

Forum: Security Council
Issue: The Question of DPRK
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Introduction

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or more commonly referred to as North Korea, has been of key importance for the UN Security Council since the country emerged in 1948 following the end of Japanese occupation of Korea.¹

The DPRK is today one of the most repressive authoritarian states in the world. It has been ruled for seven decades by the Kim family and the Worker's Party of Korea. Today the leader of DPRK is Kim Jong-Un who's methods for creating obedience include using public executions, arbitrary detention and forced labor. These human rights violations combined with nuclear ambitions of the DPRK have caused the state to become isolated from the rest of the world and undermine international peace and stability .²

Definition of Key Terms

Nuclear Weapon

A bomb or a missile that uses nuclear energy to cause an explosion. Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons on earth. Because they cause existential threat for humanity, the spread of nuclear weapons has been tried to be avoided. Currently it has been confirmed that USA, Russia, UK, France, China, India and Pakistan hold nuclear weapons. Israel and Iran have neither confirmed nor denied existence of their nuclear arsenal.

Socialism

A political ideology that aims to create a society in which the means of production are owned and controlled by the state. The DPRK is one the few remaining states under a socialist-regime.

¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15256929>

² <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/north-korea>

38th parallel

A line of latitude in the Northern Hemisphere. It was used as the pre-Korean War boundary between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea. The 38th parallel became a stabilised battlefield during the Korean War 1950-1954.

Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The controlling of the spread and/or amount of nuclear weapons.

Juche Ideology

The term *juche* means a kind of self-reliance, meaning that the country depends on only itself to produce necessities, such as food. The leader of DPRK Kim Il-sung remodeled the country according to this idea.

South Korea-US missile defence deal

The agreement to deploy Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defence system to the Republic Korea. The highly advanced missile defence system was set up to better protect the Republic of Korea and US military troops against the DPRK. However China has strongly protested this agreement, because according to China THAAD undermines its national security.³

Domino Theory

The theory that a political event in one country will cause similar events in neighboring countries. Because the United States of America was afraid that by letting communism spread to Korea it would become increasingly difficult to further oppose communist takeovers in other countries, it interfered in the Korean War.

Background

Korea had been a Japanese colony since 1910. When Japan surrendered in the Second World War the northern half of the Korean peninsula was occupied by the Soviet Union and the southern half was occupied by the United States. The border that separated these two occupation zones was the 38th parallel. In the north the Soviets installed a stalinist regime under Kim Il-Sung and equipped the North Korean People's Army with Soviet tanks and artillery. In the south an American-backed administration under the presidency of Syngman Rhee gained power.

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/08/world/asia/south-korea-and-us-agree-to-deploy-missile-defense-system.html>

After years of minor border incidents along the 38th parallel the DPRK decided to invade the South with Soviet approval. In June 1950 the North Korean Peoples' Army began its mass offensive against the South. The communist forces overwhelmed the southern forces and the DPRK started gaining territory rapidly. Because of this the United States called on the Security Council to invoke the United Nations Charter and brand the North Koreans as aggressors. This succeeded and member states were called on to send in military assistance.

With the permission of the Security Council US troops began a counter-offensive against DPRK troops and pushed them back behind the 38th parallel. However because of this the People's Republic of China started assisting DPRK militarily and thus the 38th Parallel became a stabilised battlefield. An armistice was signed in 1953 and still to this day there has not been a formal peace treaty between the parties.⁴

After the Korean war US troops stayed in the Republic of Korea to protect peace and stability in the region. This was supported also by the Soviet Union and China, because the Soviet Union did not want to see Kim Il-Sung start a second war and because Beijing was paranoid that without the American troops in the peninsula the Soviet Union would try to assert its dominance over the area.⁵

The leader of DPRK Kim-II Sung now remodeled the nation according to socialist principles and to the Juche ideology. Because of this the DPRK remains still today a totalitarian military dictatorship with one of the world's largest standing armies, but also with an underdeveloped economy and gross human rights violations. A 2014 United Nations Commission of Inquiry stated that systematic, widespread, and gross human rights violations committed by the government included murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortion, and other sexual violence, and constituted crimes against humanity.

In September 2003 a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman said that the country had completed the reprocessing of 8,000 nuclear fuel rods — this would have given the DPRK enough plutonium for approximately four to six nuclear devices according to experts. Because of this in April 2003 China, the United States, DPRK, Japan, Russia and Republic of Korea (South Korea) began dialogue in Beijing with the aim of ending DPRK's nuclear weapons program. On 19th of September 2005, the fourth round of Six-Party Talks finally reached an agreement. The six parties signed a Statement of Principles according to which DPRK would eventually abandon its nuclear program and return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguard regime quickly. The United States stated that it had no intentions of attacking DPRK and that it did not have any nuclear weapons deployed in the Republic of Korea⁶

⁴ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/korea_hickey_01.shtml

⁵ <https://www.politico.eu/article/what-trump-needs-to-know-about-north-koreas-history/>

⁶ <http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/north-korea/nuclear/>

Soon after the Statement of Principles was signed the situation continued to deteriorate. The parties involved disagreed over some implications of the Statement and in 2006 DPRK announced that it had successfully tested a nuclear bomb. Intense diplomatic pressure was directed toward the DPRK after the test which finally resulted in DPRK agreeing to shut down its main nuclear reactor in return for aid and diplomatic concessions in 2007.

When Lee Myung-bak became the president of the Republic of Korea in 2007 he ended his predecessor's "Sunshine Policy" aimed towards the warming of relations between the South and the North, increasing the tension between the countries. In April 2009 DPRK walked out of international negotiations, which aimed at ending ending DPRK's nuclear activities. A month after this DPRK carried out an underground nuclear test.

Kim Jong-Il was succeeded by his son Kim Jong-Un in December 2011. Initially in 2012 he agreed to suspend long-range missile tests in order to receive US food aid. Soon after the DPRK carried out an unsuccessful rocket-launched satellite test. This caused the US to withdraw its offer for food aid, because the rocket was not materially different from a long-range ballistic missile that could be used to carry a nuclear bomb. A more successful satellite launch in December 2012 suggested that the country was trying to develop rockets capable of hitting US mainland. February 2013 DPRK performed a new nuclear test which resulted in UN security council sanctions.

Despite sanctions DPRK has continued its nuclear program and in 2016 it performed its fifth nuclear test with a bomb equivalent to the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After this China joined a resolution with the US strongly condemning the test. It also agreed to ban the import of DPRK coal, a major blow to the country's economy.⁷

In July 2017 DPRK launched an international ballistic missile in a test. This raised the international concerns about the DPRK to new heights. The missile was estimated to be able to reach the US state of Alaska.⁸ In september a day after UN security council adopted new sanctions against the DPRK, it launched another ballistic missile this time over Japan. These tests have caused the relationship between the DPRK and the United States and US allies to deteriorate rapidly. US President Donald Trump has now stated that pre-emptive strike against DPRK is not ruled out. In addition to this DPRK has distanced itself away from its closest ally China, which has now worked with the US to impose

⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/04/14/a-timeline-of-north-koreas-five-nuclear-tests-and-how-the-u-s-has-responded/?utm_term=.8d9f6867dedd

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/04/world/asia/north-korea-missile-test-icbm.html>

sanctions on the DPRK. The current situation regarding the DPRK is now seriously threatening international peace and stability.⁹

Key member states and NGOs

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

DPRK has repeatedly violated international agreements and law due to its nuclear programme. DPRK's main goal with its nuclear programme is to gain nuclear deterrence against the United States and its allies.

Republic of Korea

After the end of the Sunshine Policy the relations between the two Koreas have not changed remarkably. The Republic of Korea has maintained a policy of trying to get DPRK to abandon its nuclear program and keeping the possibility of a peaceful reunification open. Still the continuing pursuit of nuclear weapons by the DPRK has caused the Republic of Korea to remain as a close ally to the United States.

United States

The President of the United States has said "North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen." The situation regarding the DPRK is now the biggest foreign policy issue of the Trump administration. It is very difficult to know what the Trump administration plans, but generally American interests regarding the DPRK are to ensure that its allies are safe and that China will not dominate the area.

People's Republic of China

China's support for the DPRK dates back to the Korean war. Still the nuclear tests have considerably strained their alliance. After the most recent DPRK nuclear test in September 2017, China called on the DPRK "to stop taking wrong actions that exacerbate the situation and are not in its own interest." China has also started supporting Security Council sanctions on the DPRK despite the strong economic connections ties between the two countries. China's objective regarding the issue is to maintain the

⁹ https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/14/world/asia/north-korea-missile.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FNorth%20Korea%27s%20Nuclear%20Program&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=13&pgtype=collection

status quo to keep a buffer zone between itself and the Republic of Korea, an ally of the US, and to avoid an influx of refugees coming from the DPRK.¹⁰

Russian Federation

Russian Federation is with China one of the few international supporters of the DPRK. Like China, Russia shares a border with DPRK and sees it as a buffer against Republic of Korea. Regarding the nuclear programme of the DPRK Russia has criticised the recent tests but also tried to explain them as an effort to protect itself by the DPRK. Still like China Russia has begun to distance itself from the DPRK.¹¹¹²

Japan

Due to the nuclear program of the DPRK Japan has become increasingly worried about the safety of its citizens. This has caused Japan to invest heavily on its missile defence and has also been used as a justification to reconsider the pacifist Japanese constitution by some Japanese politicians. Japan continues to co-operate closely with the United States and the Republic of Korea.¹³

Timeline

Date	Description of event
1985	The DPRK joins the International Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
1991	The DPRK joins the United Nations
1993	International Atomic Energy Agency accuses the DPRK of violating the NTP. The DPRK threatens to quit the treaty
1993	The DPRK test fires a medium-range Rodong ballistic missile
1994 July	Kim Il-sung dies. His son Kim Jong-il becomes the new supreme leader
1994 October	The DPRK and the US sign an Agreed Framework under which Pyongyang commits to freezing its nuclear programme in return for heavy fuel oil and two light-water nuclear reactors.
1998 August	The DPRK fires a multistage long-range rocket which flies over Japan and lands in the Pacific Ocean
2002 January	The US President George W Bush labels DPRK, Iraq and Iran an "axis of evil" for continuing to build "weapons of mass destruction".

¹⁰ <https://www.cfr.org/background/china-north-korea-relationship>

¹¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-41172488>

¹² <https://nautilus.org/publications/books/dprkbb/russia/dprk-briefing-book-russian-policy-on-the-north-korean-nuclear-crisis/>

¹³ <http://www.theasanforum.org/north-korea-in-japans-strategic-thinking/>

2002 October	The US and its allies Japan and Republic of Korea halt oil shipments following North Korea's reported admission that it has secretly been developing a nuclear programme.
2002 December	The DPRK announces reactivation of its nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and expels UN inspectors.
2003 January	The DPRK withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, marking the beginning of a series of six-party talks
2003 May	The DPRK withdraws from 1992 agreement with the Republic of Korea to keep the Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons.
2005 February	The DPRK claims publicly for the first time that it has produced nuclear weapons for defensive purposes
2006 July	The DPRK test fires seven missiles including a long-range Taepodong-2 missile. The missile crashes shortly after take-off despite it reportedly having the capability to hit the US mainland.
2006 October	The DPRK conducts its first nuclear weapons test at an underground facility. The UN imposes economic and commercial sanctions on the DPRK.
2008 October	The DPRK agrees to provide full access to Yongbyon nuclear site after US removes it from its blacklist for terrorism.
2009 April	The DPRK launches a long-range rocket, carrying what is claimed to be a communications satellite. Its neighbours accuse it of testing long-range missile technology. UN Security Council condemns the act, which prompts the DPRK to walk out of six-party talks and restart its nuclear facilities.
2009 May	The DPRK carries out its second underground nuclear test. UN Security Council once again condemns this act.
2011 December	Kim Jong-il dies. Kim Jong-un takes over his father's position.
2012 April	Another test launch fails. The missile launch is internationally viewed as a banned test of the long-range Taepodong-2 missile technology. The DPRK claims that their goal was to put a satellite into orbit.
2012 October	The DPRK claims it has missiles that can hit the US mainland after South Korea and Washington announce a deal to extend the range of South Korea's ballistic missiles.
2012 December	The DPRK successfully launches a satellite into orbit following a failed attempt in April.
2013 February	UN approves new sanctions after the DPRK stages its third nuclear test.
2013 September	China, the ally of the DPRK, bans the exportation of items that could be used to make missiles or nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.
2014 March	The DPRK test fires two medium-range Rodong ballistic missiles for the first time

	since 2009.
2015 September	North Korea confirms it has put its Yongbyon nuclear plant back into operation.
2015 December	US imposes new sanctions on DPRK, targeting the Strategic Rocket Force of the army, banks and shipping companies.
2016 January	The DPRK announces that it has for the first time tested a hydrogen bomb. The claim is with widespread expert scepticism.
2016 November	UN Security Council approves sanctions which aim to cut one of North Korea's main exports, coal, by 60 per cent.
2017 January	The DPRK claims that it is in the final stages of developing long-range guided missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.
2017 July	The DPRK test fires a long-range missile into the Sea of Japan. Some experts state that the missile could potentially reach Alaska.
2017 August	Tension rises between the US and the DPRK threatening to fire ballistic missiles near the US Pacific territory of Guam. ¹⁴

UN documents and resolutions

S/RES/1695 Condemned the 2006 launch of ballistic missiles by the DPRK and imposed sanctions on it.
[https://undocs.org/S/RES/1695\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1695(2006))

S/RES/1718 This resolution imposed an arms embargo, assets freeze and travel ban on on persons involved in the nuclear program of DPRK. Also banned a range of imports and exports from and to the DPRK respectively.

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1718%20%282006%29

S/RES/1874 Expressed concern over 2009 nuclear test of DPRK. Strengthened arms embargo and called for inspection of cargo, going to the DPRK.

[https://undocs.org/S/RES/1874\(2009\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1874(2009))

S/RES/2087 Condemned the satellite launch of 2012 and added sanctions.

[https://undocs.org/S/RES/2087\(2013\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2087(2013))

S/RES/2094 This resolution imposed sanctions on DPRK after the 2013 nuclear test.

¹⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15278612>

[https://undocs.org/S/RES/2094\(2013\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2094(2013))

S/RES/2270 This resolution condemned the 2016 nuclear and missile tests. It also imposed sanction on DPRK that included inspection of cargo to and from DPRK and prohibition of all weapons trade with the DPRK.

[https://undocs.org/S/RES/2270\(2016\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2270(2016))

S/RES/2371 This resolution was adopted unanimously by the UN security council to strengthen sanctions on DPRK after the July 2017 missile test.

[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2371\(2017\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2371(2017))

S/RES/2375 This resolution strengthened economic sanctions on the DPRK

[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2375\(2017\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2375(2017))

Possible solutions

Because the DPRK already has nuclear weapons, trying to solve the issue militarily would most likely lead to a nuclear war. In addition to this, conventional weapons would destroy much of the Korean Peninsula. This is why it is crucial that all parties involved in the crisis commit themselves to pursue a diplomatic solution. However, with diplomatic solutions the greatest problem has been that the DPRK has repeatedly violated international agreements and has continued to pursue its nuclear program.

In order to achieve a functioning diplomatic solution it is vital that the United States, China and DPRK reach mutual understanding of the situation. Because this is highly unlikely due to mistrust between the parties and due to differing military interests in the area, it is necessary that at least the United States and China both agree on the issue and find a way to solve the crisis that is mutually beneficial.

China is the only ally to the DPRK and if it stops supporting them the United Nations Security Council could impose far more extensive sanctions on the DPRK. However it is China's strategic interest to keep the DPRK as a buffer zone. Harsh economic sanctions could also lead to influx of DPRK refugees - fleeing hunger - coming to China, a situation which China wants to avoid. Still it is far more vital for China to maintain positive relations with its main trading partners including the United States and thus it has already started to cooperate with them in the Security Council.

The United States wants to ensure the safety of itself and its allies. It is ready to impose very severe sanctions on the DPRK to force it to abandon its nuclear interests. It is unlikely that the US will be ready to make diplomatic concessions because of deep lack of trust in DPRK.

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