

Forum: Historical Security Council

Issue 2: The question of addressing the nuclear weapons program of North Korea

Chairs: Simran Belaramani & Cayetana Güel

The nuclear weapons program of North Korea

Videos

- [Who has nuclear weapons and how did they get them- BBC](#)
- [Documentary on how Kim Jong-un funds his regime of nuclear weapons](#)
- [North Korea won't give up nukes: a new nuclear crisis](#)
- [North Korea's Nuclear Family](#)

Articles

- [CONGRESS.GOV](#)
- [IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency](#)
- [SC Security Council \(main page\)](#)
- [SC Security Council \(resolutions\)](#)
- [Arms Control Association](#)

Key Terms

Nuclear Deterrence: the strategy of preventing attacks through the threat of nuclear retaliation.

Nuclear Arsenal: a country's total stockpile of nuclear weapons both explosive and delivery systems (e.g bombers, submarines, and missiles).

Denuclearization: the reduction or complete elimination of nuclear weapons and nuclear infrastructure.

DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The official name for North Korea and its abbreviation.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1985): An international treaty designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy. India, Israel, and Pakistan never signed it.

Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM): A long-range missile capable of delivering nuclear warheads across continents

Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center: North Korea's primary nuclear research and plutonium production facility.

Six-Party Talks (2003-2009): Multilateral negotiations involving North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Weapons of mass destruction (WMDs): Weapons capable of causing large-scale destruction, including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

Overview

The nuclear weapons programme of North Korea remains one of the most imperative challenges and biggest threats to international peace and security. Since the late 20th century the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has evolved rapidly when it comes to the development of nuclear weapons. North Korea started pursuing nuclear weapons since the start of the Cold War as they argue that they are vital for their survival and protection against foreign intervention. However, the international community views this programme as a violation of non-proliferation efforts.

This programme has some rich history behind it. Born in the 1950s, when North Korea's research first began with the Soviet's assistance, this programme still thrives today in the modern 21st century. In the early 1990s, concerns emerged regarding undeclared nuclear activities which raised international concerns and marked the beginning of North Korea's nuclear impact. In 1994 there was an Agreed Framework which attempted to freeze North Korea's nuclear programme. This worked temporarily as it put a stop to plutonium production and halted construction on its reactors. However it ultimately failed to permanently stop the nuclear programme. Following this the DPRK withdrew from the NPT in 2003 and they conducted their first nuclear test soon after in 2006 giving them the confidence to continue their testing in 2009, 2013, 2016, 2017. Their eventual development of the ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) led to an increased concern about global security matters.

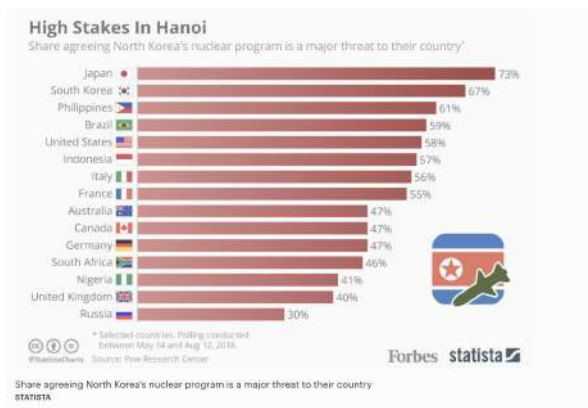
The main countries involved and affected by this global issue are North Korea, the United States, South Korea, China, Russia, Japan. In addition to these nations, international organisations such as the UNSC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are very involved in this matter as they are key in addressing and managing the issue.

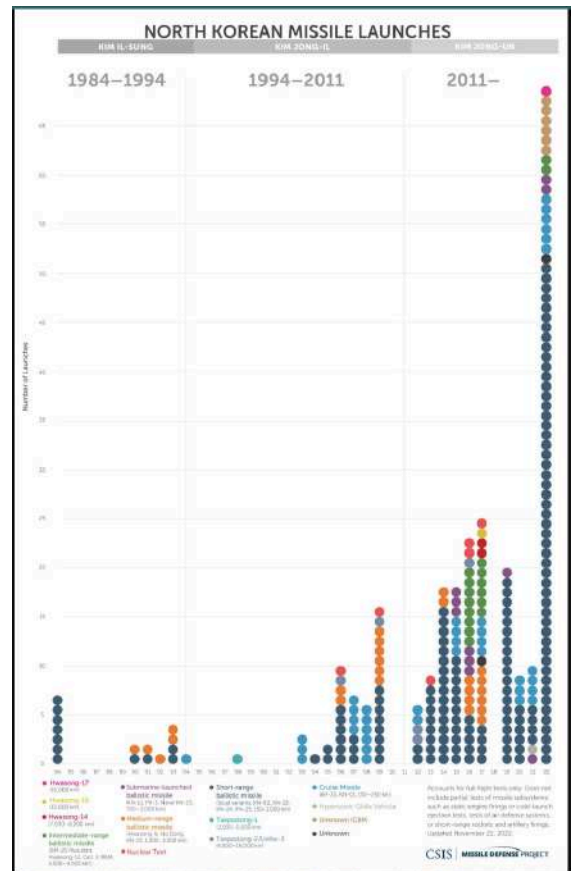
There are various concerns regarding this topic such as the risk of a nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula which possesses a threat to both South Korea and Japan, the potential ability to strike the United States with ICBMs, the possibility of nuclear technology proliferation (which undermines the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty) and a regional arms race concerns.

Previously, solutions trying to reduce the lurking danger and catastrophic threat of a major Nuclear war have been put in place. Examples of this include UNSC sanctions, the agreed Framework, the Six-Party talks, and diplomatic negotiations between North Korea and other member states.

Currently, North Korea continues to expand its nuclear arsenal with regular missile testing mostly in the sea. Various negotiations remain stalled and the UN sanctions remain in force. However, despite this, there are still many tensions between DPRK and the United States and its allies.

Statistics & Infographics





SOUTH KOREA SHOULD ALSO POSSESS NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Response	Percentage
Agree	66.8%
Disagree	31.8%
Other/No response	1.4%

US ATTITUDE IN THE EVENT OF A MILITARY CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAS

Response	Percentage
Support South Korea without conditions	38.7%
Judging whether to intervene based on its interests	59.6%
No intervention for fear of burden	4.1%
Other/No response	5.6%

Nuclear Weapons

- North Korea conducted its first nuclear test in 2006.
- The DPRK has conducted six confirmed nuclear tests (2006, 2009, 2013, twice in 2016, and 2017).
- Experts estimate that North Korea possesses approximately 50 nuclear warheads, with the capacity to produce more.

Missile Programme

- North Korea has launched hundreds of ballistic missiles since the beginning of its weapons programme.
- 2017 marked North Korea's most significant year of missile testing, including tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).
- North Korean ICBMs are believed to have the potential range to reach parts of the United States.

International Response

- Since 2006, the United Nations Security Council has adopted multiple sanctions resolutions targeting North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes.
- The Six-Party Talks involved six nations: North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Regional Security

- South Korea and Japan, home to over 175 million people combined, remain within range of North Korean missile systems.
- The Korean Peninsula remains one of the most heavily militarized regions in the world.

Timeline

1950's	Beginning of North Korea's nuclear research efforts.
1985	North Korea joins the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
1994	Signing of the Agreed Framework
2003	North Korea withdraws from the NPT
2006	First nuclear weapons test conducted
2009	Second nuclear test expansion of UN sanctions
2013	Third nuclear test
2016	Fourth and fifth nuclear tests
2017	Sixth and most powerful nuclear test; advancement of ICBM programme
2018	Singapore Summit between North Korea and the United States
2019	Hanoi Summit ends without agreement
Present day	Continued

Major Parties

North Korea – the primary actor in this issue and has developed a significant nuclear weapons programme over several decades. The DPRK argues that its nuclear arsenal is necessary for national security and regime survival. It has repeatedly stated that nuclear deterrence is essential to protect the country from foreign intervention.

The United States – North Korea's main opponent regarding the nuclear programme. Washington refuses to accept North Korea as a nuclear-armed state, viewing the regime's rapidly expanding weapons programme as a threat to international security. The United States provides military protection to both South Korea and Japan and sees North Korea as a threat to its allies and global stability.

South Korea – the country most directly affected by North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, as it shares a border with the DPRK. South Korea is one of the main advocates for the denuclearization of North Korea, as it faces the most immediate threats and potential consequences resulting from the programme.

China – North Korea is one of China's most important trading partners, and China provides both economic and diplomatic support to the DPRK. China opposes nuclear proliferation and supports stability on the Korean Peninsula. Many consider China to be the most influential external actor due to its significant economic and political influence over North Korea.

Russia – a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and shares a border with North Korea. Russia opposes nuclear proliferation but generally supports diplomatic dialogue and negotiations rather than military action. As a major regional power, Russia plays an important role in discussions regarding peace, security, and denuclearization efforts on the Korean Peninsula.

Japan – a strong ally of the United States and lies within the range of North Korean missile tests. The Japanese government views North Korea's nuclear programme as a significant threat to national and regional security and strongly advocates for the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) – responsible for maintaining international peace and security. The UNSC has passed numerous resolutions and sanctions targeting North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The Council remains one of the primary international organisations involved in addressing the issue and promoting denuclearization.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) – responsible for promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. The IAEA has repeatedly expressed concerns regarding North Korea's nuclear activities and has called for greater transparency and international monitoring. The agency would likely play a key role in verifying any future denuclearization agreements.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions include reviving the six-party talks, based on the real-life negotiations from 2003 to 2009, by restarting negotiations involving North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia to create a forum for diplomacy. Another option is a phased denuclearization agreement, based on proposals from the Singapore and Hanoi Summits, in which North Korea dismantles its nuclear facilities step by step while the international community provides incentives after each stage, including the gradual lifting of sanctions and verification by international inspectors. In addition, sanctions could be strengthened, based on existing UN Security Council measures, by expanding restrictions on weapons trade, luxury goods, and financial transactions and increasing monitoring of sanctions evasion. At the same time, humanitarian assistance could remain separate from sanctions, following the existing UN approach, by ensuring that food and medical aid reach civilians, maintaining humanitarian exemptions, and working through UN agencies.

Committee Objective

The goal of the Historical Security Council at RCMUN is to find solutions and foster international cooperation regarding the question of authorising military intervention in Iraq over alleged Weapons of Mass Destruction. By examining the positions of all major parties, t and the broader implications for global security, the committee hopes to reach a resolution that addresses both the immediate crisis and the long-term integrity of the United Nations system. Keeping in mind the political, legal, and humanitarian dimensions of the conflict, delegates should strive for rigorous debate working towards collective action. In order to fulfil these goals, nations should agree on resolutions including such as: binding disarmament requirements, inspection frameworks, legal authorisation protocols, and clear consequences for non-compliance – all aimed at producing a viable and lawful response to the situation in Iraq.

Sources

Buchholz, Katharina. “Infographic: The Rise of North Korean Missile Tests.” *Statista*

Daily Data, Statista, 29 Aug. 2024,

[www.statista.com/chart/9172/north-korea-missile-tests-timeline/?srsltid=Afm](https://www.statista.com/chart/9172/north-korea-missile-tests-timeline/?srsltid=AfmBOoqeMuUG7zZjoF1q61XMY9O6ozPY92a44NZflaiS56PGKVOt6x2I)

[BOoqeMuUG7zZjoF1q61XMY9O6ozPY92a44NZflaiS56PGKVOt6x2I](https://www.statista.com/chart/9172/north-korea-missile-tests-timeline/?srsltid=AfmBOoqeMuUG7zZjoF1q61XMY9O6ozPY92a44NZflaiS56PGKVOt6x2I).

Kristensen, Hans, et al. "Status of World Nuclear Forces." *Federation of American Scientists*, 29 Mar. 2024, fas.org/initiative/status-world-nuclear-forces/.

McCarthy, Niall. "Where Global Concern about North Korea's Nuclear Program Is Highest [Infographic]." *Forbes*, 26 Feb. 2019, www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2019/02/26/where-global-concern-about-north-koreas-nuclear-program-is-highest-infographic/.

Missile Defense Project. "North Korean Missile Launches & Nuclear Tests: 1984-Present." *Missile Threat*, 20 Apr. 2017, missilethreat.csis.org/north-korea-missile-launches-1984-present/.

"North Korean Nuclear Weapons, 2024." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 29 Aug. 2024, thebulletin.org/premium/2024-07/north-korean-nuclear-weapons-2024/.

Rahn, Wesley. "North Korea Quietly Ramps up Its Nuclear Program." *Dw.com*, Deutsche Welle, 5 June 2026, www.dw.com/en/north-korea-quietly-ramps-up-its-nuclear-program/a-77438060. Accessed 16 June 2026.

Yang, Uk. "Is South Korea Going Nuclear? - 38 North: Informed Analysis of North Korea." *38 North*, 3 Feb. 2023, www.38north.org/2023/02/is-south-korea-going-nuclear/.