

## **Topic Brief:**

### **Overview:**

It is the year 2021, and North Korea has recently suffered from a massive famine, triggering another round of talks to suspend its nuclear weapons programme in exchange for foreign aid. Participating in these negotiations are, in addition to North Korea: China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States. The original “six-party talks” in the 2000’s had led to a partial shutdown of nuclear facilities, but were discontinued in the light of various violations by the DPRK. All sides hope to achieve the goal of stability and peace in Northeast Asia.

### **Democratic People’s Republic of Korea:**

#### **History:**

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (hereafter referred to as DPRK or North Korea) was established in 1948 in the Soviet-backed half of the Korean Peninsula, which had been held by Japan until the end of the Second World War. Kim Il-Sung, the chairman of the Communist Party of North Korea and later its Workers’ Party, was appointed head of government. The North invaded its American-supported Southern neighbour in 1950, instigating a war that lasted until 1953. Following the armistice, the DPRK began to militarise and increasingly isolate itself from other nations, while maintaining close ties with China, the Soviet Union, and their allies.

The following decade brought a brief period of economic growth, as massive labour mobilisation and aid from other communist countries helped jump-start the country’s finances. However, relationships with China became strained after the death of Mao Zedong, and those with Russia deteriorated following the dissolution of the USSR. The lack of sufficient energy imports from its two neighbours led to an economic downturn lasting throughout the decade. The 1990’s also featured flooding – and later, drought – which induced a famine responsible for over 300,000 deaths. Within the country, this period is known as the “Arduous March”. After a request for international help in 1995, more than 5 million metric tons of food aid was delivered by the end of the century.

In 1994, Kim Il-Sung died due to complications from a stroke, leaving his son Kim Jong-Il to lead the DPRK. In this era, the government entered contentious nuclear talks with the United States; the Agreed

Framework of that year outlined a plan by which North Korean nuclear power plants would be replaced by proliferation-resistant reactors paid for largely by South Korea. However, after various perceived infringements of the terms by both the United States and the DPRK, the agreement broke down.

After North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003, the six-party talks began with the goal of denuclearisation of the peninsula. However, in 2006, the DPRK conducted its first underground nuclear test; this was followed by three more in 2009, 2013, and 2016. Further missile tests, as well as a semi-successful satellite launch in 2012, brought intense international criticism, even from its traditional allies in Russia and China.

In 2011, Kim Jong-Il died of a heart attack, and his youngest son Kim Jong-Un was declared leader. The following period brought heightened aggression from the DPRK, with external assessments implying an internal purge as Kim Jong-Un wrested control from his father's generation.

Interests:

#### Nuclear energy/weapons

The DPRK regards its nuclear weapons programme as a necessary defense mechanism against aggression from other nations.

In 1963, North Korea requested that the USSR aid in nuclear weapons development, and upon rejection asked the same of China in the following year. Both countries denied these requests, instead offering to aid in the construction of a nuclear energy programme. Subsequently, the DPRK built nuclear energy infrastructure with some foreign technology; in particular, it was reported that Pakistan was given missile designs in return for information regarding centrifuges.

Although the DPRK has intermittently pledged to disarm its nuclear arsenal and eliminate any production capabilities, it has every time failed to follow through, as exemplified by its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003. Various attempts at a resolution have involved replacing North Korea's current reactors with light water reactors, which are less susceptible to conversion to fissile material generators.

Much of the DPRK's nuclear production occurs at the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Centre, home to a 5 MWe experimental reactor as well as an undisclosed number of prototype light water reactors.

The four nuclear tests to date have all taken place in the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site, in the northeastern area of the country.

### Ballistic missiles

The DPRK's nuclear programme is complemented by its ballistic missiles technology. Initially, North Korea imported models from the Soviet Union and China. However, Kim Il-Sung determined that a domestic production mechanism must be created in the seemingly likely scenario that the Soviets or the Chinese withdraw their support. The first models made in the DPRK were based on Scud-B short-range missiles brought from Egypt in the late 1970s.

By 2000, North Korea had developed the Nodong missile, capable of hitting targets in the South, the western half of Japan, and parts of China and Russia. Further tests included missiles capable of hitting Southeast Asia and much of Alaska, albeit to varying degrees of success.

The DPRK also has had at least two successful satellite launches in 2012 and 2016, both on the Unha launch system. Many countries and international organisations, including NATO and the UN, condemned the act as a disguised missile test, banned under treaties. North Korea has vehemently denied these claims, stating that its satellites are purely for civilian and scientific purposes.

### Food aid

The northern half of the Korean Peninsula is considered by academics to be unsustainable in terms of agriculture; only around 20% of the mountainous region is arable land. This makes the country heavily dependent on imports for food, leaving it susceptible to natural disasters, as had happened in the late 1990s. Similarly to that previous famine, the current shortage crisis arose from heavy flooding due to the devastating effects of Typhoon Sora.

### US military presence

The DPRK has repeatedly called for the removal of US troops in the Korean peninsula, seeing them as the remnants of an imperial age. Furthermore, annual joint military exercises in the Yellow Sea between the United States and South Korea have always been a point of contention and their suspension a condition for any North Korean participation in talks.

### Korean reunification

North Korea does not recognise the Republic of Korea as a sovereign state; it instead claims territory over all of the peninsula and sees the Seoul government as an American puppet regime. The DPRK has explicitly named reunification of the two Koreas under the Juche ideology as an eventual goal.

### Republic of Korea:

#### History:

The Republic of Korea (hereafter referred to as ROK or South Korea) was established in 1948 in the US-backed half of the Korean Peninsula, which had been held by Japan until the end of the Second World War. Rhee Syngman, an American-educated independence activist, was elected leader of the Republic with strong backing from the occupying US military government. Rhee was strongly anti-Communist and, sensing the threat from the north, asked the United States to help build a modern military; however, not much progress had occurred by the time the DPRK invaded in June of 1950.

Following the end of fighting in 1953, the country saw a series of autocratic rule: after Rhee was forced to resign in 1960, General Park Chung-hee led a coup and ruled the country for almost two decades as a military dictatorship. Despite the lack of political freedom, this period saw great advances in infrastructure and the economy and marked the beginnings of the “Miracle on the Han River”. After Park’s assassination and another tumultuous coup accompanied by eight more years of martial rule, massive democratic protests led to an elected civilian government.

The successful Seoul Summer Olympics in 1988 was seen as a sort of coming-out stage for the country, whose growth continued and saw the appearance of dominant multinational corporations, such as Samsung and Hyundai. As both the raw GDP and the per capita income continued to grow, South Korea came to be recognised as a developed country, and accordingly joined the OECD in 1996 and hosted the G20 summit in 2010.

Although the ROK is universally regarded as the more democratic and free of the two Koreas, the country has had a long history of censorship and politics-driven persecution. Furthermore, greater civilian access to information has in turn led to more popular unrest and demonstrations.

Parliamentary politics is dominated by the centre-right Saenuri Party and the centrist Minjoo Party, with the more liberal People's Party as an influential minority.

#### Interests:

##### Anti-missile defense

In July 2016, American and South Korean officials announced that a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) unit would be deployed in Seongju County. This faced backlash from both the locals concerned about radiation and the Chinese, wary of an even greater American military presence in Northeast Asia. Also in response, North Korean state media once again threatened to wage war against the ROK, seeing the deployments as an act of aggression.

##### American military alliance

The Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea vows to preserve a "commitment to a free democracy and a market economy" while maintaining "a robust defense posture, backed by allied capabilities... The continuing commitment of extended deterrence, including the US nuclear umbrella, reinforces this assurance". The two countries partake in the Foal Eagle military exercises annually, often drawing ire from the DPRK.

##### Korean reunification

South Korea does not recognise the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a sovereign state; it instead claims territory over all of the peninsula and sees the Pyongyang government as illegitimate. The stated goal of the Ministry for Unification is to create a community for "peace, common prosperity, and happiness".

#### Other Parties:

##### United States:

The United States administered the southern half of the Korean Peninsula from the end of the Second World War up to the establishment of the ROK. It has remained a heavy investor and military partner since then, although there are many anti-American sentiments due to the belief that the United States was responsible for the division of Korea and its

subsequent losses. However, the two nations maintain very close ties and conduct annual military drills. There is a large American military presence in South Korea, including the Eighth Army and the Seventh Air Force.

The U.S. is a close military and economic ally of Japan. After the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States offered much capital and technological support in rebuilding the country, and the two have mutual defense treaties. However, those agreements have also been a source of controversy, with issues arising regarding true sovereignty and the behaviour of American troops towards the locals.

Sino-American relations are more complex. Today's two superpowers are each other's biggest trading partners, but they are also increasingly forming rivalries across the globe. Southeast Asia is looking to the United States for a resolution to the South China Sea crisis, and China's business ventures into the Arabian Peninsula and Africa have heightened tensions. In addition, China has continued to express concern over American military bases in Japan and South Korea, as well as its Pacific Fleet's presence in the East and South China Seas.

The United States also has a contentious relationship with Russia. Once its Cold War-era existential threat, Russia now presents itself as a nuisance along its border, including the semi-autonomous Crimean Republic and the State of Syria. The U.S. is seen as the centre of NATO, and is therefore considered by the Russians as a tyrannical, encroaching force.

#### People's Republic of China

Often called "North Korea's only ally", the PRC's military helped northern forces push UN troops back to the 38th parallel in the Korean War. However, the following decades and successions of leaders in both countries, as well as the DPRK's reluctance to heed China's warnings, has led to a slight distance between Beijing and Pyongyang. The PRC has consistently called for the de-escalation of tensions on the peninsula, and has a large trade relationship with South Korea.

China and Japan have been neighbours and enemies for centuries. While both remain on good business terms, nativist and nationalist rhetoric is powerful on both sides, and there are a handful of territorial disputes, most notably over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Other issues include Japanese war crimes of the 20th century and China's island-building campaign.

Linked by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China and Russia form a partnership with a common goal to fend off American encroachment onto the Asian continent. While having many properties in common, these two nations, who share one of the longest land borders in the world, remain at unease over the powerful central governments on both sides.

### **Procedure:**

This committee will function as a Joint Crisis Committee, meaning there will be no working papers. All legislation that your committee decides to enact must be conducted in the form of directives, which are much shorter and easier to pass than working papers. Directives can be authored by a single member or several members, but require one quarter of the committee to be either authors or signatories before it can be presented to the committee. It is suggested that directives address one issue at a time; as many directives may be in progress at any given time, a group of directives can be introduced by motion or at the discretion of the Chair. Once introduced, directives are then voted on and passed by simple majority. Directives cannot be amended. Directives that take direct use of another committee member's portfolio powers (e.g. naval movements, sending an envoy to the other committee) must have approval in writing from the concerned member in addition to the required signatories (e.g. approved and supported by the Admiral and Minister of Foreign Affairs respectively). The committee will function with normal parliamentary procedure provided that working papers have been replaced with directives. However, due to the nature of crisis committees, delegates can expect more unmoderated caucuses than in a General Assembly for work on foreign envoys, subcommittees and particularly complex sets of directives. In addition, the committee may be interrupted without warning with breaking news of a "crisis". These crises should factor into your debate, and be addressed as soon as possible. After a crisis, the messenger may be briefly questioned to the Chair's discretion, and then the caucus will resume until it expires.

### **Dress Code:**

Delegates with political or policy roles are expected to be dressed in Western business attire. Delegates with military roles may opt to wear an outfit based on the military code of their respective countries. Please keep general etiquette and professionalism in mind when selecting your wardrobe.

## **Conduct:**

All delegates are expected to express and represent their country's policy and ideology with enthusiasm and gusto. However, professional behaviour must be displayed over the course of this committee, and any comment deemed out of line by the chairs will be dealt with accordingly. Note that there may be inherent cultural differences between the delegations, as well as notions of what is fact and what is fiction. **It is crucial that what you believe to be the truth is according to your country's policy.**

## **Sources:**

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