

# ‘UpFront’: Counterintelligence investigation underway into Wisconsin soldier in North Korea

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Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh says “all levels of government” are working to engage with North Korea after a Wisconsin soldier willingly crossed into North Korea nearly a week ago.

“We are working all levels of government right now to see if we can reach out to the North Koreans to see if there is any engagement they will be interested in communicating with us,” Singh said on WISN’s “UpFront,” which is produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com. “So far, we have not received a response from them.”

Reuters reported today the United Nations Command is discussing the case with North Korea.

U.S. officials say 23-year-old Travis King, who attended and graduated from Park High School in Racine in 2020, willingly crossed the border into North Korea nearly a week ago.

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Officials say King was supposed to board a flight to return to Fort Bliss, Texas after being released from a South Korean detention facility for being involved in an altercation with locals. But instead he left the airport and joined a tour of the demilitarized zone before crossing the border.

“All I can tell you is we know that the DPRK has Private King in custody,” Singh said. “In terms of his whereabouts, in terms of his health, I’m just not sure. We can’t speak to that right now. Of course, our deepest thoughts are with his family, who

are probably thinking about him every minute, every hour, thinking about his safety. And my message to them is we hear you.”

King’s family in Racine has asked for privacy.

“I just want my son back,” King’s mom said last week. “Get my son home. Get my son home and pray. Pray he comes back.”

The U.S. Army has launched a counterintelligence investigation, including looking into whether King pre-planned the border crossing.

“I don’t want to get ahead of the investigation, and I certainly wouldn’t want to jump to conclusions,” Singh said. “I would let the investigation take its course and reveal anything else we didn’t know in advance, but I think it’s too early to speculate right now.”

Seven GOP presidential candidates say they have met the fundraising requirement to participate in the first primary debate in Milwaukee next month, a critical requirement set by the Republican National Committee.

“It’s interesting because we were thinking maybe if it was a double-digits type situation, maybe they would go over two different nights,” Rick Klein, ABC News political director, told “UpFront.” “I think that’s unlikely. I think we’re looking at less than 10. I think seven or eight is a more realistic number.”

The fundraising criteria set by the RNC requires at least 40,000 unique donors, a requirement needing to be met within 48 hours from the start of the debate.

Doug Burgum, Chris Christie, Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley, Vivek Ramaswamy, Tim Scott, and Donald Trump have all said they have met the requirement.

Former Vice President Mike Pence has yet to meet the donor threshold.

“I presume that he’d get there and get the 40,000 donors,” Klein said. “I know there’s a lot of reasons his team can explain why they weren’t able to cobble together the number of donations, but given how long he’s been on the national stage, a former governor with lots of contacts in national politics, a former member of Congress, it’s surprising he hasn’t gotten this already.”

The RNC has also set polling requirements.

Trump, who is polling as the front-runner, has threatened to boycott the Milwaukee debate and has left uncertain when he will make a final decision.

“Probably the morning of the debate, maybe the evening of the debate,” Klein said. “He’ll probably go back and forth, and there will be stories about whether he’s going to do it or not, but ultimately he’s going to decide based on how he feels that day, how the press coverage is that day. A lot of people I’ve talked to are skeptical as to whether he would give up the massive television audience that attracts a major debate, especially that first debate in Milwaukee.”

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