



DPRK Timeline of Recent Events part 1

Recommended Citation

"DPRK Timeline of Recent Events part 1", Briefing Books DPRK, April 21, 2004,
<https://nautilus.org/briefing-books/dprk/dprk-timeline-of-recent-events-part-1/>

October 16th, 2003:

- The DPRK said it would display a nuclear deterrent at "an appropriate time" to end debate over its nuclear status if the United States delayed a solution to an impasse over Pyongyang's atomic ambitions.

October 15th, 2003:

- The DPRK and ROK opened cabinet-level talks in Pyongyang with the DPRK leadership rejecting Seoul's call for a commitment to a new round of six-way nuclear crisis talks.

October 13th, 2003:

- The US wants other nations to join it in a multilateral security deal with North Korea that it hopes will satisfy the state's demands for a formal non-aggression pact, Secretary of State Colin Powell said.
- The PRC's top DPRK hand, Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, will go to Russia for talks on the region's ongoing nuclear crisis, state media reported.

October 10th, 2003:

- The PRC's U.N. ambassador embraced a reported DPRK call for six-party talks on the Korean nuclear crisis to resume in December, saying Beijing also sought fresh talks by the end of the year.

October 9th, 2003:

- The ROK urged the US to ease its tough line towards the DPRK, saying that the DPRK was still interested in dialogue.
- The ROK hopes to use high-level inter-Korean talks next week to persuade the DPRK to ease tensions over its nuclear weapons programs, an official said.
- The PRC rejected the DPRK's call for Japan to be dropped from talks on the DPRK's nuclear standoff with the US and said six-party talks were the key to a resolution of the year-old crisis.

October 8th, 2003:

- The DPRK accused Japan of adopting a hostile policy that is aimed at a military clash -an allegation Japan vehemently denied.
- The DPRK's "ridiculous" demand that Japan be thrown out of future nuclear talks is pure gamesmanship, analysts said, predicting a next round will go ahead in November as planned.

October 6th, 2003:

- Another round of talks to resolve the DPRK nuclear crisis is expected to be held soon, ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun said.

October 3rd, 2003:

- The DPRK said it had solved "all the technological matters" involved in using plutonium from nuclear fuel rods to build atomic bombs, a brazen statement prompting more international hand-wringing over Pyongyang's intentions.

October 2nd, 2003:

- The DPRK raised the stakes in a nuclear standoff by saying for the first time it had processed fuel rods that could be used to make atomic bombs.
- A senior ROK official played down the DPRK's threat to pull out of six-way talks on its nuclear program, describing Pyongyang's tough rhetoric as a negotiating tactic.

October 1st, 2003:

- Hardening in the face of US pressure, the DPRK said it had no interest in more talks on its nuclear program until the US inks a non-aggression pact with them.
- US and ROK intelligence agencies believe there is only a low possibility that the DPRK would act on its threats to test a nuclear weapon or formally declare itself a nuclear state.

September 30th, 2003:

- The DPRK said it had no interest in six-party talks and would forge ahead with nuclear weapons development as US, Japanese and ROK officials admitted to growing confusion over the mixed signals from Pyongyang.
- Seeking a regime change in the DPRK will only heighten military tensions and encourage the state to dig in its heels on retaining its nuclear option, the ROK's foreign minister said.
- The US, ROK and Japan are to start two days of closed-door meetings on their policy towards the DPRK nuclear crisis today.

September 26th, 2003:

- The US plans to boost its military potential on the Korean Peninsula over the next four years -- and make a concerted effort to strengthen its security alliance with the ROK, said US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

- The DPRK said that it was gradually heading for a clash with Japan as Tokyo refused to break with the US and soften its hard-line policy toward Pyongyang.
- One of the PRC's top DPRK policy planners said a peaceful solution to the North's nuclear standoff with the US was still a long way off.

September 25th, 2003:

- Japan, the US and the ROK will embark on establishing an international inspection system to verify that the DPRK is dismantling its nuclear arms program once it announces an intention to do so.
- The DPRK told the US to "buckle down" and resolve the nuclear crisis by dropping its "hostile" policy towards the DPRK.

September 23rd, 2003:

- US military authorities said they had deployed new unmanned spy planes in the ROK as part of a 11-billion-dollar defense build-up plan against the DPRK.
- The DPRK has rejected calls by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to dismantle its nuclear program, accusing the UN nuclear watchdog of acting as a stooge for the US.

September 22nd, 2003:

- The DPRK has denounced a US missile defense upgrade in the ROK insisting the program amounts to war preparations that will hamper efforts to resolve a crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions.
- The IAEA urged the DPRK to scrap its atomic weapons program and agree to the resumption of international scrutiny of its activities.

September 18th, 2003:

- The DPRK accused the US of trying to "stifle" it after Washington announced economic sanctions on the DPRK for alleged human trafficking.

September 17th, 2003:

- One year after the DPRK and Japan moved to bring an end to decades of hostility with a historic summit, the goodwill has evaporated and relations are marked by suspicion and hostility.

September 16th, 2003:

- The DPRK denounced a US-led multi-national naval drill held off Australia to stop trade in banned weaponry as "a prelude to a nuclear war" targeting the state.
- The PRC dismissed on reports that its troops had massed at the border with the DPRK, where thousands of refugees from the hermit country have slipped across in recent years.

September 15th, 2003:

- US President George W. Bush indicated he would spend 3.72 million dollars to finance an international consortium charged with implementing a now-defunct 1994 anti-nuclear deal with the

DPRK.

September 12th, 2003:

- The DPRK has agreed in principle to hold a second round of six-nation talks in Beijing in early November over its nuclear weapons program.
- The DPRK again rejected a US demand to end its nuclear weapons program, saying it has no intention of disarming itself in the face of perceived US aggression.

September 9, 2003:

- The DPRK's top leaders vowed to push ahead with nuclear weapons development in a defiant gesture at a massive parade celebrating the 55th anniversary of the DPRK.

September 8, 2003:

- A report Monday in a ROK newspaper alleged that the DPRK has developed a long-range missile capable of targeting all of Japan and the US territory of Guam.
- Jack Pritchard, a Korean affairs expert who recently resigned from the US State Department, urged the Bush administration to assign a full-time negotiator to work with the DPRK on ending the nuclear weapons impasse.
- US President George W. Bush expressed his intention to gradually ease sanctions on DPRK and ultimately to sign a peace treaty with DPRK.
- The US will discuss with its allies what "security assurance" could be offered to North Korea to stop Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.

September 5, 2003:

- After initially insisting it would not offer the DPRK any "quid pro quos" to terminate its suspected nuclear weapons program, the Bush administration this week signaled it was willing to consider offering some incentives to Pyongyang.

September 4, 2003:

- Kim Jong Il endorsed Pyongyang's decision to "increase its nuclear deterrent."
- The US delivered a veiled warning to North Korea, saying it would face "consequences" if it made good on an alleged threat to conduct a nuclear test.
- The US last week told the DPRK it was willing to discuss a sequence of unspecified steps it could take if the DPRK abandons its nuclear ambitions.

September 2, 2003:

- The ROK and Russia called for a new diplomatic push to keep the DPRK nuclear crisis talks afloat as China's senior envoy warned US policy was the biggest obstacle to progress.
- DPRK's hostile reaction to last week's six-way talks on its nuclear program was an initial response and probably a negotiating ploy, the ROK said.

August 29, 2003 Third Day of 6-Way Talks:

- Six-nation talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis ended in acrimony with North Korea threatening to strengthen its nuclear arsenal unless the US met its demands for a resolution of the standoff.

August 28, 2003 Second Day of 6-Way Talks:

- The second day of six-party talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis broke up with envoys splitting into smaller groups in an attempt to force a breakthrough to the 11-month stand-off.
- The PRC said on Thursday all six countries had agreed on a mutual goal of a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.
- The DPRK has denied US charges that it is running a clandestine nuclear program based on enriched uranium at multilateral talks in Beijing.

August 27, 2003 First Day of 6-Way Talks:

- Six-nation talks to defuse the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs began in Beijing as Pyongyang renewed its central demand for a non-aggression pact from Washington.
- US and the DPRK had their first face-to-face meeting in four months today as part of broader six-nation negotiations on ending the DPRK's nuclear program, but diplomats downplayed prospects for an early breakthrough.
- The ROK official denied Russian reports that the DPRK told six-way nuclear talks that it had no nuclear weapons.
- PRC People's Liberation Army has elaborate plans to deal with DPRK in case of its collapse, the Washington Times reported, quoting its PRC military sources.

August 26, 2003:

- The PRC stressed that the DPRK's security concerns must be addressed as Pyongyang's negotiating team arrived in Beijing for six-party talks on its nuclear program.

August 25, 2003:

- Jack Pritchard, a US envoy in talks with North Korea, has left the government days before crucial six-nation nuclear crisis begin.
- Envoys and diplomats arrived in Beijing to prepare for 6 way talks on the DPRK's nuclear program. Russia pledged Monday to work to ensure everyone stays at the table at six-party talks but said chances of a deal were "very poor."

August 22, 2003:

- Japan has requested the US not to exclude the possibility of using nuclear weapons against the DPRK even if the DPRK pledges to give up its nuclear weapons program.

August 21, 2003:

- The DPRK accused the US of plotting to sabotage six-nation nuclear talks in an attempt to force a

settlement of the nuclear stand-off at the United Nations.

August 20, 2003:

- The DPRK rejected a US demand for early inspection of its nuclear facilities as "absolutely unacceptable," toughening its stance ahead of six-nation nuclear crisis talks.
- ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-Kwan warned that finding a solution to the Korean Nuclear stand-off would be difficult at a single meeting, and said further rounds of negotiations were likely necessary before the crisis could be resolved.
- Japan's chief negotiator said Wednesday that Tokyo wants the 6-way talks to press the DPRK on the issue of Abductions, but the DPRK says bringing up the kidnappings would disrupt sensitive negotiations.
- Kim Jong Il, expressed his hope that the relations between his country and PRC and the two armies will keep developing smoothly.

August 19, 2003:

- US officials are now ready to have one-on-one contact with their DPRK counterparts during six-way talks on Pyongyang's nuclear arms program.

August 16, 2003:

- The DPRK warned it would not dismantle its nuclear arsenal unless the US changed its policy towards Pyongyang by agreeing to a non-aggression pact and diplomatic normalization, and pledging not to hinder the DPRK's international trade.
- US President George W. Bush said last week that it will take "a lot of persuasion" from nations besides the US to get DPRK leader Kim Jong Il to give up nuclear weapons.
- The DPRK warned Monday that Japan could spoil upcoming six-way nuclear negotiations with its insistence on raising the issue of Japanese citizens abducted to the DPRK.

August 15, 2003:

- ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun urged the DPRK to grab the opportunity presented by upcoming six-nation talks to resolve the 10-month crisis over its nuclear weapons program.

August 14, 2003:

- James Kelly -- the State Department's top East Asia policymaker, whom the DPRK has in the past slammed as "arrogant" and "high-handed" -- will lead the US delegation to six-way nuclear crisis talks in Beijing this month.
- PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said he was optimistic of resolving the DPRK nuclear standoff but warned six-way talks could fail if Pyongyang's security concerns were not addressed.
- The Bush administration is seeking a new relationship with the DPRK but is not offering economic assistance as an incentive for terminating its nuclear weapons program.

August 13, 2003:

- The DPRK's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday that a non-aggression treaty demonstrating that the US had made a "switchover in its hostile policy" was the only way to resolve the nuclear crisis.
- Russia and the PRC may offer the DPRK security guarantees to back up any US commitments as part of an international effort to ease tensions over the DPRK's nuclear program, a senior Russian official said Wednesday.

August 12, 2003:

- Six-nation crisis talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program would likely begin in Beijing on August 27 according to U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage.

August 11, 2003:

- The PRC and the DPRK held comprehensive and in-depth discussions on nuclear issues August 6-9th in preparation for the forthcoming six-party nuclear talks in Beijing.
- Senior officials from the US, Japan and the ROK will open two days of talks to refine their tactics in preparation for six-way talks August 13-14th.
- Russia will host talks between the DPRK and the ROK this week in preparation for larger negotiations.

August 7, 2003:

- Diplomats from the US, Japan, and the ROK would meet soon to coordinate their policy on the DPRK ahead of six-nation talks on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.

August 6, 2003:

- The DPRK wants to hold six-nation talks in the first week of September while the PRC has proposed an August 21 or 25 start date. The US wants to hold them in August ahead of a UN general assembly meeting in September.
- US Secretary of State Colin Powell reinforced US opposition to the DPRK's demands for a non-aggression pact, but hinted that Congress could endorse a less formal guarantee if it emerged from nuclear-crisis talks.

August 4, 2003:

- The DPRK said that Multi-lateral talks on the nuclear crisis would take place soon in Beijing.

August 2, 2003:

- The DPRK warned that any moves to discuss its suspected nuclear weapons programs at the United Nations would "hamstring" efforts for dialogue and be a "prelude to war."

August 1, 2003:

- The DPRK announced its willingness to participate in Multi-lateral, six-way talks involving itself, the US, the Russian Federation, the ROK, Japan, and the PRC.

July 31, 2003:

- Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov said that DPRK Ambassador Pak Ui Chun instructed him to express the DPRK's support for "six-sided talks with the participation of Russia on resolving the current complex situation on the Korean Peninsula."

July 30, 2003:

- John Bolton, the US Undersecretary of State, insisted that North Korea's nuclear violations be brought before the UN Security Council.
- The ROK Foreign Ministry was not opposed to UN involvement but took issue with the timing, saying efforts to resolve the crisis through negotiations should be exhausted first.

July 29, 2003:

- US and ROK officials indicated the diplomatic drive to bring the DPRK to the negotiating table had stalled.
- US Undersecretary of State John Bolton arrived in the ROK to seek ways to resolve the festering crisis over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program.

July 28, 2003:

- ROK foreign minister Yoon Young-kwan told reporters no one could be sure whether multilateral talks would be held next month or in September because Pyongyang had yet to respond to the idea.
- Senior US diplomat John Bolton attends meetings with PRC officials to jumpstart a new round of talks on the DPRK's nuclear program.

July 27, 2003:

- A ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice agreement was held in Panmunjom today.

July 25, 2003:

- A senior advisor to ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun said he believed that the US and the DPRK would meet for a new round of multilateral talks in August.

July 24, 2003:

- Japan claims that the DPRK is prepared to declare itself a nuclear state by September 9, the anniversary of the country's founding, unless the US and its allies respond favorably to the DPRK's proposals for resolution of the Korean nuclear crisis.
- President Bush says that the US and the PRC will work to obtain a diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis.
- US President Bush and ROK President Roh Moo-hyun agreed to pursue a multi-lateral framework for the DPRK talks.

- The DPRK has insisted that it is doing all it can to prevent war on the Korean peninsula by seeking a non-aggression pact with the US.
- The DPRK promises to treat any new US high-tech weapons deployed in the ROK as tactical nuclear weapons and respond in kind.

July 23, 2003:

- Powell announces that the US will seek a "dialogue with a multilateral framework to try to find a solution to the problem"

July 22, 2003:

- Powell says that the US is seeking a "permanent" solution to the Korean Crisis
- US says no non-aggression pledge is possible.

July 21, 2003:

- DPRK restates demand for a non-aggression treaty with the US.
- ROK newspaper reports trilateral talks likely in September.

July 20, 2003:

- US experts report a second possible DPRK nuclear facility.

July 18, 2003:

- DPRK pledges to reject the US' demand to scrap the DPRK's nuclear weapons program until talks can begin.
- The PRC reports that it believes that the DPRK has processed enough plutonium for a nuclear weapon.
- The PRC decides to provide the DPRK with 10,000 tons of diesel fuel, free of charge.

July 17, 2003:

- ROK and DPRK forces trade fire at the DMZ near the town of Yonchon. No one is injured.
- PRC sources indicate that the DPRK is prepared to accept trilateral talks with the US and the PRC.

July 16, 2003:

- US, ROK, and Japan set July 31st deadline for accepting multilateral talks. If the deadline is not met, the three countries will seek a UNSC resolution condemning the DPRK's nuclear program.
- Japan reports that the DPRK will accept multilateral talks if the US guarantees that it will not undermine Kim Jong-il's government.

July 15, 2003:

- DPRK reports that it has enough fuel to make 6 nuclear weapons.
- PRC steps up pressure for US-DPRK dialogue.

July 14, 2003:

- North and South Korea agree to hold "appropriate talks".
- US threatens UN Security Council (UNSC) condemnation of DPRK nuclear program.
- At a UNSC meeting, the DPRK accuses US of committing "hostile acts" of aggression against the DPRK..
- ROK expresses skepticism at reprocessing claims.

July 12, 2003:

- DPRK claims to have completed reprocessing spent fuel rods giving the DPRK the means to make nuclear weapons.

July 11, 2003:

- The DPRK followed up a letter warning the U.N. Security Council to take a neutral stance on the DPRK's nuclear program with visits to some council members urging them to be impartial.
- Inter-Korean high-level talks hit a snag as the DPRK showed little interest in a US proposal to hold multilateral talks to resolve the country's nuclear weapons program.

July 10, 2003:

- The DPRK said that two ROK battleships had violated its territorial waters in the Yellow Sea.

July 8, 2003:

- A senior Japanese diplomat left Tokyo for Washington to hold talks over the two nations' policies toward the DPRK.

July 3, 2003:

- The US has withdrawn a proposal for resuming security talks with the DPRK next week because DPRK failed to respond in a timely manner, the State Department said.

July 2, 2003:

- The ROK warned that talks with the DPRK could be delayed as anger mounted over a deadly sea battle between the ROK and DPRK navy.

July 1, 2003:

- The DPRK's military threatened "strong and merciless" retaliation if the US and its allies imposed sanctions or a blockade against the DPRK.

June 30, 2003:

- Curt Weldon, a Republican lawmaker recently back from DPRK, unveiled details of a 10-point plan he discussed with Pyongyang leaders to prod them to abandon their nuclear weapons program.
- The PRC called for a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons and urged a diplomatic settlement to the DPRK nuclear crisis.

June 25, 2003:

- The ROK marked the 53rd anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War on Wednesday by urging the DPRK to give up its nuclear ambitions in return for international aid.

June 23, 2003:

- The DPRK warned it will take a "strong emergency measure" if the US takes the dispute over the communist state's nuclear weapons programs to the U.N. Security Council.
- The DPRK has accused Japan of imposing economic sanctions, an act it would regard as a declaration of war.

June 20, 2003:

- The US circulated a draft statement among key Security Council nations that would condemn the DPRK for reviving its nuclear weapons program.
- US authorities have unofficially told their Japanese counterparts that the DPRK already possesses several small nuclear warheads for ballistic missiles.

June 19, 2003:

- US Secretary of State Colin Powell conferred with a DPRK diplomat about the nuclear standoff on the Korean Peninsula after asserting that the help of Southeast Asian nations in achieving a solution is essential.
- The Beijing format for talks on the DPRK nuclear issue is the only way to a peaceful solution, PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said on Thursday, hinting that a US offer of diplomatic relations might help.

June 18, 2003:

- The DPRK expressed opposition to multilateral talks on the nuclear crisis, calling them part of the US' strategy to crush the regime.

June 17, 2003:

- The DPRK vowed to meet any US-led blockade on the communist state with "limitless" retaliation, saying the flames of war would immediately spread to Japan.

June 16, 2003:

- The US agreed that participation by ROK and Japan "is indispensable" in talks to end the DPRK's

nuclear weapons program, sending a strong signal to the North that it cannot rely solely on the Americans to make a deal.

- ROK Unification Minister Jeong Se-Hyun said that the DPRK may accept multilateral talks in a couple of months to resolve concerns over its nuclear ambitions.

June 13, 2003:

- Former ROK President Kim Dae-jung, who met DPRK leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in 2000, said the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula can be resolved if the DPRK first abandons its nuclear ambitions.
- Australia said that 11 countries have joined forces to find a way to block the DPRK ships suspected of carrying drugs, counterfeit money or materials for weapons of mass destruction.

June 11, 2003:

- It was announced that the DPRK had proposed that Russia mediate talks between Pyongyang and Washington after three-way talks wrapped up in Beijing in April between the United States, the DPRK and the PRC, but the proposal was turned down by the US.
- ROK President Roh Moo-hyun said that he had indicated to Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi that ROK will reject any other course than dialogue in the North Korean nuclear crisis.

June 9, 2003:

- The DPRK admitted publicly for the first time that it was seeking nuclear weapons and blamed "hostile" US policy for forcing it to develop a deterrent.
- DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il has sent a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin, seeking his help in breaking the stalemate in the talks with the US over the nuclear crisis.

June 5, 2003:

- The DPRK admitted publicly for the first time that it was seeking nuclear weapons and blamed "hostile" US policy for forcing it to develop a deterrent.
- DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il has sent a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin, seeking his help in breaking the stalemate in the talks with the US over the nuclear crisis.

June 3, 2003:

- US troops soon will withdraw from the Demilitarized Zone between the DPRK and the ROK officials said today. The move will free US troops to be more mobile, replaced by soldiers in a modern ROK army, officials said.

June 3, 2003:

- US deputy defense secretary Paul Wolfowitz urged North Korea to reverse its nuclear weapons drive and promised a "devastating" response to aggression on the Korean peninsula.
- ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun reiterated a call for a peaceful resolution to the nuclear crisis and warned the DPRK that nuclear weapons would not be tolerated on the peninsula.

View this online at: <https://nautilus.org/briefing-books/dprk/dprk-timeline-of-recent-events-part-1/>

Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org