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World News:

North Korea Sets Military Sea Zone

North Korea August 1 announced creation of a "military sea boundary" off its coastline and said foreign military and civilian ships and planes would need permission to enter the zone. A previously announced 200-mile economic zone also went into effect August 1.

The official government statement said, "The military boundary is up to 50 miles from the starting line of the territorial waters in the East Sea [Sea of Japan] and the boundary line of the economic sea zone in the West Sea [Yellow Sea]." It was believed the western zone also extended about 50 miles from the **North Korean** shoreline.

The 200-mile zone would enable **North Korea** to control fishing, mining and other economic activities in the area. **North Korea** said the military zone was "demanded by the situation prevailing in our country" and was planned "to safeguard the economic sea zone and defend militarily the national interest."

South Korea, Japan, the U.S. and the United Nations Command in South **Korea** expressed opposition to the **North Korean** action. All said they would not recognize the new lines. Seoul was especially concerned because five **South Korean**-held islands off **North Korea's** west coast appeared to come within the new military zone. Two of the islands, including Paengnyong, were within 10 miles of **North Korea's** shoreline. The five islands had been ceded to **South Korea** after the 1953 armistice ending the **Korean** war and were contested by the **North**. **South Korean** Information Minister Kim Seung Jin called on **North Korea** to "give up" both zones for the sake of maintaining peace in the area.

A Japanese Cabinet official said he believed the military boundary "runs counter to international law and practice."

A South Korean passenger ferry, accompanied by seven naval escorts, August 2 tested the new **North Korean** military zone by docking at Paengnyong. The **North Koreans** did not interfere.

The U.S. State Department August 2 said it would not recognize **North Korea's** authority to "unilaterally" restrict freedom of navigation and overflight more than 12 miles off its shoreline. The **North Korean** move, the statement insisted, "in no way curtails or diminishes" U.S. or United Nations Command rights in **South Korea**, or **North Korea's** armistice obligations.

A U.N. Command statement August 2 said "There will be no change in our military operations in international waters and airspace," despite the one-sided move of the **North Koreans**.