



American Sanctions Over North Korea

For Prelims: North Korean missile launches, 38th parallel, Korean Armistice Agreement.

For Mains: Korean War, Korean Armistice Agreement, Cold War, Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003, THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence), American Sanctions Over North Korea.

Why in News

Recently, the US has imposed its first sanctions over **North Korea's weapons programs** following a series of [North Korean missile launches](#).

- These sanctions were aimed both to prevent the **advancement of North Korea's programs** and to impede its **attempts to proliferate weapons technologies**.
- North Korea is continuing its missile program despite several [UN Security Council](#) resolutions and the international community's calls for **diplomacy and denuclearization**.

Key Points

- **Origin of Divide in Korean Peninsula:**
 - The present-day conflict between the US and North Korea can be traced from the [Cold War](#) between the **USSR and US**.
 - After the defeat of Japan in [World War II](#), the Allied forces at the **Yalta Conference (1945)**, agreed to establish a "four-power trusteeship over Korea".
 - The fear of the spread of **communism (state ownership over economic resources of a country)** and the **mutual distrust between the USSR and the US** led to the failure of the trusteeship plan.
 - Before a concrete plan could be formulated, the **USSR invaded Korea**.
 - This led to a condition where the **north of Korea was under the USSR** and the **south under the rest of the allies, mainly the US**.
 - The Korean peninsula was divided into two regions by the **38th parallel**.
 - In 1948 the United Nations proposed free elections across all of Korea.
 - **The USSR rejected this plan** and the northern part was declared as **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)**.
 - The election took place in the **American protectorate** resulting in the establishment of the **Republic of Korea (South Korea)**.
 - Both North Korea and South Korea tried to enhance their reach, territorially and ideologically, which gave birth to the Korean Conflict.

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▪ The Korean War:

- On 25th June 1950, North Korea, backed by the USSR, launched an attack on South Korea and occupied most of the country.
 - In response, the **United Nations force led by the US retaliated.**
- In 1951 the US forces led by Douglas MacArthur crossed the 38th parallel and triggered the entry of China in support of North Korea.
 - To prevent further escalation, peace talks began later in 1951.
- **India was actively involved in negotiating peace** in the Korean peninsula by engaging all the major stakeholders - **US, USSR and China.**
 - In 1952, the **Indian resolution on Korea was adopted at the United Nations (UN).**
- On 27th July 1953, the **Korean Armistice Agreement** was signed between the UN Command, the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army.
 - It led to an **official ceasefire without a Peace treaty.** Thus, the war officially never ended.
- This also led to the establishment of the **Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)** - a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula to serve as a buffer zone between North Korea and South Korea.
- In December 1991, North and South Korea signed a **pact agreeing to refrain from aggression.**

▪ US-North Korea Conflict:

- During the **Cold War era, (allegedly with the support of Russia and China)** North Korea accelerated its nuclear programme and developed nuclear capabilities.
 - During the same time, the **US extended its Nuclear Umbrella** (guarantee of support during a nuclear attack) to its allies i.e South Korea and Japan.
- North Korea withdrew from the **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003** and afterwards, under **present leader Kim Jong-un, it increased nuclear missile testing.**
 - North Korea is **barred from testing ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons**

under international law.

- In response to this, the US started deploying **THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence)** in South Korea in March 2017.
 - The territorial conflict which started between North and South Korea has **transformed into a tussle between the US and North Korea.**
 - Following the failure of diplomatic efforts to improve relations with North Korea, **the US has imposed sanctions.**
- **India's Stand:**
- India has **consistently voiced its opposition to North Korean nuclear and missile tests.** However, it has maintained a **neutral stance** regarding sanctions.

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