



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9376th meeting

Thursday, 13 July 2023, 5.10 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Kariuki	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Ms. Dautllari
	Brazil	Mr. França Danese
	China	Mr. Zhang Jun
	Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	Japan	Mrs. Shino
	Malta	Mr. Camilleri
	Mozambique	Mr. Kumanga
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Switzerland	Mrs. Chanda
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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The meeting was called to order at 5.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Khiari.

Mr. Khiari: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched its Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile on 12 July. That was its second launch of its new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile. As we have previously briefed the Security Council, solid-propellant missiles do not need to undergo fuelling prior to launch and can therefore be launched more quickly than liquid-propellant missiles. The missile was launched on a lofted trajectory from the Pyongyang area at 10 a.m. local time and reportedly flew for a distance of approximately 1,000 kilometres and to an altitude of approximately 6,600 kilometres before falling into the sea inside the Russian Federation's exclusive economic zone. The flight was reported to have lasted approximately 74 minutes, making it potentially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea longest-duration ballistic-missile flight. The systems that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea tested on 12 July, 13 April, 16 March and 18 February, as well as on five occasions last year, can reach most points on Earth. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea did not issue airspace or maritime safety notifications for the launch. As recently reiterated by the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unannounced launches represent a serious risk to international civil aviation and maritime traffic.

The Secretary-General strongly condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of yet another ballistic missile of intercontinental range. He reiterates his calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations under all the relevant Security Council resolutions and to resume dialogue without preconditions leading to sustainable peace and the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The official news agency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said that the latest launch of the Hwasong-18 ballistic missile was to "deter the dangerous military moves of the hostile forces". The Democratic People's Republic of Korea also announced that the country would strengthen its so-called nuclear deterrent in line with its five-year military development plan unveiled in January 2021. That plan provides for the development of specific capabilities, many involving the country's pursuit of its nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes, in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea significantly increased its missile-launch activities in 2022 and 2023, including more than 90 launches using ballistic-missile technology.

As we have previously informed the Council, on 31 May the Democratic People's Republic of Korea attempted to launch its first military satellite with what it described as a new type of carrier rocket using ballistic-missile technology. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea reported on its failure and reiterated that it would conduct a second launch as soon as possible. While it is the right of any sovereign State to launch a satellite and to benefit from peaceful space activities, the relevant Security Council resolutions expressly prohibit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from conducting any launches using ballistic-missile technology.

Key peace and security issues, such as the situation on the Korean peninsula, must be an area for cooperation. We welcome the Security Council's commitment, as expressed in resolution 2397 (2017), to a peaceful, comprehensive, diplomatic and political solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula. The status quo is alarming and unsustainable. In a fortnight we will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Korean War Armistice Agreement. It is a tragic reality that seven decades later, the tensions persist and remain unresolved. As we have previously informed

the Council, there are several practical measures that can be taken to reduce tensions, reverse the dangerous dynamic and create space to explore diplomatic avenues. While I will not reiterate their details, I do emphasize the importance of re-establishing communication channels, particularly between military entities, and of exercising maximum restraint. It will be critical to avoid an unintended escalation. In addition, pending the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, it is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintain the highest level of safety at its nuclear facilities.

I would like to once again highlight our concerns about the humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United Nations is ready to assist the country in addressing the basic needs of its vulnerable populations. Given the positive advancements in the area of vaccines and treatments, and the declaration by the Director-General of the World Health Organization on 5 May that the coronavirus disease is no longer a public health emergency of international concern, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to allow the unimpeded re-entry and rotation of personnel from the international community, including our staff and the Resident Coordinator. That collective return will have a positive impact by supporting the people, bolstering relations and, importantly, strengthening communication channels. Diplomacy, not isolation, is the only way forward. In that regard, I would like to acknowledge the participation of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea in this meeting.

Let me conclude by stressing that the unity of the Security Council on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is essential if we are to ease tensions and overcome the diplomatic impasse. The primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security rests with the Council.

The President: I thank Mr. Khiari for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the 12 July intercontinental ballistic-missile (ICBM) launch by the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea. It is alarming, if hardly surprising, that we find ourselves back in the Security Council responding to yet another unlawful intercontinental ballistic-missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is alarming because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already launched 20 ballistic missiles in 2023, including four ICBMs. The launches are violations of multiple Security Council resolutions. They have raised tensions in North-East Asia and beyond and they are designed to help refine and further develop the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic-missile programmes. Let us be clear about what that is — 20 tests of nuclear-weapon delivery systems. That launch follows a series of threatening statements from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the most recent ones from Pyongyang against United States aircraft operating in international airspace. But as I said before, that is unfortunately unsurprising.

As Council members, we all have a mandate and responsibility to confront the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unlawful and unjustifiable development of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction. The sheer number of those ballistic-missile launches over the past year and a half should not erode our capacity to meaningfully respond to nuclear proliferation. In fact, it should strengthen the Council's resolve to reject the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's attempts to expand its WMD and ballistic-missile programmes. Countering nuclear proliferation should be an issue that unites us. It certainly was in 2017, when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea last joined us for a meeting (see S/PV.8137). However, two Council members now appear to disagree. Russia and China have prevented the Council from speaking with one voice. With its repeated launches, Pyongyang is demonstrating that it feels emboldened, perhaps even encouraged, to continue in this manner because China and Russia have consistently prevented the Council from taking action to halt those transgressions. None of that should be acceptable.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea dismisses the Council, threatens its neighbours and refuses the humanitarian assistance offered to its people. Those are not the actions of a responsible Member State, and the United States will not allow the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its defenders to make a mockery of the Council. I want to reiterate that the United States remains committed to

diplomacy. Publicly and privately and at senior levels, we have repeatedly urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in dialogue. We have made it clear that we have no preconditions for engagement and that we are prepared to discuss any topic of concern to Pyongyang. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not responded to our offers.

That status quo is untenable. I do not want us to be back here next month for another briefing in response to a ballistic-missile launch or nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but I fear that if the Council continues to remain silent, that is very likely where we will be. In 2017 the Council's unity stopped the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from launching another ICBM for five years, and that is what we should aim for again. We call on all Council members today to join us in denouncing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unlawful behaviour and fully implementing all Security Council resolutions in order to curb the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's generation of revenue for its WMD and ballistic-missile programmes.

We hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's direct participation today demonstrates that it is ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy without preconditions. But if not, the Council should unite, as we did in 2017. Let us return to the era when we used our collective voice to address nuclear proliferation as a threat to international peace and security.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Khiari for his briefing.

France condemns in the strongest terms North Korea's launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile on 12 July. In the past, such missile launches were denounced through the adoption of new Security Council resolutions, because everyone felt it represented a major risk to regional stability and international security and because we knew that those missiles are primarily intended to carry nuclear weapons. However, the number of those launches has multiplied, and the Council has remained divided and silent. I say in all seriousness that we cannot stand idly by.

North Korea has now launched 20 ballistic missiles in 2023, including four of intercontinental range, in flagrant violation of numerous Council resolutions. That is particularly worrisome in view of the escalation in recent weeks and because North Korea has declared itself an irreversible nuclear Power. To do nothing or

to go along with it trivializes nuclear proliferation, which amounts to accepting that proliferation crises will multiply elsewhere in the world tomorrow. Indeed, it also amounts to accepting dangerous destabilization in the region and puts the authority of the Council's decisions directly in question. France will not resign itself to North Korea becoming a nuclear State, and that position has been unanimously and consistently reiterated by the Council, too.

To halt the escalation, we must fully apply all unanimously adopted international sanctions and fight every effort to circumvent them, including in the cyber and maritime fields. Faced with such provocations, our priority is renewing our dialogue, without preconditions, so that North Korea can abandon its programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. Proposals have been made in that regard. It is up to the North Korean authorities to take advantage of them and to the States of the region to encourage them. We are determined to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. In that context, the Council should set an example and enforce its own decisions. We urgently need a united and resolute response from the international community.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

Let me start by expressing Albania's firm condemnation of the intercontinental ballistic-missile (ICBM) launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 12 July. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to openly ignore the United Nations, the Security Council and the international community, as well as the established norms and rules that bar it from acquiring and using ballistic technologies. The latest step by the regime reaffirms once more that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is seeking only escalation by endangering the region and the international community with its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic-missile programmes.

We further deplore the violation of the resolution 1718 (2006) sanctions regime concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Despite international sanctions, North Korea has continued to develop its nuclear-weapon and missile programmes — and it is not doing it alone. Countries must therefore implement the relevant sanctions and not allow the regime's unlawful programmes to expand or proliferate. We regret that the voice of the majority of the members of the Council, calling for a clear and

strong reaction to the illegal, unprovoked and reckless actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, continues to be ignored. Such an attitude no longer sounds like de-escalation or caution and prevents the Security Council from taking concrete action. We are also deeply concerned about the inflammatory rhetoric that Pyongyang has been using recently. We call on the regime to refrain from unfounded accusations and escalatory steps.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of WMD, ballistic-missile and nuclear programmes has come at a heavy cost to its people and the overall humanitarian situation in the country. The recent reports of increased food shortages and mounting numbers of deaths due to starvation in the country are very concerning. The oppressive policies of the regime are affecting children as well, and not only through malnutrition. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is gravely violating the Convention on the Rights of the Child by ordering children to collect scrap metal that can be used in weapons manufacturing. We deplore such actions and the militarization of children by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and call on the Security Council to react to such policies.

While the gravity of the humanitarian situation is as dire as the human rights violations in the country, we reiterate our concern that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regime is committing brutal human rights violations to expand its abilities as a proliferator. In order to de-escalate the situation, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reinstate its moratorium on ICBM launches, which was abolished last year and has been causing a lot of concern; refrain from cyberattacks and destabilizing actions; start respecting fundamental human rights through the implementation of the conventions it has ratified, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and refrain from conducting a seventh nuclear test.

In that regard, it is important for the Council to be united and call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to open the door to unconditional dialogue for ending fully, transparently, comprehensively and irreversibly its WMD, ballistic and nuclear programme in order to contribute to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and to global peace and security.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I too thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing.

I must begin by expressing my greatest regret that North Korea launched yet another intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), in violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. That latest ICBM is estimated to have landed in waters near Japan, just 250 kilometres from Hokkaido. Once again, it endangered vessels, exposed aircraft in the surrounding area to great risk and terrified Japanese citizens. Japan condemns in the strongest possible terms North Korea's dangerous act and would like to remind the international community that it is a clear violation of international law and constitutes a threat to peace and security.

The threat goes far beyond Japan, the Republic of Korea and the region. The missile, which is reportedly North Korea's new type of solid-fuel ICBM, Hwasong-18, is estimated to have flown 1,000 kilometres, with an apogee of over 6,000 kilometres and a duration of 74 minutes — the longest ever. Calculations based on the flight trajectory indicate that the estimated capable range of the missile could exceed 15,000 kilometres. That means all of Asia, all of Europe, all of North America, all of Africa and even part of South America would be within range of that delivery system of unlawful nuclear warheads. North Korea has been advancing its unlawful weapons of mass destruction development steadily and boldly as an implementation of its strategic planning, while taking full advantage of the Security Council's silence and inaction. Its actions are disrespectful of the Council and the Charter of the United Nations.

We should all ask ourselves: is it our job to sit back and wait for North Korea to steadily develop the capability to target the world with nuclear weapons and take the entire international community hostage? Do we have to acknowledge North Korea as a nuclear State? We all know the answer: absolutely not.

I daresay it is getting harder to count the number of Council meetings in response to North Korea's ballistic missile launches, because there are just too many provocations and too many Council meetings without any tangible and responsible action. Yet it is our duty to face this challenge. Let us go back to the basics to make sure that this will not be the new normal. The Council bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and in fulfilling its responsibility, the Council unanimously

adopted resolution 2397 (2017), the most recent resolution adopted in the face of threats posed by North Korea. In the resolution, the Council decided to take action if North Korea were to launch an ICBM or conduct a nuclear test. Even a single ICBM launch requires the Council to take action. That has been our determination. How many ICBMs have we witnessed without taking any action?

Some argue that the role of the Council should be to ease tensions and not to single out North Korea's behaviour alone. We do not deny that different countries have different views. At the same time, let me clearly point out a truth that no one should deny: there is no excuse for North Korea to continuously violate the relevant Security Council resolutions and for the Council to continue to disregard violations of its own resolutions. Japan once again reiterates its sincere and strong expectation that the Council will fulfil its responsibility. Let us do our job.

In conclusion, Japan once again urges North Korea to immediately and fully comply with all relevant resolutions and to resume substantive dialogue with the countries concerned towards complete denuclearization. The path to dialogue remains open.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his important and informative briefing today.

Malta is deeply concerned about yet another launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of an intercontinental ballistic missile. This marks an alarming technological advancement in the country's missile programme. The missile travelled more than 1,000 kilometres over the course of 74 minutes — a worrisome new record.

The Security Council cannot remain silent in the light of those developments. Malta strongly condemns that launch — a blatant violation of resolution 2397 (2017). We recall that the Council adopted that resolution unanimously. At the time, it had also established that it would act and place further restrictions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the face of new launches. Malta joined others in calling for today's meeting, as it recognizes that the launch — the fourth one this year — constitutes a grave threat to regional and international security. Those acts erode the global non-proliferation regime. Yet the Council was unable to respond to any of the launches in 2022, and we remain firm in our belief that that trend must

be reversed. The Council cannot be silent in the face of such provocations. The persistent inability to act would simply undermine the Council's credibility as the guarantor of international peace and security.

Furthermore, this launch is only the latest act in a deeply concerning pattern of reckless behaviour by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In parallel to missile launches, it also announced a new doctrine that sets out conditions in which it would use nuclear weapons, including pre-emptively. We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in meaningful dialogue towards denuclearization and to adhere to its obligations under Security Council resolutions. It must completely, verifiably and irreversibly abandon its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes and return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards. We also call on Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Malta also remains deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in the country. The World Food Programme estimates that 10.7 million people are undernourished and in need of emergency relief. However, those serious humanitarian needs continue to be ignored by the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Instead, it chooses to allocate its resources to costly ballistic missile launches and its illegal weapons programme. It also continues to restrict humanitarian access. Malta calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to restore access to the United Nations and other humanitarian actors in order to provide its population with the aid it requires.

In closing, I would like to remind the Council of our shared objective: peace and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. To achieve that objective, we need unity and action, while divisions and delay would only push it farther out of reach. In that regard, Malta remains supportive of adopting a Council product.

The President: I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing. I welcome the participation of the Republic of Korea, and, for the first time at the Council since 2017, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United Kingdom condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of yet another intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). This was the twelfth ICBM launch since the start of 2022. It was the second test of a solid fuel ICBM, and the fourth ICBM test this year. It came in the wake of a failed military reconnaissance satellite launch on 31 May. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's actions violate multiple Security Council resolutions and demonstrate flagrant disregard for the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We must be firm and united in our response to these violations. Inaction by the Council cannot continue.

It is clear from listening to the statements made today that Council members share a deep concern about the situation on the Korean Peninsula. With that in mind, I call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to, first, abandon its illegal nuclear and ballistic weapons programmes, which are impoverishing its people and destabilizing the region; secondly, to return to compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; thirdly, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and finally, to take up repeated and unconditional offers of dialogue. Allowing diplomats and civil society organizations back into the country is an important part of that process. Diplomacy is the only route to making progress towards a sustainable peace on the Peninsula.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mrs. Ngyema Ndong (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his presentation. I welcome the presence at this meeting of the representatives of North and South Korea.

In our view, this umpteenth long-range ballistic missile, launched on 12 July by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the direction of the East Sea, shows a frequency of launches that is likely to be sustained over the long term and to accentuate the nuclear threat in the region. In fact, for several months now, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been firing more and more powerful missiles on a more or less regular basis, raising fears each time of escalation or of a point of no return.

The ensuing verbal one-upmanship also contributes to inflaming tensions. In such a context, how can we hope for a return to peace? How can we hope to

re-establish the climate of trust needed to resume negotiations? Gabon considers it all the more urgent to find lasting solutions to the security situation on the Korean Peninsula, which is becoming a bit more fragile by the day. One way or another, discussions between all parties must resume in order to find an outcome that can guarantee security and peaceful coexistence in the region.

As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Gabon condemns this umpteenth violation of international law, which threatens international peace and security. We call for de-escalation and restraint. We take this opportunity to reiterate our call, however idealistic, for a world without nuclear weapons. The tensions we are witnessing on the Korean Peninsula support our firm belief that dialogue and diplomacy must be prioritized in order to preserve our gains and to make it possible to pursue our non-proliferation efforts.

Mrs. Chanda (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing and welcome the participation of the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea in our deliberations.

Once again, the Council is meeting because of a ballistic missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The development and operationalization of increasingly dangerous nuclear delivery systems by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea represents, together with its nuclear programme, a threat to the entire international community. Switzerland condemns this fourth launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile this year. It takes place in a tense security situation, and Switzerland is concerned about the risk of escalation inherent in such an act, which is often accompanied by inflammatory rhetoric. We recall the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons. Switzerland considers that the use of nuclear weapons can hardly be envisaged in compliance with the relevant rules of international law in general, and international humanitarian law in particular. We must step up our efforts in favour of non-proliferation, disarmament and maintenance of the nuclear taboo.

Faced with these repeated challenges, we must not waver in our collective duty. That is why the Council must assume its responsibilities. I would like to highlight three aspects.

First, those launches are in violation of legally binding Security Council resolutions and therefore of international law. It is therefore our collective duty to condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ballistic missile tests. Switzerland reiterates that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is required to implement its obligations pursuant to Council resolutions and to take concrete steps to abandon its nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We recall that, while the obligations arising from the resolutions apply primarily to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, they also apply to all other States, which are required to implement Security Council sanctions effectively.

Secondly, Switzerland stresses the importance of the efforts made by the Council to ensure that humanitarian aid remains possible and is not adversely affected by the sanctions. The unity of the Council that enabled the adoption of resolution 2664 (2022) is proof of our common objective in that respect. The heavy restrictions put in place by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in connection with the coronavirus disease pandemic have seriously hampered international humanitarian aid since 2020. We hope that they will soon be lifted. The needs of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must not be forgotten, and their human rights must be respected, as the development of nuclear and military programmes only comes at the expense of serious human rights violations and leads to a precarious humanitarian situation.

Thirdly, the Council and the United Nations as a whole have an important role to play in encouraging dialogue, de-escalation and the search for diplomatic solutions. There is a willingness to conduct and support dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We welcome the call for the Secretary-General's good offices and encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage constructively with the Council and the United Nations system.

In two weeks' time, we will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement. Switzerland, which has been involved in its implementation since 1953 through the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea, regrets that a more permanent solution has not yet been found on the Korean Peninsula. If a political solution is to be found, the Council needs to break its silence. Its call for dialogue

should be articulated around a united position. We encourage all members to seek consensus. Switzerland will support all efforts to achieve that unity.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea in this meeting.

China's position on the Korean peninsula issue is very clear. We are committed to the denuclearization of the peninsula, the maintenance of peace and stability on the peninsula and the political settlement of the issue through dialogue. The situation on the Korean peninsula continues to be tense and is becoming increasingly confrontational, which is not what China wants to see. China has taken note of the recent launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are also concerned about the heightened military pressure and the repeated dispatches of strategic weapons by a certain country to carry out military activities on the peninsula. None of those incidents happened in isolation. If this vicious circle persists, the peninsula issue will not only be intractable, but the situation will further escalate.

As a legacy of the Cold War, the peninsula issue persists to this very day. In essence, it is a political and security issue, and its crux is the absence of a peace mechanism. The United States and other countries have long regarded the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a security threat and are obsessed with imposing sanctions and pressure. As a result, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea faces an enormous security threat and an existential pressure. The legitimate security concerns of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have never been addressed. Starting this year, in particular, the United States and other countries have carried out joint military exercises on the peninsula on an unprecedented scale, featuring highly targeted and provocative drills, issued the Washington Declaration to intensify the extended deterrence and continued further and further on the path of military pressure. Such an approach will only intensify confrontation and tension, as is borne out by the reality on the ground.

The history of the Korean peninsula issue since the 1990s clearly shows that dialogue and negotiation are the only correct and effective way to ease tensions on the peninsula and promote a political settlement. As

long as the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea resume dialogue and negotiation and meet each other halfway, the situation on the peninsula will remain stable, and there will be hope for a political settlement. Instead of accusing other countries of obstructing the Security Council's actions, the United States should instead propose practical solutions, take meaningful actions to respond to the legitimate concerns of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and translate its stance of unconditional dialogue into action.

The point of departure for the Security Council to address the Korean peninsula issue should be to ease the situation and promote long-term peace and stability, rather than simply imposing sanctions and exerting pressure, let alone being reduced to a tool for certain countries to achieve their geopolitical interests. The key to maintaining the prestige and authority of the Security Council is to promote political solutions and enhance solidarity and mutual trust. All parties should fully implement the resolutions related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, especially the provisions on the resumption of dialogue and political settlement, which must not be selectively ignored. The starting point for the draft resolution on Democratic People's Republic of Korea jointly sponsored by China and Russia is to send a positive signal of goodwill, create conditions for the resumption of dialogue and a turnaround of the situation and promote the political settlement of the issue. I call on the countries demanding Council action to seriously consider the joint China-Russia proposal.

The Cold War has long since ended, but the spectre of the Cold War mentality lingers. It has not only rendered intractable the peninsula issue, but has also intensified antagonism and conflict around the world. To this day, NATO, as a product of the Cold War, has been mired in this spectre and cannot extricate itself. The communiqué issued at the recent NATO summit in Vilnius was as long winded as it was repetitive, with the same old tunes touting Cold War thinking and ideological prejudice. The communiqué ignores basic facts and makes far-fetched, irrelevant and unwarranted attacks and accusations against China. China firmly rejects these utterly hypocritical recriminations.

In fact, it is NATO itself that really needs to do some serious soul-searching. Contrary to its claim of being a regional organization, NATO breaks through the geographical scope stipulated by its own treaties

by projecting its power across the globe and advancing eastward into the Asia-Pacific region, thereby increasing its negative and destructive impact on regional and even global security. NATO claims to be a defensive alliance, but it encourages its members to continuously increase military spending, conduct military activities around the world and continue to cross borders, expand their powers and provoke confrontation. NATO claims to defend the rules-based international order, but it has repeatedly violated international law and the basic norms governing international relations, interfered in the internal affairs of other countries, ignited multiple wars, bombed diplomatic establishments, killed innocent civilians and left a dirty trail wherever it goes. Some NATO members practice double standards, promote nuclear sharing and nuclear alliance and further exacerbate regional tensions. As attested by countless facts, the real troublemaker is NATO itself.

NATO's accusations against China are totally groundless. China is a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of the international order. China firmly upholds the international system, with the United Nations at its core; the international order, based on international law; and the basic norms of international relations, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. On issues of peace and security, China boasts the best record of any major Power. We have never invaded other countries, engaged in proxy wars, conducted military operations around the world, threatened other countries with force, exported our ideology or interfered in the internal affairs of other countries. Can NATO do any of these? China adheres to the policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances and unconditionally undertakes not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones. Can NATO member States pledge the same? I want to point out that China does not cause trouble, but it is not afraid of trouble. We stand ready to firmly and forcefully respond to any acts that violate China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, undermine China's security and development interests and breach the peace and stability of China's neighbourhood.

In the era of globalization, the world shares weal and woe. No one lives in a vacuum, and no country enjoys absolute security. If countries want to achieve their own security, they must not ignore the legitimate security concerns of other countries, base their

own security on the insecurity of other countries, erect their own security fences on the doorsteps of others or give themselves carte blanche to set fires, at will, while preventing others from lighting lamps. Security is indivisible. That is a feature of our times and the starting point for achieving common security. China has always adhered to the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. President Xi Jinping's global security initiative is China's answer to the current international security dilemma and a guiding light to the realization of common security. China stands ready to work with the international community to build a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture through good-faith and pragmatic dialogue and cooperation and promote lasting peace and common security.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his informative briefing, and I welcome the participation of both the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the representative of the Republic of Korea in today's meeting.

The United Arab Emirates joins the Secretary-General in his strong condemnation of the latest unlawful ballistic-missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 12 July. The United Arab Emirates' message today is clear: this cycle of dangerous activities and escalation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must end. Furthermore, the Democratic People's Republic's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and brinkmanship are threatening not only the security and stability of the region, but that of the wider world. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing violations are eroding the non-proliferation regime and undermining our collective security.

Once again, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea failed to provide advance warning of the launch, putting international civil aviation and maritime traffic at risk. These launches continue to pose an imminent threat to civilians in neighbouring countries, who live in fear of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's actions. We express our solidarity with the people of the Republic of Korea and Japan in the threats they face. We reaffirm that civilians anywhere, including within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself, should not be subjected to arbitrary threats such as these.

With regard to the most recent launch, I would like to make three points.

First, yesterday's test was not an isolated event. It is reported to be the twentieth ballistic missile tested by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this year, and the fourth of an intercontinental range. All these launches have been in flagrant violation of the Security Council's resolutions. We reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect its obligations and refrain from further launches.

This most recent missile intercontinental ballistic-missile launch was another alarming example of the unlawful progression of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic-missile capabilities. It is reported that the so-called Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) flew for approximately 74 minutes, potentially making it the longest flight ever for an ICBM by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's capabilities are becoming ever more dangerous and threatening. With the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's increased ballistic-missile activities since 2021, it is only a matter of time before there is a miscalculation or an accident resulting in the death of civilians.

Secondly, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's actions with regard to its illegal ballistic-missile and weapons of mass destruction programme continue to violate the clear prohibitions set out by the Security Council. The Democratic People's Republic should return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and work to achieve peace in the Korean peninsula through complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. In order to achieve this goal, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to return to the country.

Thirdly, the seventieth anniversary of the Korean Armistice is a sobering reminder that sustainable peace in the Korean peninsula remains elusive. All parties must double down on diplomatic efforts and dialogue to bring about stability and prosperity. Through constructive engagement, all concerns can be addressed at the negotiating table. We encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to heed the calls of the international community and return to dialogue without preconditions.

We continue to be concerned that, while attention is focused on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unlawful ballistic-missile tests, the dire humanitarian needs of civilians in the country remain unmet. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is in the midst of its lean agricultural season, when food insecurity is expected to be at its most acute. We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to re-establish its dialogue with the United Nations and enable the return of humanitarian organizations to the country as soon as possible.

In the past, Council unity prevailed on this matter and served to send a clear message that the Council would not allow nuclear proliferation. The United Arab Emirates will continue to encourage a return to this unity so that the Council can fulfil its responsibility to support the work towards peace and security in the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing to the Security Council and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of the brotherly countries of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in today's meeting. We note this to be the first time since 2017 that a representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea attended one of our meetings on this subject (see S/PV.8137). We hope that this engagement will facilitate the efforts of the Security Council to ensure a peaceful Korean peninsula.

The Council's meeting today is against the backdrop of heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula following the test of a Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which analysts estimate flew for 74 minutes, the longest ever flight time for a North Korean missile. This act by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea violates its international obligations as expressed in multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. We deplore this most recent launch, which has come on the back of several others, and we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions by refraining from further launches with ballistic-missile technology.

We are also concerned about the risk of military confrontation, including as a result of unintended effects or a miscalculation of actions. The escalating tensions and threats of military actions could lead to devastating consequences for the peninsula, and for

international peace and security. We therefore urge all concerned parties to take immediate and concrete steps to de-escalate the tensions on the Korean peninsula.

We reiterate our conviction that a principled and pragmatic approach based on diplomacy, dialogue and trust-building is what is needed to incrementally foster conditions that allow for constructive engagements between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other major parties on its weapons programme. We underscore the need for the resumption of constructive and credible dialogue among the concerned parties and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to find an enduring, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the issues on the Korean peninsula and in a manner that recognizes regional and global security concerns, as well as those of the parties. The envisaged and acceptable solution cannot anticipate a State with nuclear capabilities on the Korean peninsula nor the possibility of there being a nuclear arms race in the region.

Before concluding, I would like to underscore that we must find improved ways of sustaining the Council's unity on this matter, as other colleagues have also indicated in their statements. While difficult options have to be embraced, we should be bold enough to accept them because time may not be on the Security Council's side if we wait too long. Our responsibility is to steer the region away from the path of catastrophe and preserve the peace and the lives of people in the region.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his informative briefing. I acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at today's meeting.

Ecuador reiterates its strongest condemnation of the recent second launch of a solid-fuel ballistic missile with intercontinental range by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2023, which adds to the dozens of missile launches it had previously undertaken. This is not an isolated event. It once again defies the provisions of the Security Council and undermines the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

I must once again recall that, with resolution 2397 (2017), adopted unanimously, the Security Council expressed its determination to take further significant steps in response to any new launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We must therefore send a strong signal, implementing the decisions of this same body.

The launch of an intercontinental missile of any kind is in itself a threat to regional and international peace and security. If the Council's response continues to be delayed, we could be reinforcing an unacceptable exception for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Ecuador supports all efforts to achieve a diplomatic and political solution enabling the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We therefore encourage greater cooperation and dialogue in good faith.

In the light of the foregoing, I conclude by reiterating my delegation's call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its obligations under international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Security Council.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing. I also welcome to this meeting the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of the Republic of Korea.

Brazil once again condemns in the strongest terms the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 11 July. The launch violated relevant Security Council resolutions, put at risk maritime and air safety, as well as endangered neighbouring populations.

The 74 minutes of flight time make it the longest test flight for a missile of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to date. If reports are correct in identifying the missile as a Hwasong-18 ICBM, it shows further progress in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's solid-fuel missile programme and further steps in their nuclear capabilities.

Those developments point to a harsh reality that we must face squarely in the Council: our approach to this file simply has not worked. Neither the inaction of the past five years nor the nine rounds of sanctions of the previous decade have been able to adequately address the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear and missile programmes.

We are disappointed when we see discussions in the Council become polarized around a false choice: returning to the pre-2018 paradigm of uniting around new and broader rounds of sanctions or remaining silent so as to avoid provoking the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Every new launch makes it clearer that a new approach is needed. We believe the Security Council has an important role to play that is neither as a silent observer, nor as a mere forum for approving sanctions.

The Council, and the United Nations as a whole, has much to contribute. It can help initially to rebuild trust between parties, so as to open a window for engagement. Once that window is open, it can use its expertise and its political weight to help build and sustain a diplomatic process. Finally, it can endorse and verify the results of any agreement, making its results more transparent and legitimate to all parties involved. Chapter VI gives the Council a wide toolbox that remains underexplored in this file.

We have been encouraged by the expressions of interest we have received over the past few months in discussing the broader diplomatic role for the Council and the United Nations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea file. We hope to continue to develop those ideas in the coming months and remain open to discussing them with any Member State that may wish to do so.

We note the presence of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in this Chamber today, after a long hiatus, and expect this to be a positive sign for diplomatic engagement. I reiterate that engagement, not isolation, remains the best path towards achieving our shared goal of a Korean peninsula that is stable, peaceful and free of nuclear weapons. The most recent launch makes us more convinced of that, not less.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have listened to the briefing by Mr. Khaled Khiari. We note again that neither in today's briefing nor yesterday's statement by the Secretary-General was there any mention of a number of factors that have a direct impact on the situation around the Korean peninsula.

Russia has consistently opposed any military activity that would threaten the security of the Korean peninsula and the countries of North-East Asia. This meeting was called by the United States, Albania, France, Japan, Malta and the United Kingdom regarding a missile launch. However, once again, we must draw attention to the actions of the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan, which continue to increase the scale of regional exercises and military interaction in the framework of their concept of so-called extended

deterrence. For some reason, some Council members attempt to downplay that factor, even though it actually defines the context of the current developments. We have repeatedly cited examples of that negative trend, but from meeting to meeting their number only increases. For example, in mid-June, for the first time in a long time, a United States nuclear submarine took part in exercises off the Korean peninsula; at the end of June, there were a number of United States-Korean air exercises that included the participation of United States fighter jets and strategic bombers.

Clearly, such actions have a destabilizing effect not only on the situation in North-East Asia, but also on the entire Asia-Pacific region. The ongoing militarization of the region, including through plans to move part of NATO's military infrastructure there and attempts by the United States and its allies to create new dividing lines in the region by establishing alliances with restricted membership to oppose certain States that Washington finds objectionable, has a major negative impact on global stability.

Moreover, we should not overlook the extremely ambiguous and contradictory signals from the allies of the United States in North-East Asia, Japan and the Republic of Korea about so-called strengthened cooperation with the United States in the military sphere. Those statements go so far as to think out loud about deploying United States nuclear weapons on their territory or even developing such weapons of their own.

In the context of the specific situation on the Korean peninsula that the Security Council is discussing today, it is clear that the military activity of the United States and its allies in the subregion is by definition contrary to the goal of de-escalating tensions. In its discussions on the issue, the Security Council has no right to ignore that factor, despite the persistent attempts of certain States to impose a one-sided vision of current developments, blaming the current escalation on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea alone. We must also bear in mind Pyongyang's well-known and publicly stated position, as well as the long history of the Korean settlement, which shows that there is no alternative to resolving the issues of the peninsula except through dialogue. It is clear that the build-up of military activity, with Washington taking the lead, followed blindly by Tokyo and Seoul, which have opted out of any independent comprehensive analysis of the situation, only postpones the resumption of such

dialogue. That appears to be a deliberate provocation of a major crisis around the Korean peninsula, which creates risks of potentially dangerous developments.

I recall that Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea call for seeking a political and diplomatic settlement of the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The most recent developments around it testify to the need for an immediate de-escalation, a rejection of provocations and a return to negotiations. In that regard, we once again draw attention to the Russian-Chinese plan of action for a comprehensive settlement of the situation on the Korean peninsula, which includes concrete steps in various areas. Its implementation will undoubtedly require ensuring a mutually respectful dialogue and taking into account the legitimate concerns and rights of all States involved, including, of course, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, we have yet to see any degree of willingness to take such a step. Moreover, given the position of certain members of the Security Council, it is criminal that so little attention continues to be paid to finding ways within that framework to help to resolve the problems that have snowballed in the subregion.

We underscore that the draft resolution co-sponsored by Russia and China to address political and humanitarian issues also remains an option. We are convinced that discussing it and its potential adoption would yield far greater benefits than all other intentionally skewed "products", including those that adhere to the policy of increasing pressure through sanctions, which is both pointless in form and inhumane in substance. Easing restrictions by the Council would not be a "gift" to Pyongyang, which Western States assert it does not deserve, but rather a long overdue step, which would, inter alia, enable the restoration of an environment of trust and demonstrate to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea the Council's willingness to comprehensively fulfil its functions under the Charter of the United Nations.

At recent Council meetings, we have repeatedly heard about the need to restore the Security Council's unity with regard to the situation on the Korean peninsula. We believe that that is a truly achievable and far from difficult goal, as long as all members of the Council, instead of promoting propaganda, are prepared to fulfil their obligations in responding objectively and impartially to threats to international peace and security, while taking into account all the

factors that underlie such threats, and engage in good faith in constructive and substantive discussions to find a concrete solution to the entire set of issues on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Kumanga (Mozambique): Mozambique would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his important briefing. We acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea at this meeting.

We have long been concerned about the prevailing tensions on the Korean peninsula. Our well-founded concerns were further justified by another launching of an intercontinental ballistic missile on 11 July. At the heart of our concern is the fact that the launching constitutes a flagrant violation of the Security Council resolutions on the matter. It is not just the Council's authority that is at stake; global peace and security continue to be placed at risk. The Korean peninsula, like the world at large, deserves peace, security and stability. To that end, all parties concerned must refrain from taking unilateral actions that could jeopardize stability in the region. In that context, we demand full compliance by all parties involved with the Security Council resolutions on the Korean peninsula.

We live in an era in which humankind is being threatened by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. All of us need to shoulder the responsibility of keeping the peace. That is a tall order, and one which derives from the Charter of the United Nations. All States Members of the United Nations, individually and collectively, are duty-bound to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In that regard, Mozambique reaffirms its call for dialogue and negotiated solutions for the sake of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The exercise of the right to self-defence is a legitimate right of sovereign States, which nobody can deny, as it is recognized under the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Our test-fire of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) had no negative effect on the security of neighbouring countries. Japan announced that our ICBM landed outside its exclusive economic zone, which is tantamount to Japan

acknowledging that no risk was posed to its security. Moreover, our test-fire of a new type of ICBM — the Hwasong-18 — is a warranted exercise of the right to self-defence to deter dangerous military actions by hostile forces and safeguard the security of our State and peace in the region without fail.

A Security Council open briefing on the legitimate exercise of the right to self-defence of a sovereign State is a contradictory action that denies the fundamental principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, enshrined in the Charter and norms of international relations. We categorically reject and condemn the convening of this Security Council briefing by the United States and its followers, which encroaches upon the legitimate right of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to self-defence, since it constitutes an illegal and reckless act of violating the spirit of the Charter and international law.

Currently, the military provocations of the United States and its followers against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are increasing at an unprecedented rate, and, consequently, the military security dynamics on the Korean peninsula are nearing a nuclear crisis surpassing that of the cold war era. In April, the United States cooked up the Washington Declaration, a platform for a nuclear showdown with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As a follow-up, the United States is openly planning to deliberate on the use of nuclear weapons against our Republic through the meeting of the United States-South Korea Nuclear Consultative Group, which will be the parent body of the United States-Japan-South Korea tripartite nuclear alliance.

In addition, it is unprecedentedly driving the regional situation to the brink of a nuclear war by frequently deploying nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear strategic bombers in and around the Korean peninsula and conducting large-scale joint military exercises. Nowhere in the world other than in the Korean peninsula are such extremely provocative and aggressive nuclear-war exercises taking place so frequently and on an annual basis, with the ultimate goal of eliminating from the region a single sovereign State. What is more serious is that the United States is attempting to redeploy nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula by dispatching a nuclear submarine to South Korea for the first time in 40 years, while resorting to extremely provocative aerial espionage activities by infiltrating the sovereign airspace of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. United States nuclear

strategic bombers have been dispatched to the Korean peninsula a number of times within the period of one month. A cruise missiles-loaded nuclear submarine was deployed in South Korea and Japan. The United States strategic nuclear submarine carrying hundreds of nuclear warheads and 20-odd ICBMs deployed in South Korea poses a serious threat not only to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and neighbouring countries, but also to the countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

Such reckless military moves by the United States constitute an outright provocative act of an aggressive nature that is pushing the situation on the Korean peninsula towards an actual armed conflict — far beyond the constant military preparedness posture aimed at a belligerent party. As such, it is having a negative impact on the regional military and political situation and the security architecture.

Here is a question for those who insist that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's exercise of the right to self-defence, including missile fire drills, poses a threat to international peace and security: how do the deployment of nuclear assets, the conduct of joint military exercises and the aerial espionage activities committed by the United States contribute to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula? The joint United States-South Korea military exercises involving nuclear assets, with the very dangerous and unrealistic aim of eliminating a sovereign State from the region, constitute very risky acts that could spark the disaster of a nuclear war on the Korean peninsula. Such acts are genuine threats to international peace and security, which must be dealt with by the Security Council.

The Security Council should explain why dozens of United States nuclear war drills involving all sorts of strategic nuclear assets are not regarded as a threat to international peace and security, while our single test of an ICBM is regarded as such. At the very least, the Security Council should explain why it ignores the fact that the United States' extremely dangerous military provocations pose a significant threat to the security of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

At present, the Security Council is taking a very dangerous path under the influence of the high-handedness and arbitrariness of the United States and its handful of followers. It is an act of flagrant disregard for the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take issue with our legitimate exercise of

the right to self-defence alone, without any discussion of the validity of the overstepping military moves by the United States and South Korea.

If the exercise of the right to self-defence of a United Nations Member State aimed at safeguarding its sovereignty and security in defiance of the military threats of the United States continues to be disputed, and if the provocative and risky muscle-flexing of the United States continues to be granted impunity, the international community will take for granted the United States' attempted military attacks and aggressive actions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is tantamount to instigating the outbreak of a nuclear war on the Korean peninsula. If its ignoring of the military arbitrariness of the United States leads to military attacks and aggression against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, resulting in a most horrible disaster, such as a nuclear war on the Korean peninsula, can the Security Council bear the responsibility? If not, the Security Council is faced with two options: the first is to refrain from obstructing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's exercise of the right to self-defence; and the second is to denounce and deter the United States' anti-peace behaviour.

A one-sided dispute of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's exercise of the right to self-defence in the face of the hostile policy and military threats of the United States, under the single pretext of violations of Security Council resolutions — which were forcibly adopted by the United States and its followers — really is a most irresponsible and ill-minded act and a total abandonment of moral obligations and consciousness towards international peace and security.

If the military alliance activities of the United States and South Korea remain intact and only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea efforts to bolster self-defensive deterrence are accused as provocations, it will result in fostering military asymmetry on the Korean peninsula and destroying the balance of power. Desired or not, whether an extreme situation takes shape on the Korean peninsula will heavily depend on the United States' upcoming moves. If an abrupt situation takes place in the future, the United States shall bear full responsibility for it.

In conclusion, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will actively join the efforts of the international community to ensure world peace and security and establish a fair and just international order. It will fulfil

its role and responsibility in the struggle to safeguard peace and stability on the Korean peninsula in the future as well.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Joonkook Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting of the Security Council. My gratitude also goes to Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

The Republic of Korea condemns in the strongest possible terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches, including its launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on 12 July, local time. Just after the launch, Pyongyang's State media announced that the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was once again present to observe the launch of the so-called Hwasong-18 ICBM, which is a new type of solid-fuel ICBM.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea even tried to justify the unlawful launch by claiming that it had no negative effect on the security of neighbouring countries. Here, I cannot help but ask the question: how can an ICBM launch ever make neighbouring countries feel safe?

Since the beginning of last year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has launched more than 90 ballistic missiles, including 13 long-range ballistic missiles, meaning that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has violated the relevant Security Council resolutions more than once per week.

It is deplorable that the Security Council has remained silent in the face of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's repeated reckless behaviour. It is a perfect example of its total disregard for international norms, as well as a brazen mockery of the functioning of the Security Council. It is ironic that a Member State that categorically rejects the authority of the Council still gets the opportunity to spread its absurd propaganda.

Once again, I would like to emphasize that even a single ballistic missile launch clearly constitutes a violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. Moreover, each and every launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea allows Pyongyang to advance the technological development of increasingly sophisticated means of delivering nuclear warheads.

In the face of that grave threat to international peace and security, the Council has been paralysed since it failed to adopt a resolution against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ICBM launch in May 2022 owing to opposition by two permanent members (see S/PV.9048). Furthermore, no individuals or entities have been newly designated on the sanctions list of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) during the past five years, while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has increasingly developed its sanction evasion techniques. It is deeply troubling that we are gathering again and again to address the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's repeated provocative actions, almost every month, without any concrete result.

We must clearly demonstrate that the international community's will towards the denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is stronger than its reckless will to develop nuclear arsenals. In the current situation, our unified voice of condemnation and international sanctions may be the only way to pressure Pyongyang into reconsidering its ill-advised policy and behaviour and to return to diplomacy. As such, it is imperative to ensuring the full implementation of the Council's resolutions. The incomplete implementation of sanctions by some countries and the ensuing loopholes should be addressed quickly. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea profits massively by continuing to evade sanctions and exploit key loopholes through malicious cyberactivities, overseas Democratic People's Republic of Korea labourers and illicit ship-to-ship transfers of refined petroleum products and coal, to name but a few examples.

It is regrettable that some still make a false equivalency between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unlawful provocations and the Republic of Korea-United States long-standing and defensive combined military exercises. As we have pointed out over and over again in the Council, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has developed its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programmes based on its own playbook. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea even claims that its illicit nuclear and ballistic missile programmes are the result of the so-called hostile policy of the Republic of Korea and the United States. But, what on earth is the substance of such a hostile policy? Pyongyang is the one that continually

reinforces its hostile policy towards the international community by endangering the world with the most aggressive nuclear doctrine in the world.

In fact, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's spreading of false narratives to use as a pretext for provocative actions does not stop there. Before and after the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's most recent ICBM launch, it made an explicit threat by saying that a special incident may occur against normal flight activities above international waters and made the groundless argument that the sky above the economic water zone is its territorial airspace. No other country claims such nonsense except the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is another example of propaganda by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to foment a crisis and threaten its neighbours. I strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop those threats and return to dialogue and diplomacy.

Some estimate that the number of deaths from starvation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has surged compared to previous years due to exacerbated food shortages. Sadly, even under those miserable circumstances, the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea has yet again prioritized its expensive and unlawful ICBM provocations. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's reckless pursuit of a growing nuclear arsenal and its gross and systematic human rights abuses are indeed two sides of the same coin. My delegation urges all Council members to support the revival of public Security Council meetings on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to address the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issue in a holistic manner.

This year we sombrely mark the seventieth anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement, which resulted from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's invasion of the Republic of Korea in 1950. It is simply appalling to witness how the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has consistently threatened the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula, the region and beyond. The Republic of Korea reiterates that the door for dialogue remains wide open. We once again strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately cease its destabilizing actions and respond to our repeated calls for serious dialogue.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.