

Forum: Security Council (SC)

Issue: The Question of the North Korean military threats

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Introduction

While North Korean nuclear and ballistic development and the combat against nuclear weapons has been existing for a long time, its drastic evolution and military tests has led to North Korean nuclear development being one of the most discussed topics of the last years. Many institutions have set the goal of denuclearizing North Korea as a main target. The United Nations Nuclear Department expressed their intentions to achieve nuclear freedom and to make DPRK rejoin the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Also, the UN Security Council emphasized on the sanctions that will be put on the North Korean government.

Despite the fact that DPRK has been developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles for a long time, the public's attention has been raised by the ballistic missile tests dating back to 9 September 2016 which were conducted in violation and flagrant disregard of the relevant Council resolutions. Ever since, North Korea has been on the radar of the public more and more. The recent missile launches that DPRK has committed to, pushes the urgency of taking measures to prevent any destructive outcome.

The UN has condemned the nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and decided to apply sanctions. Also, the Security Council reaffirmed its decision that the North-Eastern Asian country should abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and immediately cease all related activities. The actions DPRK have taken so far highlights the need of political intervention.

Useful Definitions and Key Terms:

Proliferation: rapid increase in the number of something (in our case nuclear weapons);

Nuclear Disarmament: the act of completely eliminating nuclear weapons to reach a nuclear weapon free world;

Uranium Enrichment: one of two methods of making nuclear weapons in which the percentage

composition of the Uranium 235 isotope is increased by isotopic separation. Uranium enriched below 10% cannot be made to explode.

Ballistic missile: a very long range missile which is initially powered and guided, but falls under gravity onto its target;

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field. It works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals;

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament;

Implemented UN Resolutions concerning the missile tests by DPRK:

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2270- imposed sanctions after North Korea's missile test in 2016;

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2321- strengthened its sanctions regime against DPRK in response to the nuclear test on 9 September, 2016;

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2371- strengthened its sanctions regime against DPRK in response to the missile test on 28 July, 2017;

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2375- strengthened its oil sanctions in response to DPRK's sixth nuclear test;

History

Although the North Korean threat is something that the public acknowledged recently, this threat has its roots deep in the past, all starting more than 20 years ago. The nuclear development in North Korea started in 1962 committed itself to a process called "all-fortressization" which was the beginning of today's militarized North Korea. DPRK asked the Soviet Union for help in the development of nuclear weapons but it got denied. However, the Soviet Union helped in building a Nuclear Scientific Research Center.

In 1985, North Korea signed the NPT, but only fulfilled the necessary safety guidelines by 1992. After investigations, the IAEA informed the UN Security Council that DPRK isn't complying with the NPT. This further led to North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT in 1993.

In 2005, DPRK admitted to poses nuclear weapons, but ensured the UN that they will shut down the program in exchange of normalization talks with the US and Japan and fuel aid. The agreement between North Korea and the UN fell apart following a missile test. North Korea confirmed successful tests on nuclear weapons since 2009.

Key Issues:

One of the main issues that the UN faces when it comes to the North Korean threat is the fact that their government's aspirations towards achieving nuclear quality are high. DPRK is continuously testing missiles and nuclear weapons endangering some nations' sovereignty. The North-Eastern Asian country admitted to poses nuclear weapons and the frequency of the tests increased drastically over the last few years.

The fact that DPRK withdrawn from the NPT, stops the control of the UN bodies inside its borders. Considering the fact that the international community cannot have the exact status of nuclear development inside North Korea constitutes a major threat for the whole world and is treated as such.

Previous attempts to solve this issue:

Over the years, one major attempt to solve the issue of nuclear development was the NPT, however there are major issues with the treaty. To begin with, countries that decide to not sign the treaty, such as Pakistan or India, or countries that decide to withdraw from it, such as North Korea cannot be inspected by the IAEA, meaning whatever happens within them regarding the weapons is a secret to the international community

Additionally, the NPT also commands advanced nations to begin sharing nuclear equipment and technology in order to promote their peaceful uses, however no guidelines have been set as to what could be nuclear weapons technology. Nuclear energy does require the ability to enrich uranium. However, as stated before, uranium enrichment can also be used to as a means of producing weapons. According to a UN report in 2009, "The revival of interest in nuclear power could result in the worldwide dissemination of uranium enrichment and spent fuel

reprocessing technologies, which present obvious risks of proliferation as these technologies can produce materials that are directly usable in nuclear weapons.”

Besides the NPT, there have been agreements between the UN and the North Korean government, which this country did not respect and continued with its purpose of developing weapons. Those agreements were a step towards achieving freedom and peace from a nuclear point of view, but for the North Korean government, the goal of reaching nuclear equality is a priority.

Possible Solutions:

The solution to this issue needs to be well thought out and carefully planned due to the sensitive nature of the matter.

With North Korea, any direct military interference or use of force would be seen as an act of war and would have devastating consequences. The only method that remains is the use of sanctions. These have been implied previously by the USA, but North Korea continued to evade them by a series of broken promises. Perhaps, if more countries were to impose sanctions on North Korea, the effect would be much more crippling and North Korea may be forced to stop its programme.

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