

# WORLD

## CIA behind N. Korea embassy attack?

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● They reportedly escaped with documents, computers and telephones in two embassy cars

● Break-in was well organised and similar to a military commando operation

Madrid, Spain

At least two of the 10 people who broke into Madrid's North Korean embassy in Febru-



The North Korean embassy in Madrid

ary, roughing up employees and robbing computers, are linked to the CIA, the El Pais daily said yesterday.

The mysterious incident took place on February 22 just five days before the start of a nuclear summit between North Korea and the United States attended,

among others, by Pyongyang's former ambassador to Spain Kim Hyok Chol.

According to investigators quoted by El Pais, they were specifically looking for information linked to Kim.

"At least two of the 10 assailants... have been identified and

have ties with US secret services," the paper said, citing sources from the police and Spain's intelligence agency, the National Intelligence Centre (CNI).

It specifically identified the CIA.

Contacted by AFP, the CNI refused to comment.

According to El Pais, Spain asked for clarification from the CIA but the US spy agency denied any involvement.

Spanish authorities however said the response was "not very convincing".

The report said the CIA acted "in probable cooperation" with South Korean intelligence services.

The break-in has been surrounded by mystery.

The Spanish government and police have only confirmed that on February 22, emergency services attended to a North Korean woman with mild injuries on the street near the embassy.

According to El Pais, which has quoted investigators as saying this could be "political espionage", the 10 men entered with fake handguns, tying up and gagging the staff.

They reportedly escaped with documents, computers and telephones in two embassy cars with diplomatic number plates which they later abandoned.

Investigators have discarded the theory of a petty crime as the break-in was well organised and similar to a military commando operation that knew what it was looking for.

After analysing CCTV footage and questioning witnesses, they identified two of the assailants as having links with the CIA, El Pais said.

Since 2017, when Kim Hyok Chol was expelled from Spain as "persona non grata" after nuclear tests and missile firings by Pyongyang, the secretive state has had diplomatic representation in Madrid but no ambassador.

Kim is one of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's most trusted officials.

He is now Pyongyang's special representative for the US and was involved in preparations for the summit in Hanoi between the North Korean leader and US President Donald Trump.

The talks failed to reach a nuclear accord.

### Britain expands drone no-fly zones

London, United Kingdom

Britain yesterday expanded the no-fly zones around airports in response to a spate of drone sightings that temporarily shut down some of London's biggest hubs.

The new law extends the radius around which drone flights are not permitted to five kilometres (three miles) from one kilometre.

Existing rules ban all drone



Representative picture. (Courtesy of Daily Mail)

flights above 122 metres (400 feet) and within 50 metres of buildings and people.

### Ethiopia cannot read black boxes, 'might' send them abroad: airline

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ethiopia does not have the equipment to analyse the black boxes from Sunday's deadly Ethiopian Airlines plane crash, and is considering sending them abroad, a spokesman for the airline said yesterday.

"It could be sent abroad because there is no equipment to read it here," said spokesman Biniyam Demssie.

The airline's chief executive

Tewelde GebreMariam earlier told CNN the black boxes would have to be examined outside the country, in a destination to be chosen by investigators -- possibly the United States or "a closer country in Europe in the interest of proximity and in the interest of speed."

Numerous countries have banned Boeing's 737 MAX 8 medium-haul workhorse jet from their airspace while



A photo shows debris of the crashed airplane of Ethiopia Airlines, near Bishoftu

airlines around the world have grounded the plane after the crash which killed 157 people.

The Nairobi-bound plane was the same type as the Indonesian Lion Air jet that crashed in October, killing 189 passengers and crew.

Tewelde said Ethiopian Airlines pilots had been retrained on the MAX 8 following the Lion Air crash.

### Several charged in US over Chinese student visa scheme

Los Angeles, United States

Several California residents were arrested yesterday in connection with a scheme to help Chinese nationals obtain student visas by hiring people to take English proficiency exams for the foreign students.

Federal authorities allege that those involved in the plot used counterfeit Chinese passports to impersonate 19 different students who were required to take the so-called TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam in order to get a US student visa. Six people have been named in a 26-count indictment handed down in the case.

Professors at various universities have complained at being faced with an increasing number of such students unable to handle college-level work in English. According to the University of California, which has 10 campuses across the state, there were 24,387 students from China enrolled at its schools in 2018, as opposed to 2,632 in 2008.

### Vienna tops world rankings

● Vienna has been named the city with the best quality of life

● In second place was Zurich, followed in joint third place by Munich, Vancouver and Auckland, New Zealand

Paris, France

Vienna has been named the city with the best quality of life for a 10th consecutive year in a survey published yesterday.

The Austrian capital was one of eight European cities in the top 10 in the survey by Mercer, a human-resources consultancy.

In second place was Zurich, followed in joint third place by Munich, Vancouver and Auckland, New Zealand.

Duesseldorf in Germany took sixth followed by Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Geneva and Basel.

London was ranked 41st and Paris was 39th, although the study, carried out between September and November 2018, did not take into account France's



Representative picture. (Courtesy of Tripsavvy)

'yellow vest' anti-government protests.

The survey, designed as a tool to help international organisations determine salary levels for expatriate employees, is based on 39 criteria.

These include housing, political stability, crime, leisure, air pollution, infrastructure, the health system, education and the economy.

Mercer said all US cities covered in the analysis fell in the rankings this year, with the exception of New York, which

rose one place to 44 as crime rates there continue to fall. San Francisco was the top-ranked US city at 34.

In Asia, Singapore has the highest quality of living at 25th place, followed by Tokyo and Kobe (joint 49th). Hong Kong was ranked 71st and Seoul 77th.

At the other end of the table, the lowest ranked city was Baghdad at 231. Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, and Sanaa in Yemen were 230th and 229th respectively.

He got some moves!



Britain's Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge meets children while she visits the Henry Fawcett Children's Centre in London. The Duchess visited the Henry Fawcett Children's Centre to learn more about the work being done by local organisations in Lambeth and their partners to support young children and their families.