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SECURITY COUNCIL (SC)

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMITTEE

Under the *UN Charter*, the Security Council has the responsibility of keeping international peace. It is the most powerful body of the United Nations; while other committees can only make recommendations, the Security Council makes decisions that countries have to follow. The Security Council meets throughout the year to address the most serious security issues facing the UN and the world.

The Council is made up of 15 nations: five are permanent members and the remaining 10 seats rotate every two years among the nations in the UN. The five permanent members are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Each of these nations has “**veto power**,” which means that whenever any one of these countries votes “no” on a resolution, that resolution automatically fails. In order for a resolution to pass, all the permanent members must vote “yes.”

The Security Council may deal with international conflict in many ways. When fighting breaks out, the Council's first goal is usually to call for a **ceasefire**, or an end to violence. It may also send peacekeeping forces to protect citizens and ensure that any UN decisions are carried out. The Security Council can use more forceful measures too, such as economic sanctions, which prevent a country from receiving money or trade. In the most serious situations, the Security Council can order the use of military force.

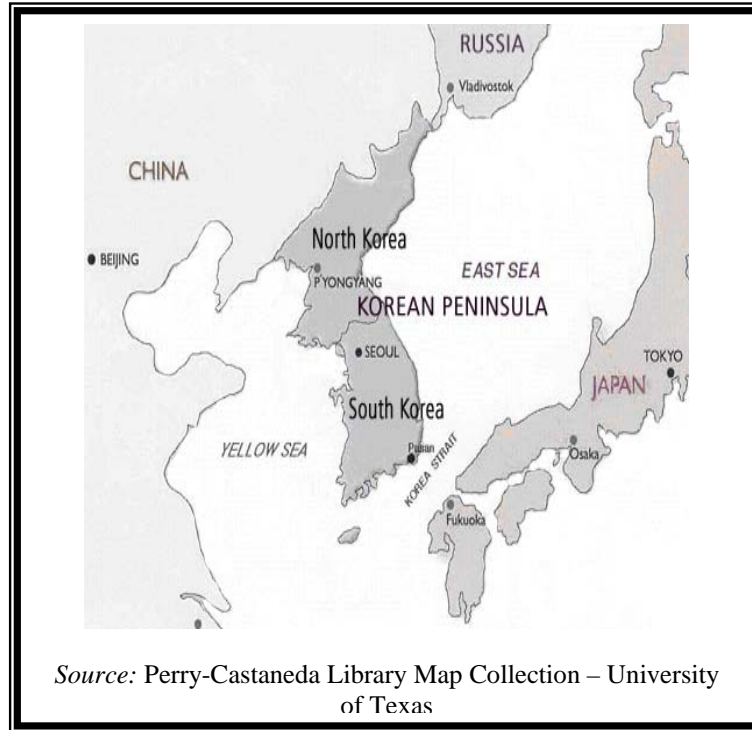
TOPIC: THE SITUATION IN NORTH KOREA

INTRODUCTION

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly called North Korea, is widely considered a threat to stability in Asia. It has been accused of manufacturing counterfeit money and commercial products for the **black market**. The government has openly admitted to selling missile technology in defiance of international law; and has been kidnapping citizens of other countries; and pursuing nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programs. In 2006, North Korea tested a small nuclear weapon, showing its status as a nuclear power, and straining its already bad diplomatic relationship with the rest of the world.



The international community believes that North Korea's nuclear weapons (and its black-market weapons programs and drug trafficking) are a danger to Asia and the rest of the world. North Korea insists the weapons are intended for defense only. How the international community responds to the government of North Korea will impact the security of the region and the world.



BACKGROUND

History of North Korea

At the end of World War II, the United Nations divided the Korean peninsula into two **trusteeships**, or governments organized and administered by other nations. The northern half of the peninsula became North Korea and was administered by the Soviet Union, now called the Russian Federation. (The southern half, South Korea, was administered by the United States.) North Korea heavily depended on the Soviet Union and China for economic and military support.

By the 1980s, Soviet-**installed** leader Kim Il-Sung closed the North Korean economy from even its closest allies, China and the Soviet Union. His son, Kim Jong-II, took power over the government in 1980. North Korea's industrial and agricultural production started failing, but the government kept spending huge sums of money on the military. According to many international experts, these decisions helped drive the nation into serious poverty. By the end of the 1990s, North Korea suffered from widespread famine. Though evidence is murky, observers estimate



two to three million North Koreans died,¹ and thousands escaped across the borders into China and South Korea.

“After decades of economic mismanagement and resource misallocation, the DPRK since the mid-1990s has relied heavily on international aid to feed its population while continuing to expend resources to maintain an army of one million. North Korea’s long-range missile development, as well as its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs and massive conventional armed forces are of major concern to the international community.”

Source: CIA World Factbook: North Korea,
www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html

Since 1990, North Korea has been very dependant on international aid for food, since its own economy, as well as its agriculture industry, is very weak. However, this has not stopped the government’s attempts to try and purchase nuclear technology from other countries. North Korea’s weapons programs have continued in earnest.

“Criminal Regime”

Tensions in the region often flare between North Korea’s government and neighboring nations, especially South Korea and Japan. Notably, the 1950 Korean War between North and South Korea never officially ended. Though both countries signed a ceasefire agreement in 1953, achieving relative peace, North Korea has occasionally conducted violent campaigns against the South Korean government. In 1983, for example, North Korean operatives bombed a South Korean delegation in Burma, killing four Cabinet ministers. In 1987, North Korea was connected to the bombing of a Korean Airlines commercial jet; 115 people were killed.²

In 2002, the North Korean government admitted to having kidnapped 13 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s in order to train spies. Though a few kidnap victims were allowed to return to Japan, North Korea claimed the others had died. Japan was skeptical and suspended food aid in protest.³ North Korea has not acknowledged other kidnappings, but evidence indicates many more citizens from neighboring nations have been kidnapped. For example, in 1978, a South Korean film director and actress were kidnapped to help Kim Jong-Il make movies.⁴

In the mid-1990s, Kim Jong-Il gained an international reputation for driving expensive cars and drinking expensive liquors. International observers were not sure how he could fund these habits considering the bad state of North Korea’s economy. The United States has since accused North Korea of running a massive counterfeiting program, producing extremely convincing US\$100 bills, Marlboro cigarettes and brand-name medical products. These illegal programs help sustain the power and lifestyles of North Korea’s government elite. After the nuclear tests that North Korea conducted in October 2006, the Security Council passed a resolution banning luxury items, as defined by member states, from being exported to North Korea.



The North Korean response to these allegations has been complete denial. “The North Koreans have denied that they are engaged in the distribution and manufacture of counterfeits, but the evidence is overwhelming that they are,” said Daniel Glasner, a deputy assistant secretary in the United States Treasury Department.⁵ US officials also allege that the North Korean government is responsible for the manufacture and trafficking of illegal narcotics, including methamphetamine.⁶

In spite of a decade of international attempts to negotiate with North Korea to prevent it from proliferating ballistic missiles, North Korea admitted in 1998 to selling missiles to countries considered unstable by the international community. Experts suspect buyers include Iran and Syria.⁷ Other weapons recipients include groups labeled as “terrorist,” such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, a rebel group in the Philippines.⁸ In 2002, United States President George W. Bush listed North Korea as a member of “the axis of evil,” a group of nations accused of supporting terrorist activities.

Many nations including the United States, label North Korea a “criminal regime” or a “terrorist state,” and refuse to maintain diplomatic relations with them. Other countries, such as China and Russia maintain diplomatic ties with the country. South Korea, considered most directly at risk from attack by North Korea, is also pursuing closer political ties with the country because of historical and cultural connections between their people.

CRITICAL THINKING

North Korea considers the United States, South Korea and Japan to be imminent threats to its safety. When its illegal missile exports were publicized, the North Korean government offered to end its missile export program in exchange for food, nuclear energy assistance, and the promise of peace from the United States. From North Korea’s perspective, why might these other nations be a threat? From the United States’, South Korea’s and Japan’s perspective, how are North Korea’s actions manipulative?

Nuclear Threat

During the 1980s, the government of North Korea denied that it was developing nuclear weapons. It was a party to the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** (NPT), an agreement under which countries promised not to make or buy nuclear weapons.

Although officials denied they were developing nuclear weapons, North Korea did have nuclear power plants. Under the NPT, countries with nuclear power plants must accept **safeguards** agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a United Nations agency. These agreements allow IAEA personnel to inspect countries’ nuclear power plants for safety and ensure they are not developing nuclear weapons. North Korea allowed IAEA inspectors into the country in 1992, but would not allow them access to certain sites. Although IAEA protested, the government would not cooperate with further investigations.



The United States persuaded the North Korean government not to develop nuclear weapons by offering **incentives**, or promises of economic and humanitarian aid. The US agreed to provide oil supplies and to help North Korea build more powerful, but safer nuclear power plants. South Korea and Japan also agreed to provide energy resources. In return, the government of North Korea agreed not to develop nuclear weapons and to let IAEA inspectors investigate. These promises became known as the **1994 Agreed Framework**. To carry out the Agreed Framework, the US, South Korea and Japan created the **Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization** (KEDO).⁹ This organization arranged the transport of food aid and oil, implemented energy projects in North Korea, and helped maintain peace and stability in the region. In the years following the creation of the Agreed Framework, North Korea received food and oil through KEDO, but the government complained that KEDO was purposefully delaying the construction of nuclear power plants.

By 2002, the Agreed Framework started to break down. North Korea revealed it was running a uranium-enrichment program, needed for the development of nuclear weapons. KEDO responded by stopping heavy-oil shipments. North Korea then announced that it would reopen nuclear facilities that it had closed under the Agreed Framework.¹⁰

North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 2003, making it the first (and, so far, only) signatory to ever withdraw from the historic treaty. In response, the US began fortifying armed force installations and bases near North in South Korea and elsewhere in the region. North Korea saw this move as a direct threat, and warned it would retaliate if attacked. By mid-2003, the Agreed Framework had broken down completely.

CRITICAL THINKING

- Countries and international organizations have used **incentives** and **sanctions** to persuade North Korea to resist nuclear weapons programs. How has North Korea responded to these incentives and sanctions? What other methods can the international community employ to discourage North Korea's weapons programs?
- How do incentives and sanctions, especially food aid and oil supplies, affect the people of North Korea?

PAST INTERNATIONAL ACTION

In 2003, the IAEA adopted several resolutions calling for North Korea to comply with international standards. When North Korea continued to ignore those resolutions, IAEA referred the situation to the UN Security Council.

The North Korean government demanded to negotiate directly with the United States government, which the US refused. Instead, the governments of South Korea, North Korea and the United States, along with Russia, China and Japan, met several times to discuss an end to North Korea's nuclear program. These meetings—known as the **Six Party Talks**—were



repeated over three years without resolution, primarily because of disagreements between the United States and North Korean governments.

In July of 2005, North Korea tested seven missiles over the Sea of Japan. One long-range missile, the Taepodong-2, is believed to be capable of reaching the United States (although this missile failed during testing). The United States, Japan, South Korea and Australia immediately condemned the test as an **act of provocation** and South Korea suspended food aid in protest.¹¹ The Security Council unanimously passed *Resolution 1695* condemning the tests and demanding that North Korea suspend all missile launches.¹²

In October of 2005, North Korea announced it had conducted successful underground nuclear tests. Russian and US officials determined the blast to be less than 1 kiloton, a relatively small but still very dangerous nuclear detonation.¹³ North Korea's news agency announced the test was "a great leap forward in the building of a great prosperous, powerful socialist nation." North Korea is now the ninth nation known to possess nuclear weapons.¹⁴

"The US said intelligence had detected a seismic event at a suspected test site and Russia said it was '100% certain' a nuclear test had occurred. The US said the reported test was a 'provocative act,' while China denounced it as 'brazen.' In an unusually strong statement against its ally, China expressed its 'resolute opposition' to the claimed test and said it 'defied the universal opposition of international society.' Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called the claimed test 'unpardonable' and said the region was 'entering a new, dangerous nuclear age.' ...President Roh [of South Korea] said the claimed test had created a 'severe situation' that threatened stability in the region. He said Seoul would react 'sternly and calmly.' The South Korean military—which has been put on a heightened state of alert—had the capability to cope with any North Korean provocation, he said. Seoul also suspended a scheduled aid shipment of concrete to North Korea, the state news agency reported."

Source: BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6032525.stm>

The international community reacted with shock and outrage. The Security Council again convened and unanimously issued a resolution condemning North Korea's actions. Resolution 1718 also imposed **sanctions** on North Korea, preventing the country from buying, selling or receiving a range of goods from other nations, and imposing an **asset freeze** and travel ban on officials related to the nuclear weapons program.¹⁵

During the Security Council proceedings, a North Korean representative said his country "totally rejected" the resolution. He called the Council "gangster-like" for condemning his nation's nuclear program while "neglecting the nuclear threat posed by the United States against his country." He insisted the nuclear program is vital for North Korea's self-defense.¹⁶ Other experts, however, argue that the pursuit of a nuclear program is deliberately provocative towards South Korea or designed to achieve global economic leverage.



In July 2007, North Korea opened its borders for IAEA inspectors. There, they worked on “verifying and monitoring the shutdown and sealing of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities [...] More recently, work has been proceeding on the disablement of some of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities under Six-Party arrangements without the Agency’s involvement,” said IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed El Baradei in a statement to the Board of Directors in 2007. In October, North Korea and South Korea signed an 8-point peace agreement on issues of permanent peace, economic cooperation and renewed travel between the countries.. This was the second step of what was outlined in the Six-Party Talks in February 2007, and was an indication of thawing of relations between North Korea and the countries involved in the Six Party Talks.

On October 11, 2008, the US removed North Korea from its list of states that sponsor terrorism. In January 2009, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, visited North Korea and offered to normalize economic ties if they agreed to abandon their nuclear program. Days later, however, North Korea confirmed that they were preparing to test the launch of a ballistic missile believed to be capable of reaching the United States, calling it a ‘scientific satellite’.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FORMULATING A RESOLUTION

China, Russia, and the United States, have stakes in peace and stability in the Asian region, and often have strong opinions on how the North Korean situation should be handled. In the past the USSR represented the rogue nuclear threat in Europe. However, now that Asia is “heating up” with several countries working on developing their own nuclear programs, it will be a challenge for the established nuclear members of Security Council to ensure that this situation is resolved peacefully.

Delegates should take a measured approach to handling the situation in North Korea. Look at previous patterns of behavior and the choices the North Korean government has made in the last ten years. Since they have had the same leader in power, Kim Jong-Il, since 1997, it is likely that North Korea’s official reaction to Security Council resolutions will align with previous responses.

Delegates should address the following issues in their resolution:

- How should North Korea be persuaded to end its nuclear program? What methods of persuasion should be used?
- Should food aid continue in North Korea? What can be done to help North Korea to become self-sustaining and encourage it to invest in its own legitimate economy and agriculture industry?
- Under what circumstances should force be used to resolve this conflict?



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What type of action regarding North Korea does your country support?
2. Does your country have a history of trade or economic relationships with North Korea? Does your country have cultural or historical ties to North Korea?
3. Has your country provided aid, or supported the provision of aid, to North Korea? Has your country issued sanctions against North Korea?
4. Has your country been affected by North Korea's missile export program or counterfeit program? How?



TERMS AND CONCEPTS

1994 Agreed Framework: a 1994 agreement between the US and North Korean governments in which North Korea would remain party to the NPT, would allow full IAEA inspections, and would replace its most dangerous nuclear power plants (capable of being used to create a nuclear weapon) with less dangerous light water reactors. The United States, in turn, would promise not to attack and would provide fuel shipments to North Korea. The agreement broke down in 2003 when North Korea withdrew from the NPT.

Asset freeze: preventing a person or organization or country from accessing possessions and money. Often, organizations and charities keep valuable assets—possessions and money—in banks. Authority figures may cause banks to prevent anyone from accessing those assets.

Black market: selling products illegally; not sold through official channels that is subject to laws and regulations.

Ceasefire: temporary stop to armed conflict, and usually a step before discussing a permanent peace treaty.

Incentives: promises of economic and humanitarian aid.

Installed: placed into a position, sometimes by an outside power. Political leaders may be “installed” by their constituents, but they may also be “installed” by foreign governments.

Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO): an organization composed of the United States, South Korea and Japan created in 1995 to implement the 1994 Agreed Framework.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): the United Nations *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (“Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty” or “NPT” for short), adopted in 1970. The NPT has three main points. First, the five countries with nuclear weapons in 1970—China, France, the Soviet Union (today the Russian Federation), the United Kingdom and the United States—would not give nuclear weapons or technology to other countries. Second, non-nuclear-weapons-possessing countries would not develop or obtain weapons. Third, all countries would discuss disarmament and create “a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

Safeguards: an activity that allows the IAEA to make sure that countries do not use nuclear technology to make weapons. Through safeguards, countries can make sure that others are following the rules. Safeguard activities can include inspections, video-camera monitoring and reviewing reports from countries.

Sanctions: an act of condemnation by one or more nations against another. Typically, sanctions take the form of a ban on trade, such as a ban on exporting weapons to the target country or importing products from that country.

Six Party Talks: a series of talks between North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China, Russia and the United States, held between 2003 and 2006, concerning North Korea’s nuclear weapons program.

Trusteeships: territories that are not stable enough to govern themselves, such as after non longer claimed as colonies or after war, are assigned to the UN Trusteeship Council, currently inactive, to become independent and democratic.

Veto power: ability of a permanent Security Council country (US, UK, France, China, or Russia) to reject a resolution so that it cannot be passed.



SOURCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

IAEA: North Korea www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaDprk

BBC: North Korea Nuclear Standoff Timeline <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/2604437.stm>

Global Security – North Korea www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/dprk

Guardian Unlimited –North Korean and Nuclear Weapons Timeline –
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- ¹² Security Council Resolution 1695 (2006), www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8778.doc.htm
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- ¹⁴ “North Korea claims nuclear test,” BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6032525.stm>
- ¹⁵ Security Council Resolution 1718 (2006), www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8853.doc.htm
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