

Forum: Security Council

Issue: De-escalation of nuclear armament in the DPRK

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Introduction

The situation in the Korean peninsula has been a pressing issue for seventy years, since the separation of the Korean Peninsula into two different countries with polarised political systems.

North Korea, officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has been conducting a series of nuclear tests since 2006, posing a serious threat to the stability, security, and peace in the international community. In recent years, tensions have escalated to historic levels, with North Korea's Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un and the United States President Donald Trump engaging in a confrontation of bellicose rhetoric and a war of words whilst the world watched on.

The division between North and South Korea has been a major issue impacting the Asia Pacific region, as well as the global political stage. With the North Korean nuclear threat as precarious as ever, the probabilities of an all-out war, or a nuclear attack is conceivable.

Despite the efforts of many countries to relieve political tensions such as talks and international sanctions, the pressure is still high and countries lack genuine trust on each other due to disagreements and violations of made agreements. The situation is getting into a deadlock as time passes and consequently, it is urgent for the United Nations (UN) to quickly solve this problem before the situation becomes uncontrollable. It is essential to take a calm, impartial, and historical perspective on this issue and study past diplomatic approaches both by individual nations and the Security Council to ensure international co-operation, peace, security, and order.



Figure 1: The Korean Peninsula

Definition of Key Terms

Agreed Framework

The Agreed Framework was an agreement between DPRK and the US which had the key elements of freezing and replacing North Korea's nuclear power program. The agreement was signed on October 21, 1994, but broke down in 2003 when North Korea opted out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Capitalism

The 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 United States, the United Kingdom, and South Korea). This directs them towards making the greatest possible profits and growth. Economic markets are free, and people can influence governmental decisions and policies through democratic elections.

Communism

The belief or 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 he or she 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.

Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)

The Korean Demilitarised Zone (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, which divides Korea into North and South Korea. 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 DMZ is not to be confused with the 38th parallel.

The 38th parallel was the circle of latitude which divided Korea prior to the Korean War, while the current demarcation line (within in DMZ) is considered the current border after the war.

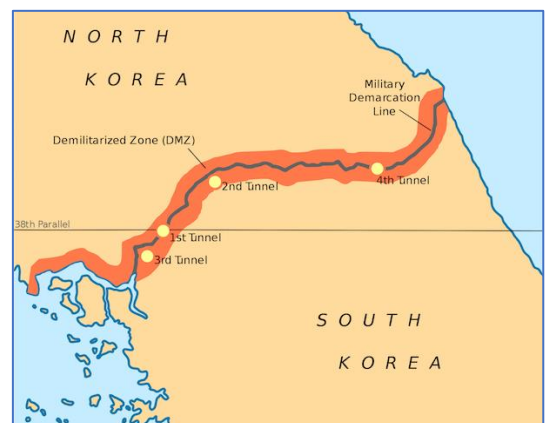


Figure 2: The Korean peninsula first divided along the 38th parallel, later along the DMZ.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The IAEA is an international organisation under the UN that advocates for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, such as nuclear weapons.

Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)

An intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) is a long-ranged guided ballistic missile, generally used for nuclear purposes, that is considered to be able to reach another continent, with a minimum range of 5,500 kilometres (3,400 miles).

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. The whole land mass surrounding North and South Korea is a peninsula.

Six-Party Talks

The Six-Party Talks (2003-2009) was 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. North Korea withdrew from the talks in 2009.

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.

General Overview

Historical background

Division and Korean War (1945-1953)

In 1910, Japan unlawfully and illegally annexed Korea by the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty, leading to imperial Japanese rule over Korea until 1945.

On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces in World War II. This immediately led to the division of the Korean peninsula as a result of the Cold War powers' intervention, when U.S.

and Soviet forces captured the peninsula. The southern half of the peninsula was occupied by the United States, and the northern half was occupied by the Soviet Union. It was through this trusteeship, that initial hopes for a free, unified and independent Korea were abandoned. The division was implemented on the 38th parallel. Both Koreas declared themselves as the legitimate government of the Korean peninsula (South Korea on August 15th, 1948, North Korea on September 9th, 1948). Korea was now two completely different countries, with polarised ideologies and systems—capitalism and communism.



Figure 3: The Korean War (1950—1953)

Then, at dawn on Sunday, June 25th, 1950, North Korea launched an attack across the 38th parallel to invade South Korea, resulting in the outbreak of war. South Korea was backed by the United States and the United Nations, and North Korea was backed by the Soviet Union and China. The war eventually ended on July 27th, 1953, when an armistice was signed. The agreement created the demarcation line. However, no peace treaty was signed, and technically, the

two Koreas are still at war, even now. The UN still has a presence in the DMZ, as well as the United States with several thousand troops to keep watch.

Modern Korea (1953—)

After the war, South Korea, with support and influence from the US, was led by various autocratic military dictators for decades, and eventually became a true democracy in 1987. South Korea transitioned to be one of Asia's most affluent and developed countries with one of the largest economies in the world. North Korea, on the other hand, established a communist government due to influence from China and the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, North Korea's economy had a steep decline, and became heavily reliant on international food aid as well as trade with China.

North Korea's nuclear programme can be traced back to the 1970s and 80s. For the next few decades after the Korean War, North Korea received help and aid from the (then) Soviet Union and China to develop a nuclear energy programme. The Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Centre was North Korea's major nuclear facility during this time (and was where the six nuclear weapon tests from 2006 to 2017 were carried out).

On 12 December 1985, North Korea ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but required safeguards agreements with the IAEA were not included in the ratification until 1992. In the following year, North Korea made an initial announcement of



Figure 4: North Korea's Kim Jong-un inspects a launching drill of the Hwasong-12 rocket in 2017.

withdrawal but suspended the withdrawal shortly thereafter, in 1994, when North Korea and the US signed the Agreed Framework. The framework stated international assistance, mainly from the US government would be provided to construct light-water nuclear reactors in exchange for North Korean disarmament, but implementation of the Agreed Framework was unsuccessful, fell apart in 2002 and was abandoned. In 2003, North Korea

announced withdrawal from the NPT once again, stating its reasons to be that the US was threatening its security. The withdrawal finally became effective, and North Korea became the first state ever to withdraw from the treaty. Consequently, emerged the Six-party talks (2003-2009).

Years later, in 2006, North Korea announced that it had successfully conducted its first nuclear test. This prompted the United Nations to impose a variety of sanctions against North Korea, and ever since, reinstate additional stricter and stronger sanctions, pressuring the country. But nevertheless, North Korea continued its conducting nuclear tests in 2009, 2013, (twice in) 2016, and in 2017. Recently, North Korea has announced that it has a “perfect” hydrogen bomb and an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that could reach the continental United States.

In 2018, North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-un has had a change of heart and suddenly shifted to offer talks with South Korea and the US on denuclearisation. There have been three inter-Korean summits in the past year (April, May and September 2018) between Kim Jong-un and South Korea's President, Moon Jae-in, and a summit meeting on 12 June, between Kim Jong-un and U.S. President Donald Trump. This was the first-ever meeting between leaders of the United States and North Korea.

Still, a deep-rooted scepticism still surrounds Kim's intentions, and there are claims that North Korea is still continuing to develop its nuclear weapons programme. Considered a “rogue state”, North Korea remains as one of the poorest countries on Earth. 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 (DPRK), has been ruled by a communist totalitarian 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 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. According to a 2017 UN report, around two out of five citizens are malnourished and more than 13 million North Koreans in need of economic assistance. 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.

When North Korea does not cooperate, it makes it hard for civilians who need this aid to survive.

North Korea’s attitude on the nuclear issue is rather inconstant, and statements oscillate between agreeing to “complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula” and calling the U.S. attitude toward talks “gangster-like” and “cancerous”.

Republic of Korea (ROK)



South Korea (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.

Many South Koreans want an improved North-South relationship, with nearly 78 per cent of South Koreans favouring the prospect of a peace agreement between the two Korean nations, according to a survey conducted by South Korean polling firm Realmeter. However, South Koreans still remain largely sceptical of the North Korean regime’s sincerity in their communications for disarmament.

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.

The US still maintains their strict policy against North Korea’s nuclear programme, with Donald Trump following a more aggressive approach against North Korea.

People’s Republic of China (PRC)



China (PRC) is another dominant force in the region that shares a border with North Korea and has been a key state and ally in the development of the North Korea, 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.

China has historically opposed harsh international sanctions on North Korea, and has little to deter, if not assist its neighbour’s nuclear ambitions. Even though China signals that it will toughen its stance toward North Korea, there is substantial scepticism that this will be the case.

Russian Federation



Russia, 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 because of economic interests in the region, which can only be seized through diplomatic 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 atrocious 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 denuclearisation in the Korean Peninsula and desires to have peace.

Past Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The Korean conflict is regarded as the longest ongoing conflict in history, and Korea is one of the only remaining divided countries in the world. Also, as mentioned above, although the Korean War was ended by the Korean Armistice Agreement, 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 70 years.



Figure 5: North and South Korea reach agreement to ease tensions, 2015

Due to the polarising policies and ideologies of the two Koreas, there have not been many 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 denuclearise 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.



Figure 6: A 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. North Korea has previously expelled all nuclear inspectors from the country, and has since been resuming its nuclear enrichment program in order to boost its nuclear deterrent. North Korea pulled out of the Six-party talks in 2009, and talks have since stopped, due to the United States and North Korea disagreeing on conditions that need to be met to restart negotiations.



Figure 7: 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 over mutual grounds, and establish lasting and strong diplomatic bonds.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

UN Involvement



Figure 8: U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley addresses a UN 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 Korean Peninsula on its agenda for over fifty years and has adopted over 20 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 Koreans. 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



Figure 9: The 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon himself was a South Korean

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.

Relevant Resolutions

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. On 17 September 1991, the General Assembly admitted both countries under Resolution 46/1.

S/RES/825 | 11 MAY 1993 This resolution urged the DPRK to reconsider its withdrawal from the NPT and abide by its international obligations. The DPRK did reconsider its withdrawal and suspended it, but eventually withdrew from the NPT in 2003.

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. A Panel of Experts was established to support the Committee.

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/2270 | 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 reduced about 30% of oil provided to N. Korea by cutting off over 55% of refined petroleum products going to N. Korea. It also bans overseas sales of North Korean textiles and further restricts the country's exports of its workers.

(The aforementioned resolutions are only the most important ones. For more resolutions, please visit the [UN homepage](#))

The sanctions have been consistently pressuring North Korea. These sanctions have been somewhat effective, and have been getting stronger and stronger throughout the years, but North Korea continued its nuclear tests. However, it must also be noted that economic sanctions could make life more difficult for many North Koreans who already struggle in poverty.

Treaties and Agreements

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>December 12th, 1985</i>	North Korea joins the International Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
<i>March 12th, 1993</i>	North Korea threatens to quit NPT after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) accuses it of violating the NPT
<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 NPT, 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>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.
<i>September 3rd, 2017</i>	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.
<i>April 27th, 2018</i>	Inter-Korean summit between North Korea's Kim Jong-un and South Korea's Moon Jae-in
<i>June 12th, 2018</i>	DPRK–USA summit between Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump

Possible Solutions

Peace treaties and mutual agreements

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. 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.



Figure 10: Inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang in June, 2000 between North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-il and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung

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



Figure 11: The Joint Security Area (JSA) in the Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)

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.

In the Security Council, several members of the Six-Party Talks hold permanent seats. The United States, China, and Russia all hold 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.

Sanctions and aid

North Korea is already heavily sanctioned, which means it is difficult 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.



Figure 12: North Korean ballistic missiles being launched, 2017



Figure 13: Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un shaking hands over the demarcation line, April 27, 2018

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. Over the course of decades, countries and the UN have taken both hard and soft approaches to solve the nuclear weapons programme issue in North Korea. The current problem is stemmed from numerous miscalculations and a lack of communication and caution is necessary to move towards de-escalation and sustainable peace.

The role of the UN is to re-conceptualise and reconcile the issue, reduce threat perceptions, and assist in opening talks and negotiations in order to achieve a reduction of tension and a long-term possibility of peace. When thinking of solutions to this problem, it is necessary to think on North Korea's perspective and seek to understand the cause of North Korea's retention of nuclear weapons.

A peaceful solution, the complete and independent reunification of Korea, will be hard to come by but must happen, one step at a time. With the efforts of many over the years, the Korean Peninsula has now entered a new phase of change. Yet, Inter-Korean relations must be improved, and trust should be premised on each other. Otherwise, the millions of people on the Korean Peninsula 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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