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White House Says World ‘Running Out of Time’ on North Korea

11/2/2017

White House officials are again talking about the idea that the soaring tensions with North Korea have a time limit attached to them, and at some point time will “run out” and the US will do something particularly rash, presumably starting a war.

H.R. McMaster says that President Trump will be touring the Pacific next week to inform the world that time is running out, and in particular to pressure China to “do more” against North Korea to try to force them to make concessions.

This appears to be built on the long-standing assumption within the administration that China could readily “solve” North Korea, and the fact that they aren’t doing so is an insult to the US. At other times, US officials have conceded that China doesn’t have near as much influence as they initially thought.

Officials continue to be very vague about the “time” remaining to make a deal, let alone what such a deal would look like. That’s unlikely to be any more clear after Trump’s upcoming tour, as he seems much more fond of making threats than talking specifics about a deal that could be made.

McMaster offered no sign that this time would be any different, saying Trump “will use whatever language he wants” while in Asia, and that no one can do anything about it.