

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON PEACE IN KOREA

KoreaPeaceNow.org  
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## A PEACE AGREEMENT CAN BE VIOLATED AT ANY TIME. WHY IS IT NECESSARY, AND HOW DOES IT GET US TO ACTUAL PEACE?

- As a legal instrument, a peace agreement would formally end the state of war and raise the legal bar for justifying the use of force. (By contrast, an armistice is a temporary ceasefire and therefore a weak safeguard against the resumption of active fighting.) The 1953 Armistice Agreement was meant to be temporary, and its text calls for its replacement with a political settlement for peace.
- A peace agreement may not be the only way to resolve the longstanding Korean conflict, but it would be the clearest political expression by all parties of their intent to establish new relations free from past enmity and create the conditions for all parties to begin to draw down their arms.

- Of course, a peace agreement alone does not guarantee peace. Ultimately, the political will of the people and commitment by governments are necessary to ensure the agreement is honored. That is why the role of Congress and civil society is critical for lasting peace in Korea.

## ARE YOU ADVOCATING FOR NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA TO REUNIFY? AND IF SO, WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE?

- We believe the two Koreas should decide their own fate. Ending the war will give Koreans the space and freedom to determine how they want to move that process forward. Keeping war on the table never allows for such dialogue and debate.

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KOREA PEACE NOW



## WHAT DOES HR 152 SAY ABOUT DENUCLEARIZATION?

- The resolution “supports ongoing diplomatic engagement to address the nuclear- and ballistic missile-related activities of North Korea.” Its premise is that we need to end the ongoing state of war in order to get to denuclearization. Trust is needed to negotiate. That’s why the resolution calls for declaring a formal end to the war as a first step.

## WHY DOES THE U.S. HAVE TO SIGN A KOREA PEACE AGREEMENT? ISN'T THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAS?

- The main parties to the 1950-'53 Korean War were North and South Korea, China, and the U.S. (as head of the UN Command). Except for the U.S., all parties have since declared peace or normalized relations.

“Ending the Korean War is “the only way to ensure true security for both Korean and American people.”  
— President Jimmy Carter

- In the Panmunjom Declaration (April 2018), the two Koreas declared that “there will be no more war and a new era of peace has begun on the Korean peninsula.” They have since taken concrete steps to transform the DMZ into a peace zone.
- China has normalized relations with the U.S. and South Korea.
- Within the UN Command, 14 of 16 countries that fought in the Korean War have normalized relations with North Korea, and many have embassies in Pyongyang. The U.S. and France are the only countries without diplomatic relations with North Korea, and France has a liaison office in Pyongyang.
- The U.S. is a key party to the ongoing war as it has wartime operational control in Korea. If war resumes, the U.S. will command the U.S.-R.O.K. combined forces and execute the Pentagon’s operational plans.
- Americans do not want more war; it’s time for the U.S. to formally end the Korean War and replace the armistice with a peace agreement.

## IS NORTH KOREA SERIOUS ABOUT DENUCLEARIZATION?

- U.S. officials who have succeeded in freezing North Korea’s nuclear weapons program argue that Pyongyang will give up its nukes only when it no longer feels threatened by the U.S. The best way to remove the threat on both sides is to establish peaceful and normal relations.
- In his 2019 New Year’s address, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country will “neither make and test nuclear weapons any longer nor use and proliferate them.”
- At the U.S.-D.P.R.K. summit in Vietnam, North Korea offered to end all nuclear and missile tests and dismantle the entire Yongbyon nuclear complex under U.S. supervision in exchange for a partial lifting of sanctions. According to leading nuclear scientist Siegfried Hecker, who has visited the nuclear site four times, Yongbyon is “the heart of their nuclear program.”

## CAN WE TRUST NORTH KOREA AS A NEGOTIATING PARTNER?

- As long as the U.S. and North Korea engaged in dialogue, North Korea has honored its commitments:
  - From 1994 to 2001, North Korea froze its nuclear program under the Agreed Framework (negotiated by the Clinton administration).
  - North Korea restarted its nuclear program when President George W. Bush reneged on U.S. commitments and declared North Korea part of the “axis of evil.”
  - North Korea accelerated its nuclear weapons program during the Obama administration, when the U.S. did not engage at all.
- The only way to know if we can trust North Korea is by negotiating and holding them to their word.

## HOW CAN WE MAKE PEACE WITH A REGIME THAT VIOLATES HUMAN RIGHTS?

- The state of war is used by governments to justify national security states. Ending the Korean War will go a long way toward improving the human rights of Koreans and Americans.
- Engaging North Korea through cultural and humanitarian initiatives and integrating them into the global economic community are more effective means of bringing about change in North Korean society than isolation through sanctions.
- Sanctions take a significant humanitarian toll on the North Korean people, restricting the work of humanitarian aid organizations. While the North Korean government is responsible for the well-being of its people, the U.S. and UN also play a role in affecting the day-to-day conditions of the North Korean people through the imposition of sanctions.
- If we are truly concerned about the human rights of the North Korean people, we should end isolation and sanctions, such as removing obstacles for inter-Korean economic cooperation.

## HOW CAN WE TRUST DONALD TRUMP OR KIM JONG UN?

- The real question is what policies and actions will make the world safer — especially for the 80 million Koreans and the 28,500 U.S. troops on the Korean Peninsula? The two countries have to shift away from mutual hostility and threats of destruction. Ending the war is the first step.

“I believe that normalization is essential in achieving denuclearization. They go together hand in hand.”  
— William Perry, former U.S. Secretary of Defense

## ISN'T KIM JONG UN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF OTTO WARMBIER?

- The death of Otto Warmbier was a terrible tragedy. His life may have been saved had the U.S. and North Korea had a diplomatic channel of communication, such as a liaison office. This is precisely why the U.S. needs to end the state of war with North Korea and normalize relations — so that such tragedies can be avoided in the future.

## HASN'T THE UNITED STATES STOPPED ITS LARGE-SCALE JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES WITH SOUTH KOREA?

- Although their scale has decreased, U.S.-R.O.K. joint military exercises continue. U.S. war operation plans still include rehearsing the collapse and occupation of North Korea. The springtime Key Resolve exercise has been renamed Alliance 19-1, and the fall Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise has been renamed Alliance 19-2.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO U.S. TROOPS IN KOREA AND THE U.S.-R.O.K. ALLIANCE AFTER A PEACE TREATY IS SIGNED?

- The legal basis of the U.S.-R.O.K. alliance is the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty. A peace agreement between the U.S. and North Korea has no legal bearing on the Mutual Defense Treaty, which can only be terminated by the U.S. or South Korea. Whether or not U.S. troops should remain in Korea should be ultimately determined by the South Korean people.

## WON'T LIFTING SANCTIONS MEAN GIVING UP OUR ONLY LEVERAGE FOR DENUCLEARIZING NORTH KOREA?

- Decades of sanctions have not had the intended effect on North Korea. On the contrary, pressure and isolation through sanctions have only strengthened North Korea’s resolve to become a nuclear power.
- North Korea will give up its nuclear weapons only when it feels the U.S. no longer poses an existential threat to its country. The only way to remove the threat on both sides is to end the Korean War and normalize relations.

- At the U.S.-D.P.R.K. summit in Vietnam, North Korea offered to end all nuclear and missile tests and dismantle the entire Yongbyon nuclear complex in exchange for a partial lifting of sanctions.
- Engagement and integration of North Korea into the global economic community are more effective means of bringing about change in North Korean society