

World War Tweet?

Some are calling it “World War Tweet”: President Trump and North Korea’s Kim Jong Un boasting on Twitter about their nuclear buttons.

It was a weird social media moment in a dangerous standoff. But it’s no joke.

In his New Year’s Day speech, Kim said, “The U.S. should know that the nuclear button is on my desk. The entire U.S. mainland is within our nuclear strike range.”

President Trump responded on Twitter: “Will someone from his depleted and food starved regime please inform him that I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!”

The president doesn’t actually have a physical nuclear button; he has a bag containing what’s called the “nuclear football,” but that didn’t stop Trump from teasing Kim.

Despite the nuclear threat in his New Year’s Day speech, North Korea experts saw important symbolism in the color of Kim’s gray suit, indicating the North was softening or wanted something. Sure enough, Kim said in his speech that the North wants to send a delegation to the Winter Olympics in South Korea next month, and has now opened a cross-border hotline with South Korea.

Nikki Haley, US Ambassador to the U.N., said, “North Korea can talk with anyone they want, but the U.S. is not going to acknowledge it until they agree to ban the weapons they have.”

And while President Trump sounded open to the possibility of an inter-Korean dialogue, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs, retired Admiral Mike Mullen, offered an alarming assessment of the nuclear standoff on ABC’s *This Week* program,

saying, "We're actually closer, in my view, to a nuclear war with North Korea and in that region than we have ever been. And I just don't see how—I don't see the opportunities to solve this diplomatically at this particular point."

At the same time, another rogue state seeking to become a nuclear power, Iran, is still being rocked by protests.

Iranian state media aired footage of pro-government demonstrations in cities across the country after a week of protests over the country's poor economy have left more than 20 dead.

Ambassador Haley said, "The demonstrations are completely spontaneous. They are virtually in every city in Iran. This is the precise picture of a long-oppressed people rising up against their dictators. The U.N. must speak out. In the days ahead, we will be calling for an emergency session both here in New York and at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. We must not be silent. The people of Iran are crying out for freedom. All freedom-loving people must stand with their cause."

While President Trump has several key domestic issues on his plate in this election year, both North Korea and Iran could also become dominant concerns for the president and his team.
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