

North korea's nuclear weapons essay

[Economics](#), [Budget](#)



North korea's nuclear weapons I.

IntroductionThe catastrophic aftermath of the nuclear bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 has shocked the world and caused it to consider and make all extra precautions to avoid another grievous mistake. About sixty years had passed with no nuclear attacks; such efforts can considerably be said as successful. Or is it? The absence of explosions nowhere implies the absence of such weapons. Today's society is in greater risk of nuclear weapons than it was sixty years ago.

The rapid spread of commerce, the rise of technology, and greater availability of information, had all contributed to the increase of nuclear weapons development across different nations and interested groups. Sixty years ago, such capacity was almost limited only to the United States and Russia, especially during the Cold War. However, many developing countries felt the need to find sources of energy in order to support its industries. Many countries had turned to nuclear energy as a primary source and consequently, became knowledgeable of uranium. This has also increased the probability of such countries to develop nuclear weapons. In addition to the five ' nuclear weapons states' (U. S., Russia, U.

K., France and China), other countries believed to be building nuclear weapons (but did not officially acknowledge) include Israel and Iran. On the other hand, North Korea commanded world-wide attention when it claimed to own nuclear weapons. It is estimated that about 20, 000 of such kind still existed around the world in 2002 and those that were reclassified as ' decommissioned' were not fully destroyed but shelved (Webster, 2003).

Although the figures were projected to decrease as much as 50% by last year, the danger of it falling on wrong hands such as terrorist groups, still placed the world in grave danger. North Korea became a potential risk when it refused to continue being a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003. Although there are those who doubt North Korea to become a real source of nuclear threat, believing that such claim is a mere political scheme to compel the United States to conform to its demands. There could be no room though, for complacency.

II. Presence of Nuclear Weapons in North Korea Two power stations are already in existence, at the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center. The second and larger of the two, which used to be responsible for supplying plutonium for UK's nuclear weapons program, is believed to generate ten new bombs per year. As of 2003, the second plant is yet to be finished. The smaller plant has already been producing materials enough to create one bomb every year. This was made possible when North Korea acquired a reactor from Russia although uranium mines were already in existence prior to this.

They were able to build up the capacity of this reactor and by the ' 80s, the North secretly started to channel its efforts in reprocessing such fuel to manufacturing nuclear weapons. Upon information obtained by US intelligence of another reactor, the country of North Korea acceded to sign up as a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT). As part of the agreement, the United States is going to provide assistance to N.

Korea's energy needs by furnishing light water reactors and fuel oil. Failure of the United States to fulfill its part caused N. Korea to resort back to its old uranium reactors and subsequently withdrew from NNPT.

It has created a missile capable of reaching any target in Southeast Asia called the Taepodong-1. Tests conducted on Taepodong-2 did not succeed. If successful, the second missile could enable North Korea to launch a nuclear attack in the west, as far as the United States (BBC News, 2006). Last year however, Washington is believed to have suggested that previous intelligence report about the status of North Korea's nuclear weaponry has been exaggerated. There are speculations today that the US government is going to alter its approach and be less harsh against North Korea (Broad & Sanger, 2007).

III. Historical Background In Relation To Nuclear Armaments
After the collapse of the Japanese imperialistic ambition in World War II, Japan lost control over North Korea to the Soviet Union and South to the United States. The dual occupation of foreign control brought on the great divide on Korea.

Both the US and the Soviet Union brought political influences which defined the conflicting kind of government of each that has claimed many lives and continued to split the nation in two. Before 1970, North Korea experienced much economic development. However, the country staggered when it lost its trading relations with its chief ally, the former Soviet Union. One important aspect of this trading relation included barter. Upon termination, North Korea found itself unprepared to conduct trading with other countries since it was severely deficient of hard currency (Business Network, 1992).

Combined with natural calamities such as flooding and drought (Olson, 2005), the country was subjected to severe famine. Faced with a country in economic collapse provided a good excuse for Kim Jong-il to enforce his regime by adapting the "Military-First" policy or *Son-gun*. A new form of government seemed an ideal solution for a ravaged country (Kwon, 2003).

The policy ensures that the military and the government receive highest priority and the biggest slice from the national budget. In return, the army is enforced to work in the forefront. The history of North Korea's desire for nuclear armament could also be traced back by the pressure that the United States gave as a way to end the Korean War.

It can be recalled that the division on Korea after the war caused tension between the two to escalate. As an ally of the South, the US through President Truman and Eisenhower's term adopted policies that aggravated the situation. The US deployed nuclear artillery in the 50's in the South and by 1970 — the number had risen by the hundreds. It is in light of these circumstances that North Korea had followed the path of pursuing a nuclear weapons program (Pincus, p. A16/2006). IV.

Effect on International Relations North Korea's nuclear program has placed its relations with other nations at a precarious state. This has caused tension not only with S. Korea but is widely perceived as a threat to its Asian neighbors. Together with South Korea, Japan and China expressed concern over possible consequences of a severe military or economic attack against North Korea. The greatest opposition that the North has faced is by the United States.

Animosity between the two was further fueled when Pres. George W. Bush referred to it as part of an "Axis of Evil" after 9/11. Aggravating the situation is North Korea's alleged government sanctioned activities that include illegal drugs, manufacture of fake bills, and money laundering. Negotiations are still underway between North Korea and other nations.

Some are questioning NNPT's unequal treatment towards its member nations. Some powerful countries including the US continue to keep such weapons, while others are forced to stop. As one official pointed out, it is inconsistent for a man who is smoking to tell others to stop smoking (Nunn, 2007).

V. Conclusion
Eliminating nuclear weapons seem like an ideal that could never be reached. As Sam Nunn (2007) pointed out in his speech before the Council on Foreign Relations he used the analogy of reaching the peak of a very tall mountain. He added that while today's generation is unable to see the top, it should not deter their efforts to continue, working steadily for the following generations to possibly see the mountaintop (Nunn, 2007). The world continues to watch, with breaths held, for the development of peace rather than weapons in North Korea, as well as in other nations. Even in our generation, we also hope to see a mountaintop. References: BBC News, (2006).

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