

## National Security Briefing A

**To:** National Security Council  
**From:** Assistant Secretary of Defense,  
 Department of Defense  
**Re:** Nuclear weapon program in North Korea

### Overview

Over the past six years, North Korea has performed three nuclear tests. The most recent test was followed by direct threats against the United States and South Korea. Immediate action needs to take place to end North Korea's nuclear program.

### Nuclear Testing in North Korea and International Response

Since the Cold War, North Korea and the United States have had growing tensions over the development of nuclear weapons. In 2003, these tensions escalated when North Korea withdrew from the

Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, a treaty that prevented the development of nuclear weapons. North Korea then returned to operating its nuclear facilities.

That same year, the United States, North Korea, and four other countries began a series of discussions called the Six-Party Talks. The goal of these talks was to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula through negotiation. However, North Korea quit these talks in 2009 after test-firing a rocket, despite warnings from the United States and other countries. This test was met with increased sanctions against North Korea from the United Nations.

### CIA Country Profile: North Korea

**Population:** 24,589,122

**Ethnicity:** racially homogenous, for the most part

**Religion:** Buddhist and Confucianist, some Christian

**Government:** Communist state one-man dictatorship

**Chief of State:** Kim Jong Un

**Capital:** Pyongyang

**GDP per capita:** 1,800

**Main exports:** rice, corn, potatoes, soybeans

**Government history:** After its lack of success in the Korean War, North Korea's founder, Kim II Sung, adopted a new policy of "self-reliance" to protect his country from outside influence. The United States was perceived as the biggest threat to this social system. Because of past and present leaders' mismanagement, North Korea has relied heavily on international food aid. But the country has recently focused on improving its economy.

Source: *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency.

### North Korea



## National Security Briefing A (continued)

Conflict between North and South Korea increased in March 2010 after the sinking of the South Korean ship, the *Cheonan*. The United States is a strong ally of South Korea. Despite North Korea's persistent denial, investigations provided evidence of its involvement in the sinking of the ship. As a result, President Obama signed an executive order that increased sanctions against North Korea.

In late 2010, North Korea revealed that it was creating a uranium enrichment facility. As you well know, enriched uranium is a critical component in nuclear power generation. It is also used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons. The secret transport of nuclear components is illegal under international law and a direct affront to the United States and the international community.

Over the next couple of years, North Korea stated its willingness to suspend nuclear testing. In 2012, the United States and North Korea finally reached an agreement. North Korea agreed to suspend its uranium enrichment plant. The 2012 negotiation between North Korea and the United States was a major step towards denuclearization. In return for North Korea suspending its uranium operations, the United States provided the country with food aid.

North Korea violated its terms when it unsuccessfully launched a satellite in April 2012 to celebrate its founder's 100th birthday. The United States believes that the launch was intended to test missile technology. As a result, U.S. aid was withdrawn. In addition, this launch caused the United Nations to place tighter sanctions on North Korea. North Korea further threatened national security when it successfully launched a satellite in December 2012.

### Current Situation

In February 2013, North Korea successfully performed another nuclear test. Following the test, Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, warned of a possible "preemptive nuclear attack" against the United States. Experts believe that North Korea is not currently capable of such attacks. However, it is possible that the country will continue nuclear tests.

Recent measures have been taken against North Korea as we meet today. The United Nations has imposed tough new sanctions because of the February 2013 nuclear test. Even China, North Korea's sole ally, is agreeing to the sanctions. These sanctions make it difficult for North Korea to fund and source its nuclear weapons program. North Korea has angrily responded by ending its 60-year-old armistice with South Korea.

North Korea's most recent nuclear test has also been met with non-combative military action. The United States is teaming with South Korea in multiple military exercises. These exercises function to strengthen U.S. and South Korean forces. The exercises are also in preparation to defend South Korea in case of an attack.

### Possible U.S. Responses

The Department of Defense has outlined five possible options. The president has asked that you devise a policy recommendation to present at the upcoming NSC meeting by choosing one or more of these options or by creating alternative options. After crafting your recommendation, prepare a spokesperson to defend it at the upcoming meeting.

**Option 1:** Gather additional covert intelligence to determine whether North Korea is capable of creating nuclear weapons small enough to fit on a missile.

**Option 2:** Host a summit with the countries of the Six-Party Talks, aside from North Korea, to propose possible negotiations that encourage North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

**Option 3:** Impose even more economic sanctions on North Korea and on all countries, including China, from which North Korea purchased sources for its nuclear weapons.

**Option 4:** Launch a military air strike and bomb suspected nuclear and chemical weapons sites.

**Option 5:** Invade North Korea, depose North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un, and pave the way for democratic elections.