

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The question of DPRK

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## Introduction

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the most isolated country in the world, has faced increasing economic and humanitarian instability. With a growing number of people facing difficulties in accessing necessities required for survival and care, the DPRK's humanitarian crisis has spread among the majority of the population. As the country's economy has not developed rapidly through industrialization unlike South Korea, the DPRK also lacks the financial resources to provide these necessities.

The question of DPRK, however, mostly entails to its recent efforts in achieving immense nuclear power, imposing a threat on the stability of international peace. The current military state of the DPRK has the potential to affect all nations and their citizens. The international community is concerned with the fact that not enough checks and balances are placed within the DPRK's government to prevent the weapons from being used by the regime or fall in the hands of terrorists. Furthermore, the DPRK's relationship with neighboring countries such as South Korea and Japan has worsened due to the nuclear program. North Korea's nuclear developments may ultimately lead to a nuclear war, and could potentially involve other countries such as the United States.

In addition to nuclear weapons, North Korea is believed to possess more than 1,000 missiles such as long-range rockets and biological and chemical weapons programs. The DPRK's active military organization, The Korean People's Army (KPA), has enlisted over one million active and eight million reserve and paramilitary troops, making it the world's largest military institution. The DPRK also has nuclear facilities in order to miniaturize a nuclear warhead small enough to fit on ballistic missiles, which would endanger countries far away as well. The DPRK is also an active exporter of ballistic missile components shipped to Middle Eastern and African countries, such as Egypt, Iran, Syria, Libya, and Yemen.

North Korea has dedicated its resources to creating nuclear warfare, developing its program despite the continuous sanctions placed by the United Nations Security Council. While the leader of the

DPRK, Kim Jong Un, has stated that North Korea would only use nuclear weaponry when it is being attacked by a foreign power, the threats imposed by the DPRK on other countries still remain a concern.

Importantly, economic sanctions were placed on North Korea to hinder its economic and nuclear growth. With the most recent sanctions, the DPRK should not be financially stable enough to bare any more sanctions. North Korea's economy and infrastructure are not lasting, and the country's ties with other countries are narrowing, with more of its citizens are fleeing the country. International diplomacy towards North Korea has been facing constant tensions in order to constructively solve North Korea's nuclear crisis. Given that tensions have risen between the United States and the DPRK, UN member nations should work toward a collaborative solution to prevent the imminent danger of the DPRK launching a full scale nuclear war.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Juche Ideology

Juche is an ideological weapon used to justify the DPRK's dictatorship and succession of power. It is the basis of the DPRK's closed door policy and communist ideals. The DPRK's Juche was improvised after the Korean War for the purpose of cutting off ties with the Soviet Union. To maintain control over the state, Juche was a means of purging all political opponents of the DPRK's then leader, Kim Il-sung.

### Nuclear weapons

Nuclear weapons are a type of weapon of mass destruction. They release nuclear energy from reactions to cause devastating explosions. There are generally two types of nuclear weapons. Fission-based nuclear weapons, also known as atomic bombs, utilize highly enriched plutonium or uranium. Fusion weapons, also known as hydrogen bombs, are significantly more powerful than the former due to combining both fission and fusion based techniques. These enhancements make hydrogen bombs more difficult to produce.

### Treaty on Non- Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT):

The NPT is an international treaty in which countries agreed to reduce the number of nuclear weapons that each member state possesses and to never use such weapons against another member state. Five nations that have either not signed or withdrew from the NPT include the DPRK, India, Pakistan, Israel and South Sudan. These nations have developed weapons through independent nuclear programs.

## **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

An organization that collaborates with the United Nations on promoting member states to the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology in fields such as medical science. The IAEA has taken part in treaty negotiations to promote disarmament and reports to the General Assembly and Security Council. Furthermore, the organization provides safeguards against the harmful use of nuclear materials and guidelines on properly disposing radioactive materials.

## **Nuclear disarmament/Denuclearization**

Nuclear disarmament is the reduction of the number of weapons in a certain area. Denuclearization has been established as a major goal for the United Nations, as nuclear weapons hold immense destructive power that threatens the security of all nations.

## **Six Party Talks**

Six-Party Talks, consisted of PRC, Japan, DPRK, Russian Federation, South Korea, and the United States, was initiated in 2003 to allow discussions between the countries. The Six-Party Talks managed to reach breakthroughs in 2005, as North Korea made promises to abandon its nuclear program and return to the NPT in 2007. Unfortunately, all forms of agreement were broken due to disagreements over methods of verification and a condemned rocket launch conducted by North Korea. Pyongyang has stated that it would no longer follow the SPT. Other member states have called upon the DPRK to follow its denuclearization pledge from 2005.

## **Sanctions**

Sanctions are limitations or restrictions that are implemented to intentionally harm a country's economy or financial resources. Sanctions can include limitations in exports of materials such as metals and other important resources. These punitive measures can be imposed on other countries by the UNSC and member states in order to lead to effectively discourage nations.

## **Background Information**

After the Korean War, the North and South have split to form two completely different political entities. South Korea has become a capitalist, globalized, and democratic state. North Korea, on the other hand, has maintained the past "Juche" principles that has allowed Kim Il-sung and his descendants to control the country for eternity. Even after his death in 1994, he passed the position down to his son,

Kim Jong-Il, and the dictatorship was eventually passed on to his grandson and current leader, Kim Jong-Un.

North Korea has shown skepticism towards the rest of the world, and even aversion towards the western states. DPRK is often viewed as a political state largely influenced by its form of dictatorship. The regime has been accused of constant human rights violations, such as but not limited to censorship, torture, extrajudicial imprisonments, and slave labor. Everyday life in North Korea is pervaded by totalitarianism, non-tolerance of dissent and militarism.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) and DPRK have also contrasted each other in its relationship with allies. While South Korea has strengthened its alliance with other democratic countries such as the United States, North Korea has, for the most part, distanced itself from other communist countries. The DPRK has lost trust of its allies by developing nuclear weaponry. North Korea's recent ballistic missile and nuclear tests have been heavily condemned by all countries, including the DPRK's former allies. Due to increasing concern over the potential severe consequences of the DPRK's nuclear program, the UNSC has implemented resolutions on the actions of the DPRK. These resolutions mainly utilized sanctions and embargoes to create a dent in North Korea's economy; the Security Council has hoped for the DPRK to come back to the negotiating table once the economic damages have taken its toll. The main sources of income for DPRK include tourism, trade with China, and the selling of blueprints for weaponry. Other solutions have included the ROK's Sunshine policy, implemented in the year 1998 in order to strengthen peaceful ties with the North. These measures have not been successful in preventing the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

### DPRK's Nuclear Programme

The DPRK's nuclear program remains to be the deepest concerns for the international community. Nuclear weapons pose an imminent threat against other countries. Although international experts have previously casted doubt on the DPRK's efforts to miniaturize nuclear warheads, the Washington Post has reported that US intelligence has gathered information that indicates North Korea's success in its efforts. The DPRK has significantly improved its technology, and many fear that the



Figure 1. North Korean Nuclear Test Quake magnitudes

country will be able to target its enemies, including the United States.

North Korea has claimed it has conducted five successful nuclear tests in in 2006, 2009, 2013, and in January and September 2016. Based on the information from the latest September 2016 test, North Korea is able to create a device with an explosive yield of 10-30 kilotons. This device would be the strongest nuclear weapons the DPRK has tested yet. On the other hand, the DPRK's previous tests were all atomic bomb tests. Although North Korea has claimed that its nuclear test in January 2016 was of a hydrogen bomb, many experts are doubtful of this claim; simply put, the size of the explosion registered was not enough to indicate that the weapon was a hydrogen bomb.

As shown in the figure above, the North Korean nuclear test quake magnitudes have steadily increased over the past several years. Another key question in regards to this issue is what kind of starting materials North Korea has used for nuclear tests. Although analysts believe the first two tests used plutonium, they cannot conclude whether the 2013 test used plutonium or uranium. If the test was successful in using uranium as the material, it would mark a significant development in the DPRK's nuclear program. Depending on uranium would bypass the need for North Korea's limited plutonium supply. It would be significantly less challenging for the DPRK to enrich uranium and build up a considerably large nuclear stockpile. North Korea has also claimed that it possesses an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of reaching the US mainland. While analysts doubt this claim, most experts agree that the missile could reach Alaska or Hawaii.

### **Humanitarian Issues in the DPRK**

While North Korea's nuclear program presents a more imminent threat, the country's prevalent humanitarian crisis must not be disregarded. At the center, the people in the DPRK face extremely harsh living conditions. According to THE HILL, approximately 70 percent of the DPRK's population experiences a lack of reliable access to nutritious food. Furthermore, 7 million people do not have consistent access to drinking water. The fact that countless citizens in DPRK are not able to access these basic necessities for survival demonstrates the severity of the crisis at hand. In addition to these necessities, pregnant women lack the prenatal care, causing infant underdevelopment. Children are also malnourished, and this lack of nutrition affects almost 30 percent of children under five years. These problems are derived from the DPRK's economy, as its GDP per capita ranks among the least economically developed countries. With little industrialization and dedication of resources toward the military, the people of North Korea are left behind.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### South Korea

The South Korean government works in close ties with the USA on the North Korean crisis. While the ROK has managed to develop ties with its allies and flourished its economy through globalization, the ROK still remains in imminent danger of the DPRK's developments in nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the South Korean government expresses that relations with the DPRK are in middle of continued disengagement and counterproductive discussions. Although North Korea announced that it would lead disarmament efforts in exchange for improved and peaceful relations with South Korea and the US and the elimination of economic sanctions, South Korea has not shown interest on this announcement for reconciliation. While the ROK is definitively opposed to the DPRK's advancement of its program, the current administration of South Korea looks forward to pursue a peaceful solution to the conflict.

### USA

The USA has been heavily involved in the question of the nuclear program of the DPRK, as illustrated by the numerous agreements the two countries have signed on the issue. The US has implemented agreements such as the Agreed Framework of 1994 and the Six-Party Talks Action Plans. The DPRK has also requested bilateral talks with the USA as a precondition to enter negotiations such as the Six-Party Talks. Currently, the United States aims towards the denuclearization of the DPRK, employing different policies ranging from bilateral talks to strategic military alliances with neighbors and UNSC imposed sanctions.

In recent years, relations between the two countries have been largely defined by North Korea's six tests of nuclear weapons, its development of long-range missiles capable of striking targets thousands of miles away, and its ongoing threats to strike the United States and South Korea. During his presidency, George W. Bush referred to North Korea as part of "the axis of evil" because of its nuclear capabilities.

North Korean tensions and the possibility of a full-scale war are continuing to rise. A recent exchange of insults between the current President Donald Trump and leader Kim Jong-un suggests that the current administration is no longer interested in dialogue and bilateral talks. After the US President vowed to "totally destroy" North Korea if it poses a threat to the US or its allies, the North Korean dictator labeled Trump as "mentally deranged." Many countries are concerned that these threats will eventually accumulate to a full-scale nuclear war.

### China

As the DPRK's most important trading partner, China provides resources of food and energy. The PRC has been instrumental in allowing the DPRK to recuperate from the Korean War after UN forces

arrived in the peninsula, and has help sustained Kim Jong-un's regime. China has also been historically opposed to harsh international sanctions on North Korea due to fears of regime collapse and resulting refugee influx across their border.

However, the PRC has been especially frustrated with some of the DPRK's actions to reduce its ties with allies, including the execution of Jang Song-Taek, Kim Jong- Un's uncle who had close relations with Beijing. China appears to have run out of patience with North Korea's actions to develop nuclear weapons and test them; North Korea's hydrogen bomb triggered an earthquake that was felt in northeast China. Following Pyongyang's recent nuclear test, China has rather grown to oppose the DPRK, even by supporting UNSC sanctions. China has agreed to close the DPRK's joint ventures with Chinese firms, 120 days after the resolution's adoption.

## Japan

The Japanese government mainly wishes to normalize relations with the DPRK. Japan is mainly concerned with the abduction of many Japanese citizens in North Korea; currently, only four citizens have been released from the country. This issue between the DPRK and Japan severely impacts the Japanese citizens' sovereignty, provoking tensions among Japanese and North Korean diplomatic relations.

Japan also wants to focus on more pressing issues such as denuclearization of the DPRK, collaborating and strengthening ties with allies such as the USA, China, and Russia. Japan has also taken part in the Six Party talks, working closely with participant member states to solve the DPRK's nuclear ambition crisis. Japan is overall cooperative in disarmament efforts, and disapproves the DPRK for its nuclear program. Japan also has contact with the US government to resolve the North Korean crisis.

On August 9, 2017, millions of Japanese citizens were led to shelters in basements and dedicated buildings as North Korea launched a missile over the country. It has been implied that the provocations by North Korea have been stemmed from Japan's efforts to ally with U.S in the region, making Japan a closer target.

## Russia

The Russian Federation has been the DPRK's closest ally after World War II. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, however, relations between the two countries have faded. The relationship gained some ground once Kim Jong-Un accepted an invitation to visit Russia (2014–15).

Russia's interest in the Korean peninsula has been associated with potential economic benefits. However, even Russia has become concerned with tensions between the US and DPRK due to the potential consequences of destruction, which affects Russia's future prospects in the Korean region. The Russian Federation, however, believes that economic sanctions will not be effective as a threat against

the unpredictable North Korean government, which would lead to lack of cooperation and diplomatic measures on the crisis. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Russian leader Vladimir Putin refused to accept the DPRK as a new nuclear state. According to Russian policy, Moscow would rather side with the United States in case that North Korea firmly proceeds with its nuclear reactivity intentions. However, if further sanctions are placed on North Korea, the Russian government will be pushed to North Korea and China's side.

### International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Highly regarded as a key player in forming multilateral solutions on denuclearization and overseeing countries in fulfilling nuclear agreements, the IAEA was the first international organization to be involved in the question of the DPRK's nuclear program. North Korea placed its nuclear programme under IAEA safeguards in 1977. The agency has been overseeing the implementation of its safeguards in the DPRK's nuclear facilities through inspections and constant monitoring procedures, including the freeze on the graphite-reactors under the Agreed Framework of 1994. However, after North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT, the DPRK was no longer placed under IAEA safeguards, leading the international community to worry about the lack of restrictions on the program. In fact, all IAEA inspectors were expelled from the country in 2009. Despite the fact that the UNSC has repeatedly urged the DPRK to welcome IAEA inspectors back to the country, the country has still refused to do so. North Korea is still opposed to the organization.

### Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December 12th, 1985	The DPRK signs the NPT.
January 30th, 1992	The DPRK signs an IAEA safeguards agreement
February 19th, 1992	Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula
January 10th, 2003	The DPRK withdraws from the NPT
August 27th, 2003	1st Round of Six-Party Talks
February 25th, 2004	2nd Round of Six-Party Talks
June 23rd, 2004	3rd Round of Six-Party Talks
September 15th, 2005	Freeze in Banco Delta Asia funds
September 19th, 2005	4th Round of Six-Party Talks and Statement of Principles
October 9th, 2006	1st Nuclear Test of DPRK
October 14th, 2006	UNSC Resolution 1718
February 13th, 2007	5th Round of Six-Party Talks and Denuclearization Action Plan

September 2007	The freeze in Banco Delta Asia is lifted
June 27th 2008	Yongbyon 5MV(e) Cooling tower is demolished
May 25th, 2009	2nd Nuclear Test of the DPRK
June 12th, 2009	UNSC Resolution 1874: expands sanctions against Pyongyang.
February 12th,2013	3rd Nuclear Test of the DPRK: using a uranium-enriched device.
March 7th, 2013	UNSC Resolution 2094
January 6th, 2016	4th Nuclear Test of the DPRK with hydrogen bomb.
March 2nd, 2016	UNSC Resolution 2270
September 9th, 2016	5th Nuclear Test of the DPRK
July 4th, 2017	First launch of a ICBM
February 12th, 2017	DPRK tests a new ballistic missile, the Pukguksong-2: range about 500 kilometers at a lofted trajectory.
May 14th, 2017	DPRK tests the Hwasong-12 (intermediate-range ballistic missile): range of 4,800 kilometers on a standard trajectory.
July 28th, 2017:	DPRK tests an ICBM: range of about 10,400km,
August 5th, 2017	The UN Security Council unanimously passes Resolution 2371: imposes additional sanctions
September 3rd, 2017	5th Nuclear Test of the DPRK: Hydrogen Bomb
September 23rd, 2017	U.S. B1-B strategic bombers fly near North Korea's coast, the farthest north they have flown in the 21st century.

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): The NPT was implemented in 1970 to accomplish the goal of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Although the DPRK acceded to the NPT in 1985, it became the first state to withdraw from it in 2003. The DPRK has been repeatedly urged to reenter the treaty on multiple occasions.
- Nuclear United Nations Security Council Resolution, 14 October 2006 (**S/RES/1718**): Condemned the first nuclear test of the DPRK and imposed sanctions on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program for the first time.
- United Nations Security Council Resolution, 12 June, 2009 (**S/RES/1874**): Condemned the second nuclear test, imposed further sanctions on the import and export of arms to and from North Korea. Called for the establishment of the Panel of Experts.
- United Nations Security Council Resolution, 07 March 2013 (**S/RES/2094**): Condemned the third nuclear test, imposed further sanctions and enhanced the inspection of cargo to and from the DPRK.

- United Nations Security Council Resolution, 02 March 2016 (**S/RES/2270**): Condemned the fourth nuclear test and imposed further financial sanctions.
- United Nations Security Council Resolution, 05 August 2017 (**S/RES/2371**): Strongest sanctions ever imposed in response to a ballistic missile test. These measures target North Korea's principal exports, imposing a total ban on all exports of coal (North Korea's largest source of external revenue), iron, iron ore, lead, lead ore and seafood. These bans would prevent the DPRK from earning approximately \$1 billion per year of currency that would have been used to fund the nuclear program. North Korea earns about \$3 billion of revenue from exports per year. Additional sanctions target North Korea's other sources of revenue, including arms smuggling and joint ventures with foreign companies

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

While numerous attempts to form disarmament deals with North Korea have been made, none of these efforts have led to much success. Bilateral agreements, such as the Joint Declaration of 1992 and the Agreed Framework of 1994 are among previous talks. In the majority of these agreements the DPRK has agreed to abandon their nuclear weapons programme in exchange for humanitarian or food aid and technology. Although they have been effective to some extent, agreements such as these have tended to quickly fall apart due to certain delays in delivery of aid. The DPRK still maintains its skepticism toward foreign countries and can easily declare formed agreements as void.

The United States, Russian Federation, PRC, Japan, and ROK have engaged in the Six-Party Talks with North Korea to reach negotiations in regards to the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. In 2005, North Korea agreed to a landmark deal to stop all nuclear weapons developments in exchange for economic aid and political concessions. The DPRK destroyed the cooling tower at Yongbyon as part of the deal in 2008. Unfortunately, the deal proved to be difficult and talks were delayed in 2009. The US never believed Pyongyang was fully disclosing all of its nuclear facilities - a suspicion bolstered when North Korea unveiled a uranium enrichment facility at Yongbyon, purportedly for electricity generation, to US scientist Siegfried Hecker in 2010.

In 2012, North Korea announced it would suspend its program and all missile tests in exchange for food aid from the United States. However, this deal never came to form when Pyongyang tried to launch a rocket in April of that year. In March 2013, after new UN sanctions over the DPRK's third nuclear test, Pyongyang vowed to restart all previously closed facilities at the Yongbyon. By 2015, normal operations there have resumed. In 2017, the UN agreed to new sanctions in response to the internationally condemned nuclear tests. In August, the United States President Donald Trump threatened North Korea with "fire and fury," should the country not abandon its threats against the US.

The rhetoric from Washington, however, only prompted Pyongyang to develop a strike plan to hit the US territory of Guam.

## Possible Solutions

The North Korea's issues have been challenging for all involved member states. North Korean allies should continue working on negotiations and multilateral talks with other nations. The intervention of North Korean allies will work toward securing the DPRK's commitment to cooperate in the discussed issue. Attempts to alleviate the situation could be further developed. In the past, diplomatic dialogue with the DPRK has managed to temporarily halt their nuclear program. The DPRK has stated that its nuclear program is dedicated as a source of energy, ensuring the safety of its citizens and the sovereignty of the states from global threats. It is not certain, however, whether North Korea would follow agreements, as in the past decades, the DPRK has largely abandoned them.

China has the greatest amount of influence over North Korea economically. As an essential ally of the DPRK, China has the potential to place the most pressure on North Korea to no longer continue its nuclear efforts. The main reason the US's economic sanctions have been largely ineffective was due to China's funding through back channels. Member nations, particularly the P5 nations, can pressure China into taking measures in response to North Korea's violations. For example, the United States has engaged with China diplomatically, promising to penalize any Chinese banks that conduct business with the DPRK. This particular tactic has been used for creating the Iran deal, which has been used for denuclearization.

Any punitive measures on North Korea, especially sanctions, should be carefully introduced. The United Nations should be responsible for negotiations with North Korea's main allies to avoid provocations. Harsher and harsher sanctions have been imposed by the Security Council on the DPRK's access to nuclear technology. However, the country has still managed to conduct nuclear tests, meaning that the sanctions have not been effective in completely halting the program yet. Although more sanctions on the DPRK could further hinder the development of more weapons, problems still remain. It is very difficult to determine whether all countries abide by the sanctions; it is possible that the DPRK still receives knowledge and technology that should have been blocked by the sanctions. Also, the sanctions could incriminate and isolate North Korea in the eyes of the global community, thereby leading to discrimination and negative impact on the living standards of everyday North Korean citizens. Regarding socioeconomic matters, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important role for providing social aid for the citizens. These efforts can be continued and improved according to the betterment of North Korean refugees who escaped from their country.

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