

## Summary of Our “1994 Agreed Framework” with North Korea Prepared for Members of Congress

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### **A Dangerous Misimpression**

Our major nuclear deal with North Korea, known as the 1994 Agreed Framework (AF), is mistakenly seen as a failure. That erroneous belief creates a major barrier to reining in North Korea’s nuclear program and increases the risk that the Iran nuclear deal will be scuttled. If nuclear diplomacy with North Korea failed, the reasoning goes, why should Iran be any different? But, as this summary shows, we got far more from the AF than North Korea did.

### **What we got from the AF**

North Korea shut down its research reactor and put its fuel rods under international control so their plutonium could not be extracted. It did not do its first nuclear test until 2006, four years after the Bush administration terminated the AF and it regained access to those fuel rods.

North Korea stopped construction of a larger nuclear reactor that would have made enough plutonium for approximately 10 bombs per year and that was a few years from completion. It also stopped construction of another reactor that was about five years from completion and that would have made enough plutonium for 40 bombs per year.

### **What North Korea was supposed to get from the AF**

We agreed to replace the two partially completed reactors with more proliferation resistant reactors. The replacement reactors never were completed and, when the AF was terminated in 2002, both of the partially completed reactors were so badly damaged from eight years of exposure to the elements that they had to be abandoned.

Until the replacement reactors were completed, we agreed to send North Korea heavy fuel oil to make up for the energy that its larger reactors would have produced. Our fuel oil shipments stopped after less than 10 years, whereas the reactors North Korea had been building would have produced energy for roughly 50 years—along with large amounts of plutonium.

North Korea wanted better relations with the US as a hedge against China and we agreed to “move toward full normalization of political and economic relations.” That never occurred.

### **Why we terminated the AF**

The Bush administration accused the North Koreans of cheating by doing uranium enrichment. While that violated the spirit of the AF, it was not a technical violation since neither the word *uranium* nor the word *enrichment* appears in the [text of the AF](#).

### **What We Can Do Now**

We need to stop insisting that new talks be about denuclearization of the Korean peninsula since that is code for unilateral nuclear disarmament by North Korea—not a realistic first step. We need to give North Korea positive incentives to freeze its nuclear and missile programs, build trust over time, and then focus on those programs’ elimination.

North Korea has repeatedly ([January 2015](#), [January 2016](#), and [June 2017](#)) suggested that it would stop nuclear testing if we would stop our annual war games with South Korea. We need to explore how serious these overtures might be instead of ignoring or rejecting them.

The [Conyers-Markey bill](#) would prohibit the president from executing a first strike against North Korea without Congressional approval. It was introduced on 26 OCT 2017 with 60 cosponsors and needs more support to become law. Study the bill and, if you agree, sign on and encourage your colleagues to do the same. It is [H.R.4140](#) in the House and [S.2016](#) in the Senate.

*For more information on North Korea, see pages 192-201 in the [free PDF of my book](#).*