

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The Question of the Threat of North Korea's Nuclear Arsenal

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**Position:** President

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## Introduction

North Korea (formally, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or DPRK) has a noticeable amount of nuclear weapons. It is also believed that the nation possesses chemical and biological weapon capabilities. The DPRK has also conducted nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2016 and 2017.

There are also multiple treaties which the DPRK has withdrawn from or isn't a part of, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Those treaties are agreed upon in order to limit the usage of WMDs and the fact that the DPRK isn't a part of them sends a clear message about the nation's willingness to use the weapons it possesses.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Nuclear weapon**

A missile or a bomb that uses nuclear energy in order to cause an explosion. Multiple nations such as the United States, Russia, China, France, United Kingdom, India, Pakistan and the DPRK possess them. Israel is also believed to possess nuclear weapons. The United States has also provided nuclear weapons for Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Turkey to deploy and store Under the NATO nuclear weapons sharing program.

### **Weapon of mass destruction (WMD)**

A nuclear, chemical, biological, radiological weapon or other device that is capable of harming large numbers of people.

## **Nuclear test**

The testing of nuclear weapons by exploding them either below or above the ground to see how effective they are.

## **Background**

During the year 1985 the DPRK signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The treaty's object is to prevent the spreading and usage of nuclear weapons. It also promotes the safe and peaceful usage of nuclear energy in order to avoid conflicts.

In 1993 the nation almost withdrew itself from the NPT because The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) insisted that their inspectors would be given access and authorities to inspect two nuclear waste storage sites of DPRK's. The IAEA asked for the investigation because they believed that the DPRK might possess more WMDs than they had announced.

During the next year the DPRK signed an agreement with the US. In the agreement the DPRK committed to stop the functioning of and eventually deconstruct its old, graphite-moderated nuclear reactors in exchange for international assistance in order to build two new light-water nuclear reactors.

In the beginning of 2002 the US president George W. Bush declared that in his opinion Iraq, Iran and the DPRK are an "axis of evil". He also stated the following: "By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger". Later on that year in October he announced that the DPRK had performed a secret nuclear operation which violated the terms of the agreement made in 1994.

In the January of 2003 the DPRK withdrew from the NPT agreement which added the already existing tension between the nation and the US. A month later the US verified that the DPRK has activated a five-megawatt nuclear reactor at a facility in Yongbyon. The facility is able to produce plutonium that is often used in nuclear weapons.

A few years later in 2005 the DPRK tentatively agreed to back down its nuclear program if China, the United States, Russia, South Korea and Japan would provide energy and actively cooperate economically with the DPRK. The DPRK was willing to agree to the terms because it needed energy assistance and more economic partners.

A year later in 2006 the DPRK violated the agreement made in 2005 by testing long range missiles. Later on that year in October the nation declared that it had successfully tested its first nuclear weapon. The UN Security Council reacted to the tests by imposing a board array of sanctions. The sanctions were imposed on trade and travel.

In the beginning of 2007 the DPRK was willing to close its main nuclear reactor in exchange for an aid package worth 400 million dollars. Later on that year in Beijing, the DPRK agreed to put out of action all of its nuclear weapon facilities. In December the DPRK failed to execute its part of the agreement and missed the deadline to disable its nuclear weapon facilities.

In 2008 talks between the DPRK's neighbours, Russia, Japan and the US were in Beijing. The DPRK still had not disabled its nuclear weapon facilities and the nation's military dominated government had been stalling in order to not disable the facilities. The talks crumbled when the DPRK wouldn't allow international inspectors unrestricted access to its nuclear sites.

A year later in 2009 the DPRK did it's second nuclear test. The nation had earlier stated that it would conduct the test if the UN Security Council would not apologize for the sanctions it had imposed on the DPRK before. After the test the Security Council gathered on an emergency meeting and decided to impose more sanctions on the DPRK.

A few years later in 2011 the United States decided to meet the DPRK's delegation and in order to reopen the six-party nuclear arms talks that teared up in 2008. The talks were held in Geneva, Switzerland. The negotiations were not moving forward since the DPRK was not cooperative enough, according to the US.

In 2012 the DPRK agreed to stop its nuclear tests, long-range missile launches and enrichment activities at its Yongbyon nuclear complex in exchange for food aid from the US. According to Hillary Clinton, who was the U.S. Secretary of State at the time, the US believed that the DPRK had taken "a step in the right direction".

Ignoring the promises that the nation had made to the US, the DPRK's National Defense Commission announced in 2013 that it is going to continue nuclear testing and long-range rocket launches. The commission also stated that the US is "the sworn enemy of the Korean people.". A month later the DPRK conducted its third nuclear test and the UN Security Council imposed additional sanctions on the nation.

In 2014 the DPRK announced that it will be executing its fourth nuclear test. A day later the country shot hundreds of shells all over the sea border that it shares with South Korea. South Korea reacted by shooting back and sending soldiers and fighter jets to guard the border.

A year later in 2015 the DPRK stated that it has the missile capability to attack mainland United States and would do so if the US "forced their hand." A few weeks later the DPRK announced that it has reached the ability to miniature nuclear weapons which can help them to build actual nuclear weapons. A US National Security Council spokesman reacted to the announcement by stating that he does not believe that the DPRK has such skills. At the end of the year the DPRK said that they have successfully added the hydrogen bomb to their arsenal.

In the beginning of 2016 the DPRK declared that they have done a hydrogen bomb test but a White House spokesman Josh Earnest stated that the US has not confirmed that the test was successful. Later that year the DPRK announced that they have ignited a nuclear warhead. South Korea's Meteorological Administration declared that the explosion might even have the explosive power of 10 kilotons.

In the beginning of 2017 a US official states that the US military has prepared itself by deploying a sea-based radar gear in order to trail missile launches by the DPRK. A few months later in July the DPRK announced that it has done its first successful test of an intercontinental ballistic missile that has the capability to "reach anywhere in the world."

The US had earlier tried to remove the dictator Kim Jong-un from the position of Supreme leader of the DPRK. The DPRK reacted to that in 2017 by threatening to conduct a nuclear strike on “the heart of the US” if the US would not stop its attempts. Later on during the same year, the DPRK’s state announced that it might attack the US territory of Guam by using ballistic missiles. Donald Trump, the president of the US reacted to the statement by announcing that if the DPRK wouldn’t stop pressuring the US, the US would start using more serious methods. A few months later the DPRK conducted its sixth nuclear test and a nuclear weapon monitoring group depicted the weapon as up to eight times more powerful than the bomb dropped in Hiroshima in 1945.

In 2018 Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un agreed to meet each other and begin peace talks. They met in Singapore and negotiated for five hours. After the talks the nations declared that they have formed a friendship and that there had been some discussion about nuclear disarmament as well. In the end of 2018 satellite images showed that the DPRK had expanded one of its missile basis.

In the beginning of 2019 Donald Trump had a meeting with the DPRK’s lead negotiator on nuclear talks, Kim Yong Chol. They talked about denuclearization and decided to meet again in February. During the second meeting the DPRK stated that in order for the to agree to anything the US sanctions must be lifted on their nation. Trump did not agree to the terms set by the DPRK. In May the DPRK tested its missiles again which was the first test since 2017.

### Timeline of the events

1985	The DPRK signs the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
1993	The IAEA asks that their inspectors would be given access and authorities to inspect two nuclear waste storage sites of DPRK’s
2002	George W. Bush calls Iraq, Iran and the DPRK an “axis of evil
2003	The DPRK activates a five-megawatt nuclear reactor at a facility in Yongbyon and withdraws itself from the NPT treaty
2005	The DPRK agrees to back down its nuclear program if China, the United States, Russia, South Korea and Japan provide energy and actively cooperate economically with the DPRK

- 2006 The DPRK announces that it has successfully tested its first nuclear weapon which makes the UN's Security Council impose sanctions
- 2008 Talks between the DPRK's neighbours, Russia, Japan and the US are held in Beijing
- 2009 The DPRK commits its second nuclear test
- 2011 The US delegation meets the DPRK's delegation and in order to reopen the six-party nuclear arms talks that teared up in 2008
- 2012 The DPRK agrees to stop its nuclear tests, long-range missile launches and enrichment activities at its Yongbyon nuclear complex in exchange for food aid from the US
- 2013 The DPRK's National Defense Commission states that the US is "the sworn enemy of the Korean people"
- 2014 The DPRK shots hundreds of shells all over the sea border that it shares with South Korea
- 2015 The DPRK stets that they have successfully added the hydrogen bomb to their arsenal
- 2017 The DPRK conducts its sixth nuclear test
- 2018 Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un meet each other in Singapore in order to begin peace talks
- 2019 Donald Trump meets the DPRK's lead negotiator on nuclear talks, Kim Yong Chol

## Key member states and NGOs

### United States

The relations between the US and the DPRK haven't ever been very friendly, partly because of the Korean war. During the recent years the relations have been mostly defined by the DPRK's nuclear policy. The DPRK has threatened multiple times to strike the US and during George W. Bush's presidency, he referred to North Korea as part of "the Axis of Evil" because of its hostile way to take advantage of its nuclear forces.

Since Donald Trump became the president of the US in 2017, the tensions between the nations rose even higher. Trump decided to approach the situation more aggressively than the president before him had. In 2018 Trump and Kim Jong-un met at a summit held in Singapore where they signed an agreement which called for security, stability, and lasting

peace. Later on in 2018 President Trump told to the UN General Assembly that the DPRK had ended its nuclear testing but that the US would keep sanctions in place until the DPRK's denuclearization.

## South Korea

The DPRK and South Korea used to be a single nation but have been divided since the end of WWII.

South Korea's former president Kim Dae-jung tried to pursue peaceful and friendly relations with the DPRK through so called Sunshine policy which he developed. The countries also held a meeting in order to promote diplomatic dialogue and in 2007 the nations signed an agreement in order to pursue peace and recover inter-Korean relations. Later on the relations became more hostile and the Sunshine policy was stopped.

However in 2018 the nations signed the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula which states that the governments agreed to cooperate on officially ending the Korean War and the Korean conflict. In 2019 the leaders of the nations met and this time the president of the US joined to the meeting.

## Russia

During the Korean war the Soviet Union supported the Korean People's army which created a base for the relations between Russia and the DPRK. The nation share a border along the lower Tumen river.

When the DPRK conducted one of its nuclear tests in 2009, the Russian foreign ministry reacted by stating that the test was a violation of previous Security Council resolutions. The ministry also announced that the recent actions of the DPRK are creating tensions in the Northeast Asia.

On March in 2016, Russia agreed with other nations that further sanctions against the DPRK should be set since it had conducted a new nuclear test on January, 2016.

## China

China is the DPRK's largest trade partner and the relations between the nations are good. China has also opposed the strictest sanctions that have been implemented on the DPRK, mostly because it does not want the refugee crisis which the sanctions could cause. Beijing also provides food- and energy aid to Pyongyang.

China has stated that one of its main interests is to keep the Korean peninsula as stable as possible. The DPRK creates a buffer between China and the democratic South and the buffer is extremely important for China. The nations have also made an agreement in 1961 called The Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance which obligates the nations to "intervene against unprovoked aggression".

## UN documents and resolutions

- This report found the DPRK in violation of its safeguards obligations and referred the matter to the Council, 1 April 1993 (**GOV/2645**)
- This was a IAEA report on the implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement between the agency and DPRK, 12 February 2003 (**GOV/2645**)
- This presidential statement expressed concern over North Korea's declaration that it would conduct a nuclear test, 6 October 2006 (**S/PRST/2006/41**)
- This presidential statement condemned the 5 April launch of a rocket by DPRK, saying it was in contravention of resolution 1718, 13 April 2009 (**S/PRST/2009/7**)
- This statement strongly condemned the DPRK's launch as a serious violation of resolutions 1718 and 1874, directed the Committee to take steps to update and strengthen the sanctions regime and expressed determination to act in the event of another DPRK launch or nuclear test, 16 April 2012 (**S/PRST/2012/13**)
- This resolution condemned the DPRK's 12 December 2012 launch and added designations to the sanctions regime, 22 January 2013 (**S/RES/2087**)
- This was a note verbale from the DPRK on its 12 February nuclear test, 13 February 2013 (**S/2013/91**)
- This resolution imposed additional sanctions against the DPRK in response to a 12 February 2013 nuclear test, 7 March 2013 (**S/RES/2094**)
- This resolution extended until 5 April 2015 the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, 5 March 2014 (**S/RES/2141**)
- This was a Human Rights Council resolution on the DPRK condemning in the strongest terms the systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations committed in the country, 28 March 2014 (**A/HRC/RES/25/25**)

- This was the first report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the DPRK to the Human Rights Council since the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the DPRK completed its work in March 2014, 13 June 2014 **(A/HRC/26/439)**
- This Human Rights Council resolution requested the establishment of a UN human rights office to work on the human rights situation in the DPRK, 27 March 2015 **(A/HRC/RES/28/22)**
- This was a resolution renewing the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 5 April 2016, 4 March 2015 **(S/RES/2207)**
- This was a resolution condemning in the strongest terms the nuclear test conducted by DPRK on 6 January 2016 and its ballistic missile launch of 7 February 2016, and demanding that it comply immediately with its international obligations, 2 March 2016 **(S/RES/2270)**
- This was a DPRK letter rejecting the Council's 23 June press statement, 29 July 2016 **(S/2016/575)**
- This was a resolution on sanctions, in response to the DPRK's 9 September 2016 nuclear test, 30 November 2016 **(S/RES/2321)**
- This was a letter from the DPRK affirming its intention to continue to bolster its nuclear force, 8 September 2016 **(S/2016/771)**
- This was a letter in which the Republic of Korea called for tougher sanctions against the DPRK and said it would maintain a "posture of heightened readiness" against further provocations, 9 September 2016 **(S/2016/775)**
- This was a letter from the DPRK transmitting a memorandum on its right to develop its nuclear capabilities to defend itself against the US, 22 November 2016 **(S/2016/988)**
- This was a joint request for a meeting on the human rights situation in the DPRK from France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain, Ukraine, the UK, the US and Uruguay, 1 December 2016 **(S/2016/1034)**
- This was a letter from the DPRK rejecting the sanctions resolution adopted on 30 November 2016, 2 December 2016 **(S/2016/1023)**
- This was a letter from the Republic of Korea on the DPRK's 11 February 2017 missile launch, 12 February 2017 **(S/2017/128)**
- This was a report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, 22 February 2017 **(A/HRC/34/66)**

- The Human Rights Council extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK for one year, 24 March 2017 **(A/HRC/34/L.23)**
- The DPRK sent a letter to the Council accusing the US of engaging in "aggressive schemes" that amounted to a declaration of war and warned of a pre-emptive strike, 7 April 2017 **(S/2017/303)**
- This letter transmitted the concept note for the 28 April Council meeting on the denuclearisation of the DPRK, 18 April 2017 **(S/2017/337)**
- This was a letter from the DPRK to the Secretary-General referring to the 13 May launch as a legitimate exercise of the right to self-defence, 16 May 2017 **(S/2017/429)**
- This resolution condemned the 3 and 28 July ballistic missile launches, 5 August 2017 **(S/RES/2371)**
- Condemned the launch of a missile over the territory of Japan and urged the DPRK to comply with previous Council resolutions and presidential statements, 29 August 2017 **(S/PRST/2017/16)**
- This resolution expanded sanctions to additional sectors of the North Korean economy in response to the DPRK's nuclear test, 11 September 2017 **(S/RES/2375)**
- This was the report of the special rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities on her visit to the DPRK from 3 to 8 May 2017, 8 December 2017 **(A/HRC/37/56/Add.1)**
- This was a resolution, adopted unanimously, tightening sanctions on the DPRK, 22 December 2017 **(S/RES/2397)**
- This was a report of the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, 9 March 2018 **(A/HRC/37/69)**
- This was a resolution, unanimously adopted, extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 24 April 2019, 21 March 2018 **(S/RES/2407)**
- This was the final report of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, 12 March 2019 **(S/2019/171)**

## Possible solutions

History and multiple attempts to solve the issues have shown that the DPRK is not too willing to cooperate, especially when it comes to nuclear weapons. Other nations have created treaties and organized negotiations with the DPRK, but the country has not usually lived up to the promises made in those treaties or negotiations.

The DPRK needs food- and energy assistance, since most of its citizens live in poverty and the nation violates multiple human rights on daily basis. The sanctions imposed upon the country have limited the assistance delivered to it but for example China is still abetting the nation. In other words the sanctions aren't too effective, but they still have an impact on the DPRK and they can be used in order to solve the question of the DPRK's nuclear arsenal.

Of course there are also military options against the DPRK but those options are usually extremely problematic. First of all, attack against the DPRK would harm multiple innocent civilians who are already suffering from many human right violations. The military operation could also not succeed which could lead to a nuclear war which could destroy the whole world.

When taking to consideration the fact that military options are too risky and sanctions aren't working, diplomacy seems to be one of the only options left. Creating treaties, holding negotiations and promoting diplomatic relations might help keeping the DPRK as stable as possible. Of course sanctions should be imposed if the nations disrespects the shared treaties and boundaries.

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