

Forum: Security Council (SC)

Issue: Addressing DPRK's Activities in Arms Control and Proliferation

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INTRODUCTION

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is among the key players in arms control and proliferation. As of January 2024, North Korea holds approximately 50 nuclear warheads and has enough fissile material to produce around 70-90 nuclear weapons. Additionally, it has grown its chemical and biological weapon programs which add to the global threats.¹

In the last two years, North Korea has remarkably accelerated its ballistic missile testing. The DPRK now possesses a variety of weapons including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)² for reaching the mainland USA and developing submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) to get second-strike capability in submarines.³ This rapid development has raised international alarm, especially given that in 2003 North Korea had withdrawn from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but this is still under international controversy.⁴

As a result, resolutions have been adopted by the United Nations Security Council since 2006 demanding North Korea to stop their nuclear and missile activities. These measures are also accompanied by tough sanctions meant to paralyze the country's capability of developing its weapons programs. But, despite these steps, the DPRK has smuggled goods, committed cyber-attacks and got support from China which is its biggest trading partner.⁵

Moreover, there were some breakthroughs in diplomacy on issues concerning North Korea. During negotiations such as the Agreed Framework of 1994, Six-Party Talks to the recent summits with US Presidents, North Korea intermittently entered into arrangements to restrict their nuclear activities. But many times, these moves have fizzled out too soon leading to an incomplete denuclearization process.

North Korea's progress in nuclear and missiles technology poses great danger for both regional and global peace. An unstable regime that is presently one among the most

¹ "Meetings Coverage and Press Releases | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." www.press.un.org/en/2023/sc15504.doc.htm.

² "The DPRK-Hamas Relationship." CSIS | Center for Strategic and International Studies, www.csis.org/analysis/dprk-hamas-relationship.

³ "DPRK (North Korea): Open Briefing : What's In Blue : Security Council Report." July 2024 Monthly Forecast : Security Council Report, www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/06/dprk-north-korea-open-briefing-9.php.

⁴ "The DPRK-Hamas Relationship." CSIS | Center for Strategic and International Studies, www.csis.org/analysis/dprk-hamas-relationship.

⁵ "DPRK (North Korea): Open Briefing : What's In Blue : Security Council Report." July 2024 Monthly Forecast : Security Council Report, www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/06/dprk-north-korea-open-briefing-9.php.

unpredictable regimes demands roundabout ways through which international community can navigate negotiation channels, apply sanctions or defensive mechanism that can reduce threats.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Nuclear weapons development programs

A nuclear weapons development program is “a program or plan for the development, acquisition, or production of any nuclear weapon or weapons.”⁶

Ballistic missiles

A ballistic missile is “a rocket-propelled self-guided strategic-weapons system that follows a ballistic trajectory to deliver a payload from its launch site to a predetermined target.”⁷ Ballistic missiles can take conventional high explosives, chemical, biological, or nuclear munitions. Besides being launched from land-based silos or mobile platforms, they can also be launched from aircraft, ships, and submarines.

Scud missile⁸

A Scud missile is one of a series of tactical ballistic missiles developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It was exported widely to both developing and developed countries. The term comes from the NATO reporting name attached to the missile by Western intelligence agencies.

NoDong missile

“The NoDong is a medium range ballistic missile indigenous to North Korea. The missile has a maximum range of 1250 km (776 miles), making it capable of striking all of South Korea and Japan. The NoDong is liquid fueled and can carry a payload of 1,200kg.”⁹

Taepodong-1 and Taepodong-2¹⁰

The Taepodong-2 is the designation for what was reported to be a North Korean two- or three-stage ballistic missile design, initially thought to be the successor to the Taepodong-1 technology demonstrator.

⁶ “Definition: Nuclear Weapons Program from 18 USC § 832(D)(1) | LII / Legal Information Institute.”
Www.law.cornell.edu,
www.law.cornell.edu/definitions/uscode.php?width=840&height=800&iframe=true&def_id=18-USC-1531105793-85541671&term_occur=999&term_src=title:18:part:I:chapter:39:section:832.

⁷ “Ballistic Missile | Definition & Facts.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 10 Mar. 2014,
www.britannica.com/technology/ballistic-missile.

⁸ “Scud Missile.” *DBpedia*, dbpedia.org/page/Scud_missile.

⁹ “NoDong – Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance.” *Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance – Making the World a Safer Place*, www.missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-threat-and-proliferation/todays-missile-threat/north-korea/no-dong-1/.

¹⁰ “Taepodong-2 (Unha-3).” *Missile Threat*, 23 Apr. 2024, missilethreat.csis.org/missile/taepodong-2/.

Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)¹¹

An intercontinental ballistic missile is a guided ballistic missile with a range of over 5,500 km, and because of the mass and dimensions of a nuclear warhead, it is primarily designed to deliver a nuclear weapon. Currently, ICBMs also form the basis for a multiple independent reentry vehicle, which means that they can carry nuclear heads toward separate targets. Some of the countries that have deployed operational ICBMs are the U.S., Russia, China, France, India, the U.K., Israel, and North Korea.

The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)

“The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) is a highly effective, combat-proven defense against short, medium and intermediate-range ballistic missile threats. THAAD is the only U.S. system designed to intercept targets outside and inside the atmosphere.”¹²

Juche

“Juche, state ideology of North Korea and official ideology of the Workers Party of Korea. Typically translated as “self-reliance,” Juche was developed by the founder of the North Korean state and its “eternal president,” Kim Il-Sung, and expounded upon by his son Kim Jong Il.”¹³

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Context

In recent years, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea managed to look into the strengthening of its military, and weapons control programs. The Korean Peninsula, immediately after World War II, was split into two influence zones whereby the DPRK was formed in the north by Soviet influence while the Republic of Korea (ROK) was established in the south under U.S. influence.

¹¹ "Page Restricted." *Page Restricted* | ScienceDirect, www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/missiles.

¹² "Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)." *Lockheed Martin*, www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/products/thaad.html.

¹³ "Juche." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 17 Apr. 2024, www.britannica.com/topic/Juche.



14

This division set the stage for the Korean War of 1950-1953, which ended in a destructive stalemate that further heightened ideological differences between the two halves: North and South.

After the war, under Kim Il-sung's leadership, the DPRK began to build up the military as an effective defense force against perceived threats from the United States and South Korea. Juche, the guiding principle for its military and economic policies, relied on self-reliance. The emphasis on self-reliance would make available huge investments in conventional or unconventional weapons. In the beginning, during the Cold War, the DPRK received sufficient military and economic aid from the Soviet Union and China, which helped foster the rise of its military capabilities. However, in 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed and cut most of this aid, leaving the DPRK seriously isolated. Such isolation also encouraged its quest toward a nuclear deterrent, because nuclear weapons were then considered vital for regime survival and sovereignty by the regime.¹⁵

Critical to its behavior on today's issues related to arms control and proliferation is a history behind the military development of the DPRK. The regime's early focus on militarization, combined with its experiences during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, has shaped this persistence to seek advanced weapons technologies. This history provides a backdrop for understanding the complex relationships between the DPRK and the international community on arms control and nonproliferation issues.

Nuclear Weapons Development

The top components of the DPRK defense strategy are nuclear weapons development programs. To be specific, the development of such programs started during the late period of 1950s and early years of 1960s when North Korea began receiving nuclear technology and

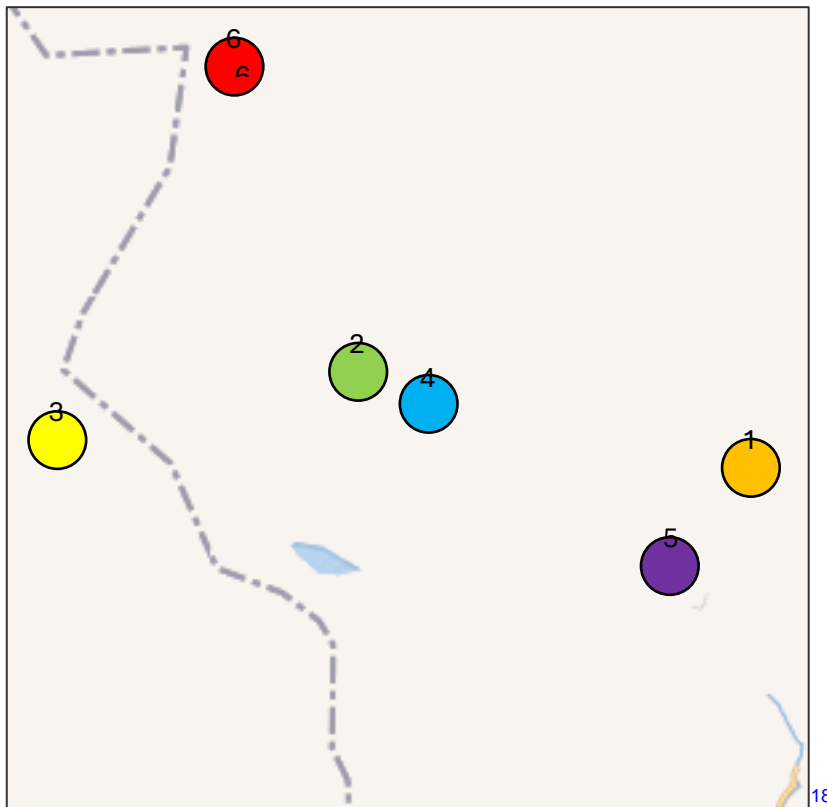
¹⁴ "Korea - Division, Geography, History." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 20 July 1998, www.britannica.com/place/Korea/Division-of-Korea.

¹⁵ "Existence of Nuclear Weapons Creates Temptation, Risk of Use, First Committee Hears As It Unpacks Assumptions About Complex Path to Peace." www.press.un.org/en/2023/qadis3720.doc.htm.

professionals related to it from the Soviet Union. A large nuclear complex, the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center, began construction in the early 1980s and at one time was able to establish an initial infrastructure that characterized a native nuclear capability.

North Korea's nuclear intentions were first suspected internationally in the early 1990s.¹⁶ In 1993, North Korea declared an intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, then finally suspending withdrawal. By the early 2000s, it was publicly admitted by the DPRK to have a uranium enrichment program that sharpened international concern. Then, in 2006, came the DPRK's first underground nuclear test. Having a pretty low yield, it yet literally sealed the fact that the regime had started down the pathway to nuclear weapons. Later tests, in 2009, 2013, and 2016, indicated rising yield. For example, the 2016 test was reportedly a hydrogen bomb, but experts argued over whether it was valid. In 2017, the DPRK conducted its sixth and most powerful test to date, which it again claimed was a hydrogen bomb, with a significantly larger yield than previous tests.¹⁷

The underground nuclear tests:



1: 2006; 2: 2009; 3: 2013; 4: 2016 January; 5: 2016 September; 6: 2017¹⁹

The map is showing the places that the nuclear tests have taken place.

¹⁶ "North Korea's Nuclear Program: A History." *Korean Legal Studies*, www.kls.law.columbia.edu/content/north-koreas-nuclear-program-history.

¹⁷ "Detecting Nuclear Tests." *CTBTO*, www.ctbto.org/our-work/detecting-nuclear-tests.

¹⁸ "List of Nuclear Weapons Tests of North Korea." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc, 3 Mar. 2024,

¹⁹ List of Nuclear Weapons Tests of North Korea." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc, 3 Mar. 2024,

The development of reliable delivery systems for these nuclear warheads has been another main focus for the DPRK. Transferring these nuclear warheads at a small enough size to be fitted onto ballistic missiles, and also ensuring that these missile systems are accurate, reliable, and survivable under real-world conditions, remain key challenges. These challenges are offset by the fact that the DPRK has made considerable progress with recent tests indicative of advanced capabilities. The bottom line in the development of nuclear weapons by the DPRK has been a story of success and backward movement. Beginning with the initial support from the Soviet Union, indigenous development, and a number of nuclear tests, the program experienced different sorts of technical and safety-related problems. Notwithstanding these challenges, the DPRK continues to advance its nuclear capability, posing significant proliferation and security concerns.

Missile Development

North Korea's missile development program had taken a substantial evolutionary leap over the last several decades, making it a formidable missile power. It is, in fact, in the 1960s and 1970s that missile assistance and technology transfers in North Korea took root with assistance from the then Soviet Union and China.²⁰ By the late 1980s, North Korea had developed its first indigenously produced missiles: the Scud-B and Scud-C. This included the 1990s development of the NoDong missile, which significantly increased strike range into Japan. For much of the early-mid 2000s, North Korea was advancing more advanced missile systems development, such as the Taepodong-1 and Taepodong-2, its entry into long-range ballistic missile technology.

North Korea's missile development program has been defined by large and major missile tests and launches. The Taepodong-1's critical test flight over Japan occurred in 1998 but resulted in a failure to place a satellite in orbit. Succeeded to put a satellite in orbit in 2012, the Taepodong-2 test demonstrated the progress made by North Korea. More recent tests of the Hwasong-14 and Hwasong-15 in 2017 showed intercontinental ballistic missile capacity; the latter could reach the USA mainland.

The missile technologies developed in North Korea have significantly serious effects on both regional and global security. The development of longer-ranging missiles has already increased tensions on the Korean Peninsula, which has, in effect, driven South Korea and Japan to take response measures, including the deployment of missile defense systems such as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD). Globally, the missile tests by North Korea have plied an increased number of sanctions and relentless diplomatic efforts toward the control of North Korea's missile and nuclear programs. In sum, North Korea's missile development program has moved from Scud derivatives to ICBMs changes that have remarkably overhauled local and global security landscapes and put a constant problem on international diplomacy and the pertinent defense strategies.

Proliferation Activities

The DPRK abounds in proliferation activities, and in strategic alliances, to which it has sold conventional arms, missile technology, and probably nuclear technology to other countries and non-state actors. This kind of network being run by North Korea has been

²⁰ *Wilson Center,*

www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/WP53_web_final1.pdf.

widespread and has been carried out through complex structures and front companies so that it could continue to evade the international sanctions and scrutiny.

One of the best-documented cases of North Korea's proliferation is its relationship with Syria. In the early 2000s, North Korea assisted Syria in constructing a nuclear reactor, which was destroyed by the Israeli air force in 2007. The case underlines the DPRK's willingness to export sensitive technologies, independent of international norms and regulations.

In addition, it has been linked with missile sales to such countries as Iran and Pakistan. The transfers of missile technology, which included whole missile systems and critical subsystems, have definitely provided these countries with the ability to make substantial progress in their missile efforts. For instance, the NoDong missile was reportedly transferred to Pakistan for the development of the Ghauri missile.

North Korea's proliferation activities have not been confined to state actors. While the same has rather posed fears of a possible transfer of weapons and technologies to non-state actors and militant groups, there is no concrete proof of such actions taking place. This involvement of the DPRK in the international black market for weapons and military technology poses a serious challenge to international security efforts.

Though sanctions and diplomatic pressures were imposed by the international community, the activities of North Korea have gone on in various forms, managing to get around and develop a means of getting around such restrictions. With all these advanced smuggling techniques being used by the regime, proliferated via the front companies and international networks, it only shows that the threat of proliferation never dissipates. In conclusion, such proliferation activity by North Korea has presented a major challenge to the security of most countries. Continued vigilance and robust international implementation are required to prevent this dangerous proliferation of abilities in missile and conventional arms exports, as well as potentially in nuclear technology.

Legal Aspects of DPRK's Arms Control and Proliferation

The legal framework surrounding DPRK's arms control and proliferation activities is primarily anchored in international treaties and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. North Korea was a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985, committing itself to refrain from developing nuclear weapons.²¹ However, the DPRK announced its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003, citing security concerns and perceived threats from the United States. This withdrawal has been a significant legal contention point, as the NPT is a cornerstone of global non-proliferation efforts.²²

On September 8, 2022, the DPRK further complicated the legal landscape by passing a law that officially declared itself a nuclear weapon state. This law not only formalized North Korea's nuclear status but also asserted the DPRK's right to use preemptive nuclear strikes

²¹ "North Korea's Nuclear Program: A History." *Korean Legal Studies*, <https://kls.law.columbia.edu/content/north-koreas-nuclear-program-history>.

²² "North Korea's Withdrawal From the NPT: A Reality Check." *James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies*, 14 Aug. 2020, www.nonproliferation.org/north-koreas-withdrawal-from-the-npt-a-reality-check/.

to protect itself. This declaration directly challenges international norms and treaties aimed at preventing the spread and use of nuclear weapons.²³

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s safeguards agreements, which North Korea has violated by expelling inspectors and resuming its nuclear activities, further highlight the legal breaches committed by the DPRK. These actions not only undermine the international legal order but also challenge the enforcement mechanisms of global arms control and non-proliferation regimes, raising significant legal and diplomatic issues for the international community. The DPRK's recent legal assertions exacerbate these challenges, emphasizing the urgent need for robust legal and diplomatic strategies to address the growing proliferation threat.²⁴

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America (USA)

The United States plays a vital role in addressing the arms control and proliferation challenges posed by the DPRK. The initiatives are spread out through an approach that covers economic sanctions, military deterrence, and diplomacy. The country leads the international charge in levying stringent economic sanctions on North Korea in such major sectors as finance, trade, and energy. The measures are meant to cut off resources for use in developing nuclear weapons and missiles.

With regard to its military, the U.S. has maintained a significant presence in the region, interoperating with exercises carried out alongside South Korea, while diplomatically, it has fielded the most advanced missile defense systems, such as THAAD, against North Korean aggression. These have included direct negotiations, including high-profile summits between President Trump and Kim Jong-un in 2018 and 2019 seeking to broker a deal on denuclearization. Even though such summits kindled new hopes, the processes ended with no sustainable agreement.²⁵ In sum, actions by the US have contributed much to constraining the capabilities of DPRK, even if comprehensive denuclearization remains out of reach.

China

China is in a very delicate dual role in regard to DPRK's arms control and proliferation, being the greatest ally and the largest trading partner of Pyongyang.²⁶ On the one hand, China supports the international sanctions imposed by the United Nations under the umbrella of recognizing that the nuclear ambitions of the North have to be contained to maintain regional balance. On the other hand, China has been offering economic lifelines to the DPRK through food and energy supplies in an attempt to delay the regime's possible collapse and the ensuing refugee crisis that might occur along the Chinese border. Overall, the strategic objectives of

²³ "Reuters.com." *Reuters.com*, www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkorea-passes-law-declaring-itself-nuclear-weapons-state-kcna-2022-09-08/.

²⁴ *International Atomic Energy Agency | Atoms for Peace and Development*, www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/dprk.pdf.

²⁵ "Assessment of the Trump-Kim Hanoi Summit." *CSIS | Center for Strategic and International Studies*, www.csis.org/analysis/assessment-trump-kim-hanoi-summit.b

²⁶ "Understanding the China-North Korea Relationship." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 11 July 2006, www.cfr.org/background/china-north-korea-relationship.

China are to maintain a buffer state, preventing USA troops stationed in South Korea from approaching its border.²⁷ Thus, while enforcement remains key for sanctions, commitment changes and sometimes outweighs compliance for the sake of stability. Advances made by China are critical to the situation because there is economic leverage with North Korea, thus it has to play a key role in any meaningful and realistic diplomatic resolution.

South Korea

The military activities carried out by the DPRK affect South Korea directly. It is an important player in regional security through its general military preparedness, diplomatic engagement, and participation in international sanctions. Along with this, South Korea forms a strong military alliance with the United States by conducting combined military exercises and hosting U.S. troops. Additionally, South Korea has been diplomatically insistent, with many initiatives put underway to improve inter-Korean relations with summits and several economic cooperation projects.²⁸ The Moon Jae-in government has carefully cultivated active dialogue with the North, including very historic meetings between Korean leaders. However, progress has been uneven, with periods of increased tension following missile tests and provocations from North Korea. The contribution or role played by South Korea in sustaining regional stability and creating chances for peaceful resolution remains immense, even if the road ahead is still strewn with challenges.

Japan

Japan has continued to show initiatives on the international front toward containing DPRK's nuclear and missile programs by imposing serious sanctions and security cooperation in terms of alliances with the United States and South Korea. Japan has always been at the lead in calling for tough measures of sanctions against its northern neighbor, calling for international action through the United Nations. It has particularly invested much in missile defense systems, not least Aegis Ashore and Patriot PAC-3, against possible missile attacks from North Korea. The geographical proximity, historical animosities, and other issues make Japan especially vulnerable to the DPRK's missile threats. On a regional scale, Japan does play an important role in security dynamics through its contribution of overall pressure on North Korea through economic sanctions and defensive preparations. It has helped to a great extent in maintaining regional security and a unified international stance over provocations by North Korea.

India

The case of India's role in the DPRK arms control issue is more indirect, yet still of importance, within the context of global non-proliferation efforts. While India supports international sanctions against North Korea, through a diplomatic statement, it denounces the nuclear tests and missile launches. There are no direct security stakes for India in the Korean Peninsula, but on the issue of nuclear proliferation, it converges with global efforts. India's policy includes adherence to UN sanctions and support for the various diplomatic initiatives leading toward denuclearization. Not only has it participated in the multilateral discussion on the North Korean situation, but India has also included bilateral diplomatic dialogues with North

²⁷ "China's Response to Collapse in North Korea." *Brookings*, 29 July 2016, www.brookings.edu/articles/chinas-response-to-collapse-in-north-korea/.

²⁸ "Korea Information - Inter-Korean Relations — Korean Cultural Center New York." *Korean Cultural Center New York*, www.koreanculture.org/korea-information-interkorean-relations.

Korea, stressing peace and stability regarding the matter. Even though India is not a direct stakeholder, the impact of India adds to that global consensus against weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation and warns against violations of international norms and treaties.

Russian Federation

Russia has played an important and complicated role in affecting the nuclear and armament policies of North Korea (DPRK) throughout history. Historically, Russia has been one of the major supporters but, withal, the Soviet Union supporters in the supply of North Korea with military and technological support, predominantly vital nuclear technologies. This historical support enabled North Korea to advance its nuclear capability to the present level. However, Russia has become more sophisticated over the past years. While it has supported United Nations sanctions to slow North Korea's nuclear program, it has at the same time advocated diplomatic engagement and reduction in tensions. Herein, the dual strategy of Russia lies in balancing its geopolitical interests with concerns for international security. Economic links between Russia and North Korea have been at a low key, with the motivation for interaction still largely regional stability rather than major economic benefit. Those severely limited economic interactions apart, they, of course, have no effect on strategic influence that a country Russia is, in fact, enjoys the status of a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council with powers on international policy decisions. The second, more interesting, reason probably implies that this dual status of enforcing sanctions while supporting dialogue and denuclearization on the installment plan is what highlights its special place in global diplomacy. The signing of such another new treaty between Moscow and Pyongyang signals a step further in their cooperation and mutual strategic interests. This treaty marks a further step of ties that are likely to influence the geopolitical position. In most cases, Russia often tends to act in contraposition to U.S. dominion within the region, often advocating for Phased and DIPLOMATIC approaches to North Korea's denuclearization. This balanced stance, which sees the enforcement of sanctions running in tandem with the call for direct talks, casts Russia as a significant player in the efforts related to managing North Korea's nuclear proliferation.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) fulfills a very critical function in monitoring general nuclear activity and has been part of the inspection and verification processes in North Korea. Although North Korea expelled IAEA inspectors in 2009, the agency still keeps track of developments there with satellite imagery and through other means. The IAEA gives technical assessments and reports about North Korea's nuclear capabilities, hence helping to build international knowledge of the DPRK's progress and possible threats. The impact of the IAEA is based on the competency of expertise and authority respecting nuclear verification, central to any forthcoming agreement on denuclearization.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plays a complementary role to regional stability and dialogue over North Korea. Although it does not generally take part directly in imposing sanctions, ASEAN member states are involved in multilateral discussions and heed initiatives targeted at denuclearization and establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula. This engagement in diplomacy by ASEAN, more so through the ASEAN Regional Forum, provides an effective communication channel between North Korea and the rest of the

countries in the region. Hence, ASEAN is more of a diplomatic influence in terms of regional co-operation and keeping open the communications that could help reduce tensions and ease the path toward peaceful resolution.

European Union (EU)

At an international level, the European Union is actively involved in efforts to address DPRK arms control and proliferation issues. In particular, it has imposed sanctions on North Korea as part of the international sanctions' regime against the state, given the actual limitation of the DPRK nuclear and missile development capabilities. The EU contains a diplomatic dimension through which it emphasizes the need for dialogue and a non-confrontational resolution of tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, the EU balances the humanitarian aid toward North Korea with pressure in the outreach effort dealing with humanitarian needs for the North Korean people. The impact of the EU is considerable in reinforcing the application of international norms and supporting multilateral efforts to control North Korea's nuclear ambitions while continuing to persuade Pyongyang to address human rights and humanitarian concerns.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
December 12, 1985	The DPRK joins the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
March 12, 1993	The DPRK Declares Its Withdrawal from the NPT UN Security Council Resolution 825: Calls on DPRK to repeal its announcement and comply with the obligation of the NPT.
October 21, 1994,	The Agreed Framework. An agreement between the U.S. and DPRK to freeze North Korea's plutonium weapons program in exchange for energy aid.
October 2002,	The U.S. reveals that DPRK has been pursuing a clandestine uranium enrichment program. This discovery leads to the collapse of the Agreed Framework.
January 10, 2003,	The DPRK withdraws from the NPT. Start of the Six-Party Talks involving North Korea,

	South Korea, Japan, China, Russia, and the United States.
September 19, 2005,	September Joint Statement was made by the United States and the Soviet Union
October 9, 2006	First nuclear test. UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1718, imposing sanctions including a ban on military goods and luxury items.
June 25, 2008	The DPRK destroys a key part of its nuclear reactor as a gesture towards denuclearization. (part of the Six-Party Talks agreements)
May 25, 2009	Second nuclear test took place at the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site.
February 12, 2013	Third nuclear test took place at the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site.
January 6, 2016	Fourth nuclear test, UN Security Council adopts Resolution 2270, imposing the toughest sanctions yet, including bans on mineral exports and limitations on oil imports.
September 9, 2016	Fifth nuclear test took place at the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site.
July 4, 2017	First successful ICBM test
September 3, 2017,	Sixth nuclear test took place at the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site.
June 12, 2018,	The Singapore Summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un took place on June 12, 2018, at the Capella Hotel on Sentosa Island in Singapore.
February 27, 2019,	The Hanoi Summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim

	Jong-un took place in Hanoi, Vietnam, on February 27-28, 2019.
June 30, 2019	Panmunjom meeting took place in the Joint Security Area (JSA) of the Korean Demilitarization Zone (DMZ)
October 10, 2020,	The DPRK unveils new ICBM during military parade.
March 25, 2021	The DPRK launches ballistic missiles.
March 24, 2022	The DPRK conducts an ICBM test, breaking its self-imposed moratorium on such tests.
May 4, 2022	The DPRK fires suspected ballistic missiles.
September 8, 2022	The DPRK passes law declaring itself a nuclear weapons state, The law asserts DPRK's right to use preemptive nuclear strikes to protect itself.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Resolution 825 (1993) / adopted by the Security Council at its 3212th meeting, on 11 May 1993 (S/RES/825(1993))²⁹

On May 11, 1993, after the statement of the intention to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons, made by North Korea, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 825. It urged North Korea to reconsider its decision and comply with requirements ensuing from the NPT. The resolution was meant as a blend of conservation of international peace and security through furtherance of the ideology on non-proliferation. The text of the resolution also mentioned that it had requested the International Atomic Energy Agency to negotiate a solution with North Korea and report back to the Security Council.

S/RES/1718(2006)³⁰

Adopted on October 14, 2006, right after the first nuclear test by North Korea, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718 provided the terms under which a number of

²⁹ "Security Council Resolution 825 (1993) [on the Decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons]." *United Nations Digital Library System*, 11 May 1993, www.digitallibrary.un.org/record/283058?ln=ar.

³⁰ "Resolution 1718 (2006) / ." *United Nations Digital Library System*, Oct. 2006, digitallibrary.un.org/record/584729?ln=ar&v=pdf.

economic and commercial sanctions would be placed upon it. This resolution tries to avoid mass destruction weapons proliferation by preventing North Korea from being able to make other nuclear tests and missile launches. The same resolution also set a committee for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of these sanctions comprising all the UN States that make up the Security Council. Such measures nonetheless did not cease North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, raising questions for many as to how international sanctions are enforced.

S/RES/2270 (2016)³¹

UN Security Council Resolution 2270 was passed on 2 March 2016 in response to North Korea's fourth nuclear test and satellite launch using ballistic missile technology. The new resolution put further sanctions on DPRK activities regarding financial transactions, sea and air transportation, and import of aviation and rocket fuel. It also put in place obligatory inspections of cargo to and from North Korea. The resolution was designed to be one of the most thorough efforts so far to try to thwart North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons³²

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which entered into force on March 5, 1970, is an significant international agreement aimed at preventing proliferation and promoting peaceful applications of nuclear energy. These three pillars set the base with regard to non-proliferation, disarmament, and the right of peaceful use of nuclear technology. This provides a framework under which nuclear-weapon states take measures of disarmament and for states that are not in possession of nuclear weapons not to develop or acquire them. While being relatively successful, the treaty has limited the number of countries with nuclear weapons. Challenges persist with non-compliant states and further disarmament efforts.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The Agreed Framework (1994)

The Agreed Framework signed in 1994 between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was an important diplomacy effort, putting a stop to North Korea's nuclear weapons program. It required that DPRK freeze its illicit plutonium weapons program in return for aid in the form of two proliferation-resistant nuclear power reactors, as well as heavy fuel oil to meet its energy needs until those reactors were operational. The Agreed Framework did, initially, freeze North Korea's plutonium production capability. Indeed, for several years, all nuclear activities at the Yongbyon nuclear facility came to a halt and international inspectors from IAEA got access to-monitor compliance. This lessened tension on the Korean Peninsula, and further opened avenues for dialogue and engagement. Yet, it faced formidable problems and eventually collapsed.

Another salient issue has been the non-implementation, in a timely manner, regarding reactors agreed to and fuel oil deliveries, thus creating dissatisfaction and mistrust with the

³¹ "Resolution 2270 (2016) /." *United Nations Digital Library System*, Mar. 2016, digitallibrary.un.org/record/822114?ln=es&v=pdf.

³² "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons." *United Nations Digital Library System*, digitallibrary.un.org/record/203087?v=pdf.

DPRK. Add to this the political developments in the United States with the election of President George W. Bush, whose administration metered a more hardline approach toward Pyongyang, further labeling it as part of the "Axis of Evil." Reacting to the new U.S. policy, the DPRK secretly launched a uranium enrichment program that was revealed to the public in 2002, leading to the unraveling of the Agreed Framework. Specifically, even though the Framework Agreement attenuated DPRK nuclear aspirations for a while, it soon became a failure because of mutual distrust, delays, and geopolitical changes. This experience underscored how complex and challenging arms control negotiations with the DPRK can be and provided a salient reminder of why constant and relentless diplomatic interaction is required.

The Six-Party Talks (2003)

The Six-Party Talks, initiated in 2003, involved North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China, Russia, and the United States, aiming to dismantle DPRK's nuclear program through multilateral negotiations. The talks sought a comprehensive solution, addressing security concerns and providing economic and energy assistance to North Korea in exchange for denuclearization. The Six-Party Talks generated milestones like the September 2005 Joint Statement, where North Korea is committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and programs in exchange for energy aid, security assurances, and the normalization of relations with the United States and Japan.

Other agreements followed, including the shut-down of the nuclear facility in Yongbyon and the return of IAEA inspectors. These were offset by many reverses in the process. Key problems included verification disagreements, mostly about the extent and modalities of verifying DPRK's disarmament. What was also not agreed upon easily was North Korea's demand to remove it from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, along with the removal of economic sanctions against it. These talks were further undermined by provocative acts of the DPRK, which included missile tests and a nuclear test in 2006. In 2009, North Korea would withdraw from the talks after the U.N. condemned its satellite launch, saying this exercise was in violation of U.N. resolutions. This move effectively ended the Six-Party Talks without an overall denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Although the Six-Party Talks were generally multilateral diplomacy at its best, too much mistrust, verification disagreements, and strategic North Korean provocations did exist. The experience brought out lessons regarding how all parties' security and economic concerns should be taken up comprehensively and the unity of approach, not easy to sustain, among a wide array of stakeholders.

The 2018-2019 Diplomatic Engagements

The period of 2018-2019 saw renewed diplomatic efforts between North Korea and the United States, marked by unprecedented direct engagements between U.S. President Donald Trump and DPRK leader Kim Jong-un. This period included three key summits: the Singapore Summit (June 2018), the Hanoi Summit (February 2019), and the Panmunjom meeting (June 2019). The Singapore Summit is concluded by a vague declaration, through which North Korea committed itself towards complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, while the United States would offer security guarantees. Historic in being the first-ever meeting between a sitting president of the United States and a North Korean leader, this summit had big hopes attached to it for achieving some kind of breakthrough in relations and nuclear disarmament efforts. However, further negotiations revealed huge discrepancies in the expectations and definitions of denuclearization from both parties. The Hanoi Summit ended abruptly without

any agreement, principally because of disagreements over how much sanctions relief should be offered and the extent of denuclearization steps North Korea would be willing to take. The Panmunjom meeting was rich in symbolism but not very productive in terms of outcome. The engagements of 2018-2019 certainly drove home the point that for any form of diplomacy, good preparation, clear objectives, and a realistic set of expectations are required.

Overall, The lack of detailed agreements and verification mechanisms inherently made matters pertaining to concrete outcome-related problems even more challenging in high-stake diplomacy. The tendency toward an emphasis on top-level summits and a lack of rigorous groundwork and follow-up undercut substantive outcome. Ambitious diplomatic engagements, despite setting off to a good atmosphere and reducing immediate tensions in 2018-2019, could not really produce any enduring solution to the DPRK nuclear issue until now. That period showed the requirements for a gradual and highly negotiated process, with the provisions on denuclearization and those on security assurances underpinned by efficient verification measures and prolonged diplomatic efforts.

The United Nations Sanctions

The United Nations has played a crucial role in addressing DPRK's activities in arms control and proliferation through a series of sanctions aimed at curbing North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. These sanctions were implemented progressively as North Korea continued its nuclear and missile tests, with the intent to pressure the regime into compliance with international norms and agreements. Subsequently, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1718 of October 2006, which imposed heavy sanctions on North Korea after the country's first nuclear test. This resolution banned the supply of heavy weaponry or luxury goods to North Korea and froze assets linked to its nuclear and missile programs. It was the start of a protracted effort at economic isolation of the regime. Successive adopted resolutions, in particular 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013), and 2094 (2013), have much reinforced the strictness of restrictions through the broadening of an arms embargo, prohibition on export of materials and technologies in the sphere of ballistic missiles development, and financial transactions. The measures were designed with the purpose of limiting North Korea's capability to finance and develop weapons programs. Resolutions 2270 (2016) and 2321 (2016) introduced even harsher economic measures of sanctions, including bans on coal, iron, and seafood exports, which were immense sources of revenue for North Korea. Resolution 2371 of 2017 further banned North Korean exports of textiles and topped oil imports, while Resolution 2375 of 2017 set a ceiling on supplies of fuel besides a ban on work authorizations on overseas employment by North Korean laborers.

Undoubtedly, these sanctions have imposed economic pressure on North Korea, but far from efficient in terms of complete denuclearization. Nonetheless, the country still perseveres in its nuclear and missile development due to a number of sanctions-evasion techniques the country uses, ship-to-ship transfers, and illicit smuggling networks. These sanctions are therefore an aggression on people in North Korea. On a final note, UN sanctions have been the key instrument in the international community's efforts to slow North Korea's nuclear drive. It managed to isolate the regime economically and diplomatically, but it has not come as far as making DPRK totally dismantle its nuclear program. The experience underscores the need for a balanced approach that contains economic pressure within it, along with the need for diplomatic engagement and humanitarian considerations.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Diplomatic Engagement and Gradual Normalization

A step-by-step diplomatic engagement strategy, together with gradual normalization of relations, still remains a feasible solution for the need to curtail the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's arms control and proliferation activities. The strategy would focus on creating an overarching framework covering security concerns, economic needs, and the desire for international legitimacy of the DPRK. The process could involve key stakeholders: South Korea, China, the United States and Japan-, in multilateral talks prodding for incremental but verifiable steps toward disarmament.

The process could furthermore include phased incentives in the form of sanctions relief, economic aid, and security guarantees, all contingent upon the DPRK remaining compliant with commitments to denuclearization. After all, historical precedents, including the 1994 Agreed Framework and the Singapore Summit in 2018, have demonstrated that there is every possibility that DPRK may become responsive to the ongoing diplomatic process as soon as its main issues are taken care of. For example, economic benefits with verifiable milestones of denuclearization can underline mutual trust and the realistic motivations of the DPRK to adhere to international norms. On the other hand, if the DPRK is guaranteed an opportunity to participate in international trade and development projects, then interdependence based on peaceful international relations might bring further benefits to compliance. While requiring endurance and patience, it has the potential to finally embody the integration into the international community with positive enforcement and mutual benefit.

Enhanced Sanctions and Enforcement Mechanisms

Another practical solution would be to strengthen and strictly enforce international sanctions. This would require a unanimous decision on the part of the international community, especially by countries that have substantive economic dealings with the DPRK, including China and Russia. The tightened sanctions would strike at the heart of the economy of the DPRK in areas like financing, trade, and energy, putting maximum pressure on the regime to compel compliance. Inevitably, efficient mechanisms for averting evasion need to support such sanctions through means such as strengthened monitoring, interdiction of illicit shipments, severe punishment of entities that violate these very sanctions, and intelligence sharing among allies heightened against such activities. For example, UN Security Council Resolution 2270 greatly reduced North Korea's capacity to finance weapons programs, showing how stringent sanctions could be very effective. But for these sanctions to be effective, major powers must reciprocate such cooperation, prioritizing global security. What is more, the transparent and consistent execution of the sanctions would make them credible and evades loopholes the DPRK will take advantage of. It would be a dual track of economic pressure working alongside the diplomatic channels: putting pressure on the DPRK leadership to abort its nuclear ambitions while the door remains open for negotiation and peaceful resolution.

Regional Security and Economic Integration Framework

One strategic solution to the problem is the development of a regional security and economic integration framework that effectively deals with the structural security dilemmas underlying the proliferation activities of the DPRK. These include the establishment of a security pact among Northeast Asian states—the DRPK, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia,

and the United States. It would put great emphasis on mutual security guarantees, mechanisms for resolving conflicts, and economic cooperation initiatives in general. Receipt of infrastructure investments, trade opportunities, and energy cooperation can provide the regime with options apart from its militaristic policies. In such a framework, there will also have to be the solution of regional tensions and a stable environment for long-lasting peace and denuclearization. This approach would alleviate feelings of isolation and insecurity in the DPRK's mind, therefore enabling it to set up a positive process with its neighbors. Rather, economic integration and security cooperation can, over time, dispel such an adversarial mindset and create conditions for lasting peace and disarmament on the Korean Peninsula.

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