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US, China, Koreas Revisit Diplomacy After Soaring Tensions

Jason Ditz
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A flurry of threats last week had the whole region fearing a new Korean War was about to break out, but Monday gave way to at least a bit of an attempt by everyone involved to revisit the possibility of diplomacy.

That's not to say that diplomacy is any more imminent this week than war was last week, but as North Korea put its Guam missile launches on hold, US officials again made it very clear they were at least open to a resolution that didn't involve nuclear war.

North Korea's Kim Jong-un said that US should show itself to be committed to an alternative to the conflict, while US officials continued to reiterate how ready they were for war. Either way, both sides agree it was entirely the other side's fault, and that it's entirely up to the other side to stop the provocations.

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in, another advocate of diplomacy, reiterated today that he believes it vital to resolve the dispute peacefully, and pointedly warned the US not to carry out any military action without South Korea's consent.

China also appears to be trying to engage internationally, moving ahead with UN-imposed sanctions ahead of schedule, which might give them an opportunity to push the United States to agree to more engagement.

That's been a struggle for China all year, as they'd banned coal imports from North Korea before in an effort to sell the United States on direct diplomacy, only for the US to reject all diplomatic proposals. It may be that the diplomatic proposals will seem more compelling for the US at this point.