

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The Situation in the Korean peninsula

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Position: Chair of Security Council

Introduction



Location of the Korean Peninsula

The situation in the Korean peninsula has been a hotspot for almost sixty years, since the partitioning of the two Koreas into North and South, with different polarised political systems. It is attracting lots of attention to the international community because of North Korea's powerful nuclear weapon holds, which holds a serious threat to stability, security, and peace in North-East Asia and the world. The division between the North and South has been a major issue impacting the Asia Pacific region, as well as the global political stage.

Despite the efforts of many countries in Asia to relieve political tensions, the pressure is still high and countries seem to lack trust on each other. The situation is getting into a *deadlock* as time passes, due to North Korea's capricious actions and dishonesty. Consequently, it is urgent for the United Nations to quickly solve this problem before the situation goes out of hands.



The Korean Peninsula

Key Terms

Peninsula

A portion of land nearly surrounded by water and connected with a larger body by an isthmus; a long piece of land that sticks out from a larger area of land into the sea or into a lake.

Capitalism

An economic, political, and social system in which successful organisations and individuals privately own and control property, business, and industry, rather than the state for equal contribution and use (e.g. the USA, UK, and South Korea). This directs them towards making the greatest possible profits

and growth. Economic markets are free, and the people can influence governmental decisions and policies through democratic elections.

Communism

The belief/system in a society without different social classes in which the whole participating group or community own and control the methods of production, where everyone works as much as they can and receives what they need, which in this context by the State (e.g. China and North Korea). Each person contributes and receives according to their contribution, ability, and needs.

38th parallel

The 38th parallel is a border between North Korea and South Korea, dividing them into roughly equal portions. It is in the circle of latitude of 38 degrees north of the Earth's equatorial plane.

Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)

The Korean Demilitarised Zone (shortly referred as the DMZ) is a 250-kilometre (160-mile) long, 4-kilometre (2.5-mile) wide, highly militarised stretch of land at the border running across the Korean Peninsula. A demilitarised zone, specifically, is an area in which treaties or agreements between nations, military powers or contending groups forbid military installations, activities, or personnel.



The Korean peninsula first divided along the 38th parallel, later along the demarcation line

Six-Party Talks

The Six-Party Talks are a programme, consisting of negotiations among China, the United States of America, North and South Korea, Japan and Russia to find a peaceful resolution to the security concerns as a result of the North Korean nuclear weapons programme.

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is an internationally recognised UN treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to achieve nuclear disarmament and the oversight of nuclear technology.

History

Japanese colonial rule

In 1910, Japan annexed Korea by the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty (this would be confirmed in 1965 to be “null and void,” whereby it was declared illegal, for the Emperor of Korea had not signed the treaty, and it violated the international convention on external pressures regarding treaties). In the first decade, Japan sought to repress Korean traditions and culture, i.e., killing the Korean identity, to implement Japanese culture instead, primarily for the Japanese benefit. They introduced European-styled transport and communication networks (which was mostly destroyed later in the Korean War). The banking system was consolidated, and the Korean currency was abolished. The Japanese had removed the Joseon (last dynasty of Korea) hierarchy, destroyed the Gyeongbokgung Palace, and replaced it with a new government office building.



Map of Korea in the Japanese Empire

When the Emperor of Korea, Gojong died in January 1919 with rumours of poisoning, independence rallies against the Japanese sparked on 1 March 1919 (often referred to as the March 1st Movement). An estimated 2 million people took part in peaceful, pro-liberation rallies, but was faced by Japanese soldiers and police who suppressed them by force, where they killed about 7,000 innocent people during the campaign. In the aftermath of this movement, the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea was established in Shanghai, China. It worked for liberation and resistance against Japanese control.

As the uprisings against Japan continued, this led to Japan’s strengthening of their military rule in 1931. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 and World War II, Japan strived to destroy Korea as a nation. They regarded Korean culture itself as illegal, banned the Korean language, and forced Koreans to adopt Japanese names. The Japanese even made it compulsory for Koreans to worship at Japanese Shinto shrines, and during the annexation as a whole, countless cultural artefacts were destroyed or taken to Japan. Even the school curriculum was radically modified to eliminate teaching in the Korean language and history.

In World War II, tens of thousands of Korean men were forced into Japan’s military to support the Japanese war effort. Around 200,000 young girls and women were forced into sexual slavery for Japanese soldiers, euphemised as “comfort women.”

The imperial Japanese rule over Korea ended in 1945, when U.S. and Soviet forces captured the peninsula.

Division of Korea and the Korean War

On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces in WWII. This immediately led to the division of the Korean peninsula, as a result of the Cold War powers' intervention, whereby the southern half of the peninsula was managed by the United States, and the other half was taken over by the Soviet Union. This was implemented on the 38th parallel, and initial hopes for a unified and independent Korea failed, since the United States and the Soviet Union occupied the peninsula with the Koreans, establishing them into two separate nations, with polarised ideologies and systems—capitalism and communism. Both Korea's declared themselves as the legitimate government of the Korean peninsula.

On August 15th, 1948, exactly three years after the liberation of Korea, Syngman Rhee, an ally of the United States, determined to keep Communism from spreading, became the first president of the Republic of Korea. Soon after, on September 9th, 1948, Kim Il-sung, was proclaimed the Supreme Leader, establishing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, gaining the favour of the Soviets. It was at that moment, when South and North Korea became two completely different countries.



The Korean War

At dawn on Sunday, June 25th, 1950, after two years of conflict and tension, North Korea launched an attack across the 38th parallel to invade South Korea, resulting in the outbreak of war. Two days later, the United Nations, led by the United States, sent a military mission to push back the North. 21 countries of the United Nations eventually contributed to the UN force, with the United States providing 88% of the UN's military personnel. The war ended on July 27th, 1953, when an armistice was signed. The agreement created the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) to separate North and South Korea, by the 38th parallel. However, no peace treaty was signed, so technically, the two Korea's are still at war, and military engagements can happen at any time, even now. The UN still has a presence in the DMZ, as well as the United States with several thousand troops to keep watch.

After the war, South Korea, was led by various military dictators for decades, eventually becoming a democracy, and is now one of Asia's most affluent countries with one of the largest economies in the world. North Korea remains as one of the poorest countries on Earth, and slipped into totalitarianism and poverty. As one of the few countries still under communist rule, the totalitarian state also stands accused of systematic human rights.

Key Players

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

North Korea, officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (abbreviated DPRK), has been ruled by a communist totalitarian military dictatorship (“the Kim Dynasty”) since its foundation and is one of the most isolated countries in the world. The regime’s unpredictable actions and anti-American anti-west stance have made cooperation more difficult. The North Korean government proclaims that they have nuclear weapons fully capable of reaching the US. North Korea remains one of the countries still most in need of international assistance. Famines in North Korea are frequent, as are smaller food shortages. While the international community offers aid to North Korea, the amount it gets from sources other than the UN's World Food Programme often depends on how well it cooperates with demands to halt its missile tests and other actions that raise tensions in East Asia. Occasionally, North Korea does not cooperate, making it hard for the civilians who need this aid to survive.

Republic of Korea (ROK)

South Korea, officially the Republic of Korea (abbreviated ROK), is the other state that occupies the southern part of the Korean Peninsula. Unlike North Korea, South Korea possesses strong ties to the US and to the Western world (South Korea was occupied by the United States from 1945-1948). Since its foundation, South Korea has seen rapid industrial development, advanced military and civilian infrastructure and extensive social programmes. South Korea’s pro-US and pro-west stance against North Korea’s anti-western sentiment has created tension and frequent disagreements.

United States of America (USA)

The United States of America (USA) is one of the most influential powers in the region. The US has been a key ally of South Korea and is a key “enemy” of the North, predominantly for the reason that the US helped establish the modern state of South Korea, and fought on South Korea’s side in the Korean War. The US has been instrumental in the forming and the development of South Korea and the Korean Peninsula as a whole. The US still maintains a strong military presence in South Korea.

People's Republic of China (PRC)

The People’s Republic of China is another dominant force in the region that shares a border with North Korea. Much alike the United States, China has been a key state and ally in the development of the Korean Peninsula, ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. China’s longstanding support for North Korea regarding finance and military infrastructure has defined the current strength and threat North Korea possesses. China also has diplomatic and positive relations with South Korea at the same time.

Russian Federation

Russia, also officially known as the Russian Federation, can be considered to have close ties to North Korea and can be regarded as a supporter. Though the two were close allies during the Cold War, their relations have deteriorated since the fall of the Soviet Union and due to North Korea's recent nuclear actions. Russia pursues a policy that supports the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and supports peace and stability.

Japan

Japan has had different relations with both Koreas throughout the years. Japan and North Korea have not established official diplomatic relations, and the relation between the two countries is hostile. North Korea has gone to the points of abducting Japanese citizens and firing test missiles near Japanese waters. Japanese-South Korean relations have had turns throughout history due to the acts committed by the Japanese occupying forces during the colonial era and the Second World War. The two countries are close neighbours, sharing strategic interests, however, the relationship has greatly deteriorated due to many disputes. Japan has a policy that supports denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula.

Past Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The Korean conflict is regarded as the longest ongoing conflict in history, and Korea is the only remaining divided country in the world. Also, as mentioned above, although the Korean War was ended by the Korean Armistice Agreement, but the two Koreas have not signed a peace treaty, and technically, the Democratic People's Republic Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have been at war for 68 years!



North and South Korea reach agreement to ease tensions

Due to the polarising policies and ideologies of the two Koreas, there have not been any concrete steps towards resolutions. So far, the major agreements signed by both Koreas alongside third-parties are only the Safeguard Agreements with South Korea to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, the Agreed Framework agreement with the United States to freeze and disassemble the North Korean nuclear program, The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Korean Armistice Agreement, all of which have collapsed and

become unsuccessful due to the withdrawal of North Korea. Constant political, military and diplomatic disagreements have made it very difficult for any agreement to last, or to be effective.

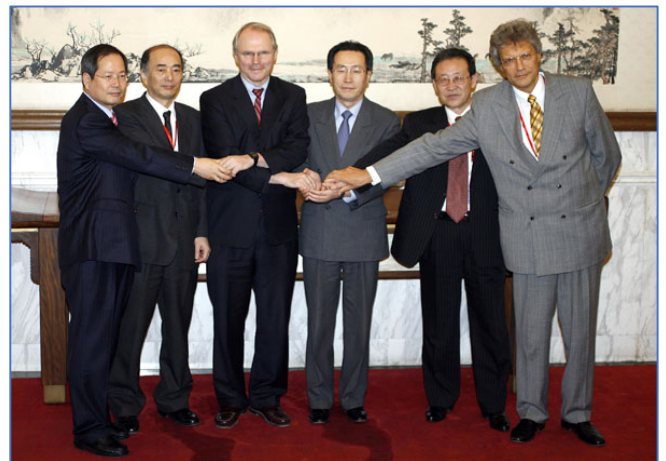


North Korean military parade

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is a crucial agreement to take into account when attempting to resolve this issue. It was drafted in 1968 and represented a landmark agreement on halting the spread of nuclear weapons. Under the NPT, states holding nuclear weapons would agree to limit its number of weapons and not spread the technology to other states. Those without nuclear weapons would agree not to pursue them, in exchange for

the right to develop nuclear energy for civilian purposes. North Korea first signed the NPT in 1985, but declared withdrawal from the agreement in 2003. Of the countries that once signed and ratified the treaty, only North Korea has withdrawn. In doing so, North Korea has also rejected International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) inspections of its nuclear facilities. The relationship between the DPRK and the IAEA has varied wildly over the years with inspectors currently invited to enter the country.

Furthermore, starting in 2003, there have been a series of negotiations known as the Six-Party Talks. North Korea, South Korea, the United States, Russia, China, and Japan have all met together to discuss ways that North Korea can be convinced to give up its nuclear programme. Some breakthroughs have occurred, however, these deals have rarely been completely followed through, leading to setbacks. Talks have stopped since 2009, due to the United States and North Korea disagreeing on conditions that need to be met to restart negotiations.



Six-party talks in 2006

The United States and North Korea have agreed to several smaller deals outside of the Six-Party Talks.

On February 29th, 2012, the US and DPRK came to an agreement called the Leap Day agreement on a way for the US to send food aid into North Korea again. In exchange for this food aid, the DPRK promised to stop enriching uranium, invite in IAEA inspectors, and halt its nuclear and long-range missile testing. Nevertheless, this agreement too, was ended after a long-range rocket launch in April.

In order for attempts to be successful, the two Korean nations, along with their allies, must come to agreements of mutual grounds, end the current status of the war and establish lasting, strong, and diplomatic bonds.

UN Involvement



U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley addresses a United Nations Security Council emergency meeting on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s nuclear test at the UN headquarters in New York

Both North Korea and South Korea hold full member status to the UN. North Korea has never held a seat in the UN Security Council, whereas South Korea has been elected twice. After the United Nations Command's intervention in the Korean War, the UN has taken a position that offers amnesty and help. The United Nations has provided humanitarian aid and assistance to the DPRK and the DPRK has softened their resolve for the UN in return. The UN's relationship with North Korea has developed immensely, considering the

relationship between the two parties was heavily severed after the Korean War, and the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union left North Korea without a powerful ally, plunging the country into deep crisis. Without economic, agricultural or technical support North Korea suffered famines, various economic crises and mass poverty, all of which resulted in the deaths of millions of people. South Korea's relationship with the UN, on the other hand, can be regarded as more cooperative and more productive.

The UN Security Council has had the Situation in the Korea Peninsula on its agenda for over fifty years, and has adopted around resolutions concerning North and South Korea. Ever since North Korea began its nuclear weapons testing, the Security Council has issued several rounds of sanctions, including a weapons embargo and the banning the sale of weapons materials to and from the DPRK. Specifically, these sanctions target the ability of the DPRK to produce missiles and create new nuclear production facilities.

The United Nations possesses a critical role in solving the conflict in the Korean Peninsula and has a significant role in preventing various humanitarian crises from getting worse. Taking a stance that promotes peace and stability, the UN has played a mediator role and acted as a neutral party throughout the Cold War and the proxy war between the Koreas. As described above, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the crash of the North Korean economy and an immense famine, the UN lent a helping hand, proving an agricultural and economic relief to the Korean economy and the Korean people. The UN plays a crucial role in this conflict not only as a neutral mediator but also as reinforcement for the civilians caught up in this somewhat political conflict.



The 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon himself was a South Korean

Relevant Resolutions (UNSC)

S/RES/702 | 8 AUGUST 1991 This resolution recommended both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea for UN membership.

S/RES/825 | 11 MAY 1993 This resolution urged the DPRK to reconsider its withdrawal from the NPT and abide by its international obligations.

S/RES/1718 | 14 OCTOBER 2006 This resolution expressed grave concern over North Korea's first nuclear test (2006), imposed sanctions and set up the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee on North Korea.

S/RES/1874 | 12 JUNE 2009 This resolution expressed grave concern over North Korea's second nuclear test (2009) and extended the sanctions imposed on North Korea to include all arms and related material, financial transactions, technical training, advice, services or assistance, as well as manufacture and maintenance.

S/RES/2321 | 2 MARCH 2016 This resolution imposed sanctions, in response to North Korea's fourth nuclear test (January 2016), which including the inspection of cargo, prohibition of all weapons trade, and restrictions on N. Korean imports and expulsion of certain N. Korean diplomats.

S/RES/2375 | 11 SEPTEMBER 2017 This resolution strengthened its oil sanctions regime against North Korea, in response to its sixth nuclear test (2 September 2017) With a unanimous vote by the UNSC, the resolution reduces about 30% of oil provided to N. Korea by cutting off over 55% of refined petroleum products going to N. Korea.

Treaties and Events

Korean Armistice Agreement: July 27, 1953. Signed by North Korea and the United Nations Command. The agreement ceased all military activities, finalised the situation of POWs (Prisoners of War) and established the DMZ or the 38th parallel as the border between North and South Korea.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: July 1, 1968. Signed by 190 nations in total, including all P5 nations and South Korea. The treaty aims to stop the spread of nuclear weaponry and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament. North Korea has signed the treaty in 1985 but has withdrawn in 2003.

Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula: January 20, 1992. Signed by North and South Korea to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula. The treaty defined the peaceful purposes of nuclear

energy and explicitly states that the North and South shall not engage in any activities regarding nuclear armaments. North Korea has withdrawn from the agreement.

Agreed Framework: October 21, 1994. Signed by North Korea and the United States in which North Korea agreed to freeze its nuclear program in return for energy and supply aid from the United States. North Korea has withdrawn from the agreement.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
<i>August 29th, 1910</i>	The Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910 started the annexation of the Korean Empire by Imperial Japan.
<i>August 15th, 1945</i>	After World War II, Japan surrenders and its colonial rule ends.
<i>August 15th, 1948</i>	The Republic of Korea is proclaimed, with Syngman Rhee as the leader.
<i>September 9th, 1948</i>	DPRK is proclaimed, with Kim Il-sung as the leader.
<i>June 25th, 1950 – July 27th, 1953</i>	Korean War. Started by a North Korean invasion, it kills at least 2.5 million people. Armistice negotiations end Korean War.
<i>1950s</i>	South sustained by US military, economic and political support.
<i>1960s</i>	South Korea – Major programme of industrial development.
<i>1960s</i>	North Korea – Rapid industrial growth.
<i>December 12th, 1985</i>	North Korea joins the International Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
<i>September 17th, 1988</i>	South Korea hosts Summer Olympic games in Seoul.
<i>October 2nd, 1988</i>	
<i>March 12th, 1993</i>	North Korea threatens to quit Treaty after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) accuses it of violating the NPT and demands inspectors be given access to nuclear waste storage sites.
<i>June 13th – June 15th, 2000</i>	Landmark inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang between N. Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-il and S. Korean President Kim Dae-jung.
<i>January 10th, 2003</i>	North Korea withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, marking the beginning of a series of six-party talks.
<i>October 9th, 2006</i>	North Korea conducts its first nuclear weapons test at an underground facility. The UN imposes economic and commercial sanctions.
<i>December 17th, 2011</i>	Death of Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-un takes over on 28 th .
<i>February 12th, 2013</i>	North Korea stages its third nuclear test, said to be more powerful than the second nuclear test (2009), the UN approves fresh sanctions.

December 9 th , 2016	President Park Geun-Hye is impeached due to a political crisis.
May 9 th , 2017	The centre-left candidate Moon Jae-in is elected president.
September 3 rd , 2017	North Korea carries out its sixth nuclear test, claiming the device tested was a hydrogen bomb and the test was a "perfect success". The weapon is described as up to eight times stronger than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.



Images of an independence movement, the Korean War, and the Gwangju massacre (left to right)

Possible Solutions

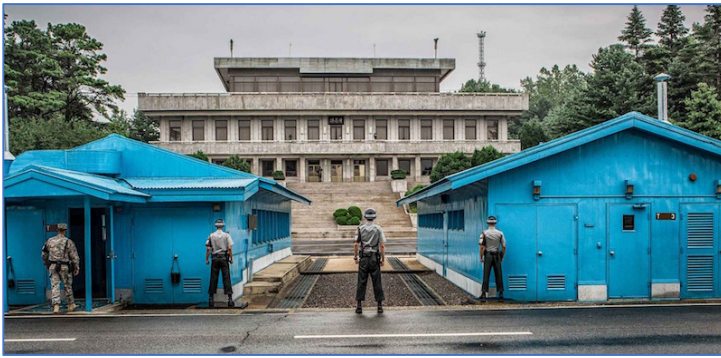
Peace treaties

The current conflict in the Korean Peninsula is one not born from the lack of resources or one of a poor decision, it is, unfortunately, a problem originated from different ideologies and political disagreements. There is a very limited amount of countries that can be regarded as allies or partners of North Korea. The current military skirmishes in the Korean Peninsula is a result of the standing distrust between the two bordering nations, and most importantly the lack of a peace treaty that technically puts the two Koreas in a state of war with each other. Even for prominent steps towards sustainable peace and security, a peace treaty is vital. The signing of a mutual peace treaty would certainly ease the tensions between the two polarizing states and would soften their agenda of constant defence and military action. The recent stance is taken towards the production of nuclear weapons by North Korea, and the North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un's extreme actions regarding the position of the South has furthermore increased tensions between the two states. North Korea's new aims to achieve full nuclear status, and the nuclear tests in the Pacific have been a topic of heavy criticism, controversy, and one that has spurred various crises. For peace, stability and possibly reunification between the two countries, it is first and foremost very important for both nations to have bilateral talks to agree on a mutual agenda and ease their strict military stances against each other.



Inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang in June, 2000 between North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-il and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung

Mutual agreements



The Joint Security Area (JSA) in the Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)

The current de facto cold war and an arms race between the two countries are fueling crisis after crisis and halting further talks of trade, peace, and stability. The harsh military rule of North Korea and its strict policies can be acknowledged as one of the primary sources of the tension and disagreements within the region. The one-party rule in North Korea accompanied by the totalitarian attitude of the North

Korean government has made all steps regarding cooperation more difficult and more unlikely. For the achievement of regional sustainability, cooperation and possible reunification; the two Koreas must first and foremost have mutual agreements and a strong bond of diplomacy.

Six-party talks

In the Security Council, several members of the Six-Party Talks hold permanent seats. The United States, China, and Russia all hold a veto power over the actions of the Council because of those permanent seats. That means that if any of them veto (disagree with a resolution), it does not pass. China has long favoured a much softer approach to North Korea than the United States. This policy prevented the passage of a strong resolution condemning North Korea's failed "rocket launch" in April 2012. Therefore, the Security Council must focus on recommending a way for the Six-Party Talks to be brought back to life.

Sanctions and aid

Both the United Nations and individual countries already heavily sanction North Korea. This means it is hard to find ways to make North Korea follow demands of the Security Council without also adding things North Korea wants, like new food aid. Many say that giving this aid to North Korea means the regime is able to back out of its side of agreements. Others say that having aid to civilians in North Korea tied to government cooperation with the international community's demands is cruel. The debate in the Security Council on how to handle North Korea swings between these two ideas.



North Korean ballistic missiles being launched

Additionally, a possible solution could be where North Korea will commit to giving up nuclear weapons. If not, the Security Council could address the alleged human rights violations taking place in North Korea and potentially call for Kim Jong-Un to be tried before the International Criminal Court.

The situation in North Korea not only affects the people who live there, but also the people of South Korea, Japan, China, and others in the region. A peaceful solution will be hard to come by, but needs to happen. Otherwise, the millions of people of North Korea will continue to struggle and suffer while the rest of the world watches North Korea's government for what it will do next.

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