

ZISMUN

Zurich International School MUN



Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that we welcome you to the Security Council of ZISMUN 2026! As your chairs, we are thrilled to have this opportunity to engage in meaningful and diplomatic dialogue alongside each one of you. As we tackle some of the most pressing issues of this day, we look forward to seeing the energy, creativity, and passion that you will bring to this committee.

Order remains imperative for the United Nations. The Security Council (SC) has a particularly important role in ensuring the security and freedom of member states. Our topics, *The disarmament of the Korean Peninsula and Addressing the Risk of Military Escalation in the Taiwan Strait through Preventive Diplomacy*, closely align with the goal of the SC to maintain international peace and security for its member states.

As the Security Council, we hope to create lasting change for both our members and the global community. Hence, it is critical to consider not only the needs of our individual member states, but the collective interests of the world. These include but are not limited to the Global South, the European Union, NATO, the African Union, MEDCs (more economically developed countries), and LEDCs (less economically developed countries).

We aim to produce focused, enforceable resolutions with precise mandates, defined actors, timelines, and enforcement mechanisms. Debate should prioritize concrete policy choices such as sanctions, peacekeeping mandates, authorization of force, monitoring mechanisms, and diplomatic leverage. Delegates are expected to engage with these realities actively from their country's perspective, have a sound understanding of both topics, and ultimately bring an open mindset to collaborate with member states of the SC. Both topics are challenging and require you to be mindful and respectful to all delegates. Nevertheless, make sure to represent your country's position as accurately as you can, even if you are controversial! That is what makes debate truly enjoyable!

We cannot wait to see what you will bring to the table and look forward to the upcoming days of fruitful debate. Remember, above all else, debate is at the heart of what we do, but diplomacy is the foundation upon which MUN thrives.

Warm regards,
Your Chairs,
Ishan Wadhwani and Ethan Kahn

The disarmament of the Korean Peninsula

General Overview of the Situation:

Disarmament on the Korean Peninsula remains a complex challenge in international security. Since the unresolved end of the Korean War (North Korea (DPRK) and South Korea), the issue has expanded beyond weapons reduction to include regime survival, regional geopolitical dynamics, divided alliances, and Non-Proliferation Treaty standards. Diplomatic efforts have stalled, resulting in frequent escalations and limited progress toward lasting denuclearization.

For the DPRK, the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles has intensified the situation. Pyongyang views its nuclear arsenal as essential for deterring Western threats, particularly from the United States and its allies. Historical cases where regimes without such deterrence collapsed have been used as key learnings for the DPRK. South Korea, by contrast, seeks denuclearization as a mandate for prolonged peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Seoul balances its alliance with the United States with some engagement with the DPRK to reduce tension.

Overall, the Korean Peninsula remains an environment where deterrence and dialogue exist simultaneously in a fragmented way, and it is unclear what the future of the peninsula holds given this imbalance.

Beyond the Korean Peninsula, various countries have been actively involved, which may have complicated the situation. The United States prioritizes complete denuclearization, viewing North Korea's nuclear program as a direct threat. China and Russia support denuclearization, yet they stress regional peace and are cautious about actions that might undermine the regime or increase U.S. influence near their borders. More concerningly, external tensions between the U.S. and China and Russia may have influenced the tension between the Koreas, raising questions as to what extent this influence is justified.

Previous diplomatic attempts are nuanced. While the Agreed Framework and Six-Party Talks temporarily froze aspects of North Korea's nuclear program, these efforts collapsed due to distrust, verification disputes, and shifting political priorities. Recently, diplomatic efforts are failing to achieve concrete disarmament, and further diplomatic efforts require addressing North Korea's security concerns, redefining regional threat perceptions, and building credible compliance and authenticity assessments. Maintaining the global non-proliferation regime and reassuring regional actors who rely on extended deterrence is another dimension that should be considered.

Key Definitions:

Disarmament:

The reduction of a state's weapons capabilities. Disarmament includes removing nuclear weapons, missile systems, and supporting infrastructure, as well as force reductions

Denuclearization:

Complete dismantlement of nuclear weapons, materials, and production facilities. Full, verifiable, and irreversible removal of North Korea's nuclear program. North Korea has historically framed denuclearization broadly, suggesting the removal of external nuclear threats in the region. Adopting a clear definition should be considered to combat ambiguity.

The Korean Peninsula:

The region between North Korea and South Korea; the tension in this region stems from the Korean War, which ended legally unresolved in an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

Deterrence:

A threat of retaliation to prevent aggression. North Korea uses nuclear weapons to deter, whereas South Korea relies on extended deterrence from the US.

Extended deterrence:

A commitment of one country to defend another country. South Korea's security policy relies on extended deterrence, but it remains a concern for North Korea when discussing denuclearization.

Non-proliferation:

A concept that aims to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and related technologies. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (additional information below) remains one of the critical ways non-proliferation has been involved in the global community.

Sanctions:

Economic and diplomatic restrictions imposed to spur changes in state behavior. Sanctions on the DPRK aim to limit or dismantle its nuclear weapon program.

Verification:

Inspection, monitoring, and transparency measures to confirm compliance with disarmament agreements. However, key challenges remain due to secrecy, mistrust, and restricted access that hinder establishing verifiability with disarmament. Verification remains critical to establishing the current status of the Korean Peninsula conflict.

Confidence-building measures:

Reducing mistrust miscalculation, such as military hotlines, notifications of exercises, or arms freezes to promote verification and build confidence in current measures.

Historical Situation:

Following Japan's surrender in 1945, Korea was divided along the 38th parallel into Soviet- and U.S.-backed zones. It was therefore expected that ideological confrontation and divisions would soon emerge. This division escalated into the Korean War, involving North Korea, South Korea, the United States, and China. While the Armistice Agreement (1953) ended active combat, it failed to establish a peace treaty. The result was a state of armistice, hostility, and heavy militarization on both sides.

During the Cold War, security on the peninsula was shaped by bipolar rivalry. South Korea relied on the U.S.-ROK alliance and benefited from extended deterrence, including the deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons until 1991. North Korea, supported by the Soviet Union and China, pursued a strategy of military self-reliance (Juche). The collapse of the Soviet Union marked a critical shift, leaving North Korea economically weakened, strategically isolated, and insecure.

North Korea's nuclear program emerged prominently in the early 1990s, triggering the First North Korean Nuclear Crisis. Tensions centered on inspections and compliance with international safeguards, leading to negotiated arrangements that temporarily froze nuclear activities in exchange for aid and security assurances. These agreements collapsed due to verification disputes, mistrust, and inconsistent implementation, reinforcing perceptions on both sides that diplomacy was unreliable.

In the early 2000s, North Korea withdrew from global non-proliferation frameworks and openly pursued nuclear weapons development. In 2006, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test, transforming the issue from potential proliferation to an established nuclear reality.

Since then, the historical trend has become cyclical: provocation, sanctions, negotiation, and stalemate. Nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches were followed by talks and temporary freezes, but disagreements over sequencing, security guarantees, sanctions relief, and verification repeatedly undermined progress. Nuclear weapons increasingly became central to North Korea's deterrence doctrine and regime survival strategy, while South Korea and its allies viewed them as a fundamental threat to regional and global security.

Current Situation:

North Korea is now a de facto (definition: in fact, whether by right or not) nuclear-armed state, having conducted multiple nuclear tests and demonstrated advanced intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capabilities. This has been widely considered as evidence of weapons possession and progress toward survivable, deliverable nuclear forces.

Pyongyang's leadership has codified nuclear weapons into domestic law, characterizing them as essential to regime survival, deterrence, and leverage. Nuclear weapons are treated as permanent instruments of national defense, narrowing diplomatic space, as traditional incentives such as aid or sanctions relief are no longer viewed as sufficient compensation for disarmament.

In response, South Korea and the United States have strengthened extended deterrence, expanding joint military exercises, enhancing missile defense cooperation, and increasing the visibility of U.S. strategic assets in the region. Although meant to reassure allies and deter aggression, these measures are perceived by North Korea as hostile, reinforcing its justification to preserve along with expanding its nuclear arsenal. North-South dynamics sustains a security dilemma, where defensive actions by one side are interpreted as offensive by the other.

Formal negotiations on denuclearization are stalled, with no active multilateral framework comparable to earlier dialogue mechanisms. Sanctions remain in place, and their effectiveness is constrained by inconsistent enforcement and transforming geopolitical priorities. China and Russia, while officially supporting denuclearization, prioritize regional peace and strategic competition with the United States, limiting coordinated pressure on the DPRK.

The regional security environment has also deteriorated. Increased missile testing, rapid weapons development, and rhetorical escalation heighten the risk of miscalculation and unintended conflict. Crisis management mechanisms exist but are fragile, and communication channels remain limited. At the same time, South Korea faces internal debates over deterrence credibility, alliance dependence, and long-term security options.

Overall, the current situation shows a transition from a disarmament challenge to a nuclear management problem. The focus has shifted from achieving rapid denuclearization to preventing escalation, managing deterrence, and diminishing the risk of conflict. It must be considered that disarmament is widely established to be a long-term objective rather than an imminent possibility.

Key Treaties/Agreements:

The 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement formally ended active hostilities in the Korean War. While not a disarmament treaty, it established the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and methods to prevent renewed fighting. The absence of a peace treaty remains a fundamental obstacle to disarmament, sustaining mutual threat perceptions and justifying continued militarization.

The 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea represented the first major nuclear disarmament effort. North Korea agreed to freeze and eventually dismantle its plutonium program in exchange for energy assistance and normalization steps. The agreement collapsed due to mutual non-compliance claims, verification limitations, and political transitions, reinforcing distrust on both sides.

The Six-Party Talks (2003-2009) involved South Korea, the United States, North Korea, China, Japan, and Russia. Joint statements committed North Korea to abandoning nuclear

weapons in return for security guarantees, economic assistance, and diplomatic normalization. Despite initial steps to disablement, talks collapsed over sequencing disputes, inspection access, and sanctions enforcement.

The 2018-2019 Inter-Korean and U.S.-DPRK Summits represented a shift toward leader-level diplomacy. Declarations emphasized denuclearization, confidence-building measures, and peace regime discussions. However, these agreements lacked definite schedules, definitions, and verification mechanisms, resulting in symbolic progress without substantive disarmament results.

Additionally, North Korea's withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 2003 significantly weakened legal constraints on its nuclear program. The NPT security guarantee for the Korean Peninsula may no longer be valid.

Key Country Positions:

North Korea:

North Korea rejects unilateral denuclearization and frames its nuclear arsenal as non-negotiable. The DPRK views nuclear weapons as essential for regime survival, deterrence against external threats, and strategic leverage. Disarmament is conditioned on the removal of perceived hostile policies, security guarantees, and changes to the regional military balance.

South Korea:

South Korea supports complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, emphasizing deterrence and alliance credibility. Key strategies include balanced pressure and engagement, pursuing stability, conflict prevention, and eventual peace, while relying on extended deterrence from the United States.

United States:

The United States advocates complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization. The US combines sanctions, military deterrence, and conditional diplomacy while emphasizing alliance commitments and non-proliferation norms.

China:

China supports denuclearization in theory. It opposes regime collapse in North Korea and resists measures that could expand U.S. influence near its borders, favoring dialogue and incremental de-escalation.

Russia:

Rhetorically, denuclearization is endorsed. Yet the Russian Federation stresses sanctions relief, diplomacy, and multipolar balance. Russia views the issue through the lens of strategic competition with the United States and regional influence.

Japan:

Japan strongly supports denuclearization due to direct security threats from North Korean missiles. Japan favors strict sanctions, close coordination with the United States, and firm pressure to uphold regional security and non-proliferation.

France:

France supports denuclearization through multilateral frameworks and strict enforcement of sanctions. France stresses international law, nuclear non-proliferation standards, and Security Council unity.

United Kingdom:

The United Kingdom maintains a consistent position with U.S. and European partners, advocating diplomatic solutions backed by sanctions and verification. The UK prioritizes global non-proliferation and stability in Asia, especially in the Korean Peninsula.

Germany:

Germany supports denuclearization through diplomacy, confidence-building measures, and economic incentives tied to compliance. Germany emphasizes arms control, dialogue, and multilateral coordination.

India:

India calls for non-violent resolution and dialogue, while stressing regional peace and non-proliferation. India avoids direct involvement but supports diplomatic interaction over military escalation.

Possible Solutions:

Phased Reciprocal Roadmap:

A sequenced process where each side undertakes limited, verifiable steps simultaneously. Initial measures could include a freeze on nuclear tests, long-range missile launches, and fissile material production, matched by narrowly targeted sanctions relief and humanitarian access. Later phases exchange dismantlement of facilities for broader economic and diplomatic normalization. Sequencing should be designed to prevent front-loaded concessions and reduce collapse risk.

Freeze-and-Cap Before Full Disarmament:

Prioritize risk reduction by capping warhead numbers, missile ranges, and production capacity before pursuing total dismantlement. This approach stabilizes the security environment, prevents further expansion, and creates space for trust-building.

Peace and Security Assurances Package:

Link nuclear steps to credible security guarantees. Measures include a formal peace process to replace the armistice, military hotlines, incident-prevention agreements, and

calibrated adjustments to exercises. The goal of this being addressing regime-survival concerns without weakening current deterrence.

Robust Verification:

Implement verification in stages, starting with monitoring of declared nuclear sites and production freezes, then expanding to inspections of storage facilities and warheads. Tools include on-site inspections, remote sensors, environmental sampling, and challenge inspections, with clear access rules to manage sovereignty concerns.

Sanctions Redesign and Conditional Relief:

Shift from broad sanctions to targeted, reversible relief tied to specific verified actions. Concurrently, tighten enforcement against proliferation financing and illicit procurement networks. This increases leverage while giving compliance immediate, tangible benefits.

Regional Security Dialogue Framework:

Establish a standing Northeast Asia security forum focused on missile risk reduction, transparency, and crisis management. Even without immediate denuclearization, institutionalized dialogue lowers escalation risk and facilitates regular cooperation.

Inter-Korean Confidence-Building:

Expand military confidence-building steps such as notifications of exercises, limits on deployments near the DMZ, and joint incident-investigation mechanisms.

Humanitarian and Economic Engagement with Safeguards:

Scale humanitarian aid, public health cooperation, and limited development projects under strict monitoring to prevent diversion. This builds minimal trust, reduces civilian harm, and supports engagement without granting strategic leverage.

Suggested Further Reading List:

“North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program” by Ankit Panda
Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) Backgrounder
<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/north-koreas-nuclear-weapons-program>

“The Korean Armistice and the Enduring Risk of War” by Bruce Cumings
Foreign Affairs
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-01-16/korean-war-never-ended>

“Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula: What Does It Mean?” by Frank Aum
United States Institute of Peace (USIP)

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/02/what-does-denuclearization-korean-peninsula-mean>

“North Korea’s Nuclear Doctrine and Strategy” by Vipin Narang and Ankit Panda
War on the Rocks

<https://warontherocks.com/2018/06/north-koreas-nuclear-posture/>

“The Rise and Fall of the Six-Party Talks” by Victor Cha
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/rise-and-fall-six-party-talks>

“Why North Korea Will Not Give Up Its Nukes” by Andrei Lankov
Al Jazeera Opinion

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/5/16/why-north-korea-will-not-give-up-its-nukes>

“Managing, Not Solving, the North Korea Nuclear Problem” by Jeffrey Lewis
Foreign Policy

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/06/12/managing-not-solving-the-north-korea-nuclear-problem/>

“U.S. Extended Deterrence and the Korean Peninsula” by Terence Roehrig
Asia Policy (National Bureau of Asian Research)

<https://www.nbr.org/publication/us-extended-deterrence-and-the-korean-peninsula/>

“China’s Role in North Korea’s Nuclear Crisis” by Yun Sun
Brookings Institution

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/chinas-role-in-north-koreas-nuclear-crisis/>

“North Korea and the Bomb” by Vox (Explainer Video)
YouTube (Vox)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8l3q4K7F1o>

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Vox. "North Korea and the Bomb." YouTube, uploaded by Vox, 13 June 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8l3q4K7F1o.