

# *U.S. Pentagon Chief Says 'Storm Clouds Gathering' Over Korean Peninsula*

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Fort Bragg, December 25 (RHC)-- U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has said that “storm clouds are gathering” over the Korean Peninsula amid mounting tension between the U.S. and North Korea. Mattis made the remarks in a speech to several dozen soldiers and airmen at the 82nd Airborne Division's Hall of Heroes at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

He claimed that while diplomats are striving to resolve the standoff with North Korea over its development of ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads, the U.S. military must do its part by preparing for war with the country. "My fine young soldiers, the only way our diplomats can speak with authority and be believed is if you're ready to go."

Tensions between Washington and Pyongyang further peaked earlier this month, when the U.S. and its allies launched large-scale joint aerial drills in the Pacific, which involved more than 230 aircraft, including six F-22 Raptor stealth fighters. The war games were said to be a response to the North's test-firing of what U.S. military experts said was an all-new Hwasong-15 missile capable of hitting targets across the U.S. mainland.

Mattis, during a holiday visit to troops at the illegally-occupied naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, said that North Korea was “a direct threat to the United States.” If the U.S. has to act militarily, he said “we expect to make it the worst day in North Korea's life.”

U.S. President Donald Trump had previously stated that his country would use “fire and fury” to “totally destroy North Korea,” referring to Kim as a “madman” and “little rocket man.”

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