

STATE, LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL

North Korea & US Relations

Monique Kreisman, staff writer

North Korea, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has a long history of conflict with the United States. On Tuesday, the DPRK announced that it will reopen the nuclear facilities it had promised to shut down in 2007. Recent months have seen rising tensions between the two nations, and a consideration of past events is helpful in understanding the current state of affairs. After over fifty years of promises broken and remade, it is unknown what the future holds for the United States' relationship with North Korea.

- (1945) The conclusion of World War II freed Korea from Japanese control, and the United States and the Soviet Union split administration of the country at the 38th parallel. The division of the nation was intended to be temporary, but the difficulty in establishing a unified government made the separation permanent.
- In 1948, North Korea was established as a nation, and two years later, it attacked its southern counterpart. Several nations, including the United States, sent troops to support South Korea in the war.
- In 1953, an armistice was signed to end the Korean War.
- In 1991, North and South Korea signed the Joint Declaration for denuclearization. The two countries agreed to ban nuclear weapons and allow inspections of nuclear facilities.
- However, North Korea refused inspectors access to two nuclear waste sites, and in 1993, it publicized an intention to back out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty—an announcement it later withdrew.
- Also in 1993, North Korea conducted a successful midrange missile test, provoking fear that a nuclear missile might be able to reach large Japanese cities.
- Finally, in 1994, inspectors were granted access to nuclear plants, but North Korea destroyed evidence of the amount of nuclear material devoted to a possible weapons program.
- Also in 1994, North Korea withdrew from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and expelled inspectors from the country.
- In July of the same year, Kim Il-sung, the president, died, and Kim Jong-il became the leader of North Korea.
- A few months later, North Korea signed a pact with the United States to open some areas to inspection and to halt nuclear weapons development.
- In 1998, North Korea conducted another successful missile test.
- In 2002, the US found evidence that North Korea has been conducting a secret nuclear weapons development program; when confronted, North Korea admitted to the charges. It also announced that the 1994 agreement was nullified.
- In 2003, when the United States prepared to invade Iraq, evidence was obtained that North Korea was carting plutonium away from one of its reactors. Plutonium is a material that can be converted and used for atomic bomb fuel.
- In August of 2003, the "Six Nations Talks"—a meeting of North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China, Russia, and Japan—attempted to find a diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis. North Korea demanded a nonaggression treaty from the United States, and the United States announced that it would not give economic aid to North Korea unless the country halts its nuclear development program.
- In 2005, North Korea promised to abandon its weapons efforts in exchange for security and economic assistance.
- In 2006, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test, resulting in immediate economic sanctions.
- The Six Nations Talks resumed, and a 2007 agreement persuaded North Korea to again promise to halt weapons development in exchange for oil and monetary aid.
- By 2008, North Korea announced that it will no longer participate in the Six Nations Talks and that it will resume its efforts to develop a nuclear weapon.
- 2009 saw several missile tests and a second nuclear test, again met by economic sanctions.
- In December of 2009, Kim Jong-il dies and is replaced as the leader of North Korea by Kim Jong-un.
- Two months later, Kim Jong-un announced that North Korea would halt nuclear development in exchange for food aid from the United States.
- However, in 2012, North Korea successfully launched a long-range rocket.
- On February 12th, 2013, North Korea conducted its third and latest nuclear test. It is unknown if the country has obtained the technology needed to fit an atomic weapon in a long-range missile.
- On March 11th, North Korea announced that it will no longer abide by the 1953 armistice that concluded the Korean War.



Kim Jong Un (left) and two senior military officers
photo via npr.com

Burmese School Fire Kills 13

Brianna Karmi, staff writer

Earlier in the day on April 2, 2013, a fire in an Islamic school in Yangon, Myanmar left 13 children dead. While there are questions as to how the fire occurred, officials speculate that the fire might have been caused by a short circuit.

The fire broke out in the dormitory in which about 75 children were located. The dormitory was a part of a complex of buildings adjacent to a mosque. The 13 children perished due to suffocation. While there is not a determined cause of the fire, Muslims are blaming Buddhists. The fire came in the aftermath of violence against Muslims in Meiktila. The violence occurred March 20-22, and more than 40 Muslims were killed and 12,000 had to evacuate their homes.

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