
JOINT DECLARATION OF SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA ON THE DENUCLEARIZATION OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Signed: 20 January 1992.

Entered into Force: 19 February 1992.

Under the Joint Declaration, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) agree not to test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy, or use nuclear weapons; to use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes; and not to possess facilities for nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment.

Treaty Text

Verification and Compliance: According to the Joint Declaration, the two sides will conduct inspections of locations chosen by the other side and mutually agreed upon by both sides. The two Koreas also established the South-North Joint Nuclear Control Commission (JNCC) as an implementing mechanism of the Joint Denuclearization Declaration (JDD) in March 1992. The JNCC has not been able to reach agreement on the reciprocal inspection regime and has been stalled since 1993.

Developments:

For related information, see sections on the [US-DPRK Agreed Framework / Six-Party Talks](#), [KEDO](#), and [IAEA](#)

2002: On 16 October North Korea admitted that it had been conducting a secret uranium enrichment program, which Pyongyang agreed to halt under the 1994 DPRK-US Agreement Framework. On 28 October a joint statement issued by the United States together with Japan and the ROK concluded that the DPRK's program was a violation of the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

2001: Despite the fact that the Joint Declaration had been in force since February 1992, no inspections were conducted within the framework of the Joint Declaration. The last JNCC meeting was convened in January 1993.

2000: In February, President Clinton certified to the US Congress that the implementation of the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was progressing.

1995: On 19 September, the US House of Representatives adopted a resolution exhorting President Bill Clinton not to improve relations or ease economic restrictions on North Korea until it made efforts to fulfill the terms of the North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

1994: On 31 January, South Korea said that it would proceed with the 1994 Team Spirit military exercise unless North Korea allowed international inspections of its nuclear-related facilities.

On 15 August, as a response to the DPRK's announcement that it was ready to terminate construction of its graphite-moderated nuclear reactor in exchange for the light water nuclear reactor and economic incentives, South Korea offered North Korea "the necessary capital and technology" to build light water reactors "if and when the North guaranteed the transparency of its nuclear facilities."

On 21 October, the United States and DPRK signed an Agreed Framework. Under one of its provisions, both countries pledged to strive towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK committed to taking steps to implement the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and engaging in North-South dialogue. The Agreed Framework, however, did not link the sequencing of actions in the Agreed Framework with any timeframe for carrying out the provisions of the North-South Joint Declaration. The United States announced cancellation of the Team Spirit military exercises in 1994.

1993: On 25 January, during the 13th JNCC meeting, North Korea refused to discuss any type of negotiations until the US-South Korean Team Spirit military exercises were cancelled. South Korea announced that the exercises would commence this

year because the mutual nuclear inspections issue had not been resolved. North Korea announced that it would take “necessary self-defensive measures” if the Team Spirit military exercises were conducted. The exercises were to be held from January-April 1993.

On 12 March, the DPRK announced its withdrawal from the [Non-Proliferation Treaty \(NPT\)](#). Since then, the developments around the Joint Declaration were overshadowed by the attempts of the international community to bring North Korea back into the NPT and ensure its compliance with the Treaty.

On 27 March, South Korea announced that it would consider ending Team Spirit military exercises permanently if North Korea reversed its decision to withdraw from the NPT.

On 9 June, the DPRK suspended its withdrawal from the NPT.

On 1 September, North Korea called for urgent talks with South Korea concerning the long-standing dispute over inspections of nuclear facilities. South Korea agreed to North Korea’s proposal to resume dialogue on nuclear issues through the exchange of envoys.

1992: In February, the DPRK and ROK agreed to form the JNCC by 19 March in order for it to oversee the mutual nuclear inspections.

On 20 February, the DPRK and ROK exchanged agreements on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free Korean Peninsula. The ROK indicated that it was necessary for North Korea to produce more evidence to verify that its nuclear intentions were peaceful. During the meeting, North Korean President Kim Il-Sung ignored the South Korean demand for mutual nuclear inspections to take place at an early date. Kim also dismissed Western reports that North Korea was close to constructing a nuclear bomb. Kim said that North Korea did not intend to enter into a nuclear arms race with its neighbors. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed in greater detail during talks scheduled for the spring of 1992 between North Korean President Kim Il-Sung and South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo.

On 28 February, North Korea rejected South Korea’s deadline request for mutual trial inspections by 18 March. North Korea also refused to finalize the procedures for mutual inspections by 18 April. South Korea’s Assistant Foreign Minister Chang Man-Soon said that North Korea would be able to produce weapons-grade plutonium by June 1992. On 5 March, South Korea announced that the United States would

like to participate in inter-Korean inspections of the suspected nuclear facilities.

On 14 March, North Korea and South Korea concluded an agreement to establish the JNCC and conduct inspections of nuclear facilities in early-June 1992. The inspections agreement, however, did not hold North Korea to a strict schedule and did not mention specific nuclear facilities in North Korea. According to Article 4, the Koreans would jointly try to adopt the necessary documents for verifying the nuclear-free status of the Korean Peninsula within an approximately two-month timeframe after 19 March. The sides agreed that inspections would begin within 20 days. North Korea also demanded to inspect US military bases in the ROK in order to verify withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from South Korea.

On 19 March, the Parties held the first meeting of the JNCC in order to develop a specific plan for proposed mutual inspections of suspected nuclear weapons sites. However, little progress was made with North Korea saying that the agreements signed with the South were merely statements of intent and were therefore not binding. Despite the announcement, South Korea advocated regular bilateral inspections of nuclear sites four times a year with 12 special inspections annually.

During the second JNCC meeting on 1 April, the DPRK and ROK failed to reach an agreement on inspection proposals. South Korea proposed that regular inspections be conducted on nuclear materials and facilities at least 16 times a year, and that special inspections be conducted on military bases at least 40 times a year. South Korea also requested that equal numbers of facilities be inspected by both Parties. North Korea responded by saying that South Korea should allow inspections of all US bases, but that the only site it would allow to be inspected was the Yongbyon nuclear facility.

On 19 April, during the third JNCC meeting, North and South Korea attempted to discuss regulations for mutual inspections. However, no progress was made. South Korea insisted that the number of sites inspected for both sides be equal and subject to mutual inspections based on the principle of reciprocity. North Korea, however, said that if Yongbyon were to be opened for inspection, all US military installations in South Korea must be opened for inspection.

On 15 May, during the JNCC fourth meeting, South Korea suggested that special inspections of nuclear facilities be conducted 24 hours after notification.

South Korea also demanded that North Korea stopped constructing its reprocessing facility.

On 27 May, during the fifth JNCC meeting, very little progress was made on the issue of mutual inspections. By delaying discussion on inspection guidelines, North Korea blocked any possibility of mutual inspections prior to July 1992. South Korea responded by warning North Korea that delaying talks further could lead to an impasse in inter-Korean exchanges in other areas.

On 12 June, South Korea announced that North Korea was breaking the nuclear-weapon-free zone agreement by building a reprocessing facility. North Korea, however, claimed that the facility was a “radiochemical laboratory.” South Korea said that it would not take further reconciliatory measures with North Korea unless it opened its facilities to South Korean inspectors. The DPRK stated that the major obstacle to the North-South talks was South Korea’s refusal to allow North Korean inspections of US military bases in the South. The North wanted to determine whether these bases might house nuclear weapons. North Korea demanded that it be allowed to inspect all US military installations before it stopped reprocessing. However, neither South Korea nor the United States agreed to such terms. North Korea then indicated that it would stop reprocessing in exchange for light water reactor technology from the West.

On 26 June, during the sixth JNCC meeting, negotiations came to a standstill when South Korea insisted that its suspicion of North Korea’s nuclear program was greater than ever despite the fact that North Korea had said that all suspicion had been removed through IAEA inspections. South Korea said that North Korea might inspect US military bases in the South if the North reciprocated by opening its military bases to inspection. South Korea requested that mutual inspections begin before September 1992.

On 21 July, during the seventh JNCC meeting, no progress was made again. North Korea rejected the South’s proposal for 24-hour notice challenge inspections of military sites. South Korea reminded North Korea that no economic exchange could take place in the absence of a nuclear accord. South Korea also announced that IAEA inspections were not enough to deter North Korea from pursuing a nuclear weapons program. The eighth meeting in August also ended in failure. The two sides, however, agreed to prepare proposed inspection regulations for the next meeting.

On 16 September, during the ninth JNCC meeting, North Korea demanded that the United States and South Korea terminate their Team Spirit military exercises. South Korea had decided to resume the exercises due to a lack of progress in the JNCC meetings to establish mutual inspections. North Korea accused the United States of shipping nuclear weapons via submarines to the South Korean port of Chinhae. The two countries failed to reach an agreement on “challenge inspections” of military sites.

On 19 September, during the 10th JNCC meeting, North Korea continued to stress the urgency of its being allowed to inspect US bases in South Korea for nuclear weapons, while South Korea denied that any nuclear weapons or bases exist on its territory. North and South Korea agreed to speed up the process of drafting and discussing inspection regulations proposals.

On 8 October, the United States announced that due to North Korea’s refusal to accept mutual nuclear inspections with South Korea, the United States and South Korea would most likely postpone removing US troops from South Korea. In response to that, later in October, the DPRK withdrew from the JNCC talks. The DPRK stated that it will stop all channels of inter-Korean dialogue if South Korea did not cancel Team Spirit military exercises with the United States. South Korea responded by stating that it would cancel the exercises if North Korea were willing to adopt guidelines for mutual inspections by the end of November 1992, and allow the first inspections to commence by 20 December.

On 27 November, during the 11th JNCC meeting, the inter-Korean dialogue collapsed. North Korea repeated its demand for the cancellation of Team Spirit military exercises. South Korea responded by demanding that North Korea allow a minimum of one inspection before it halted the exercises. South Korea said that the exercises would resume unless substantial progress was made with at least one mutual inspection before the next prime ministers’ meeting in Seoul on 21 December 1992. North Korea announced the suspension of further joint committee dialogue with South Korea, excluding JNCC meetings. The next, 12th JNCC meeting in December did not produce any positive results either.