated their preference for a diplomatic solution.

Shortly before Mr Trump's speech, Mr Guterres appealed from the General Assembly lectern for statesmanship to avoid war with North Korea.



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

The has great strength & patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy #NoKo.

6:22 PM - Sep 19, 2017

8,528 9,690 30,909

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Key points:

- His North Korea comments shocked the forum that earlier pushed for statesmanship
- In his 41-minute speech Mr Trump also touched on Iran and Islamic extremism
- Mr Trump repeated his "America First" vision, said he would defend US "above all else"

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"We must not sleepwalk our way into war," he said.

Later, in what may have been a veiled prod at China, Pyongyang's major trading partner, Mr Trump said:

"It is an outrage that some nations would not only trade with such a regime but would arm, supply and financially support a country that imperils the world with nuclear conflict."

Learn the history behind the instability of the Korean Peninsula, the Kim dynasty, the country's nuclear weapons program and why China remains an ally.



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'Major portions of the world are going to hell': Trump



PHOTO: Mr Trump addressed 193 diplomats at the UN General Assembly's New York headquarters. (AP: Seth Wenig)

In a thunderous 41-minute speech, Mr Trump also took aim at [Iran's nuclear ambitions and regional influence](#), Venezuela's collapsing democracy, and the threat of Islamist extremists. He also criticised the Cuban Government.

"Major portions of the world are in conflict and some in fact are going to hell," he said.

Turning to Iran, Mr Trump called the 2015 nuclear deal negotiated by his predecessor Barack Obama an embarrassment and hinted that he may not recertify the agreement when it came up for a mid-October deadline.

"I don't think you've heard the last of it," he said, while calling Iran an "economically depleted rogue state" that exported violence.

There was no immediate comment from either Iran's UN delegation or its foreign ministry in Tehran.

The speech marked Mr Trump's latest attempt to lay out his "America First" vision for a US foreign policy aimed at downgrading global bureaucracies, basing alliances on shared interests, and steering Washington away from nation-building exercises abroad.

Mr Trump, who entered the White House eight months ago, told the 193-member global body that the United States did not seek to impose its will on other nations and would respect other countries' sovereignty.

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The main points in the nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers aimed at curbing Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

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"I will defend America's interests above all else," he said.

"But in fulfilling our obligations to other nations we also realise it's in everyone's interest to seek a future

where all nations can be sovereign, prosperous and secure."

'You are worse than I am':
Transcript of Trump-Turnbull phone call leaked



VIDEO: A US Air Force B-1B bomber, F-35B stealth fighter jets, and South Korean F-15K fighter jets fly over the peninsula.
(ABC News)

Reuters

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