

A STUDENT SIMULATION: THE SIX PARTY TALKS

GRADES: 10-12

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SUBJECT: World History, AP Human Geography, World Area Studies

TIME REQUIRED: Two to three class periods

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the significance of the Six Party Talks as a method of solving the North Korean nuclear crisis.
- Understand the contemporary relationships between North Korea, China, the United States, Russia, Japan and South Korea.
- Examine the political relationship among the members of the Six-Party Talks.
- Compare and contrast the political, ideological and economic differences between North Korea and South Korea.
- Evaluate variables in the diplomatic situation that could affect the outcome of the talks.
- Use a problem solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, and choose and implement a solution.
- Compare the relationships between and among countries with differing economic systems.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Computers with Internet access
- Handout 1: Background Information Sheet (attached)
- Handout 2: Scenario Cards (attached)
- Preparation sheets for members of the six delegations (attached)

PROCEDURE:

1. Place students into six cooperative groups within the classroom. Assign “delegations”—one for each of the countries that participate in the Six-Party Talks.
2. Pass out the Background Information Sheet (Handout 1, one to each student) and the Preparation Sheets (one for each member of the specific delegations). Allow the delegations at least one class period to research their country’s position on the North Korean nuclear situation and to understand their country’s political situation in relationship to North Korea.
3. Select scenario cards (Handout 2). Allow the delegation further time to research the specific situation and prepare possible solutions and actions as a response to the crisis. Allow students to select a delegate from each group to act as the primary spokesperson in formal negotiations.
4. Group the desks in a “U” formation or circle for classroom discussion. Delegates will then “formally meet” at the bargaining table to attempt to resolve the crisis. Encourage students to use appropriate procedures for debate and discussion.

EVALUATION: Evaluate students on the basis of participation, preparation and creativity of their solution to the crisis.

RESOURCES:

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HANDOUT 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET

THE SIX PARTY TALKS—A BRIEF HISTORY

The Six Party Talks evolved out of a need to find a solution to growing concerns over North Korea's nuclear capabilities. North Korea announced that it possessed these nuclear capabilities when confronted by U.S. State Department envoy James Kelly in 2002. Pyongyang claimed their nuclear program of uranium enrichment was designed to generate nuclear power, but stated that as a sovereign nation they had they were "entitled to possess nuclear weapons . . . in the face of a U.S. threat." In December of 2002, North Korea expelled all International Atomic Energy Inspectors, further heightening tension. In January of 2003, North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The United Nations Security Council expressed concern, but did not condemn North Korea from withdrawing from this treaty.

In April of 2003, informal talks between the United States, North Korea and China were held in Beijing. U.S. officials expressed concern over a veiled threat from North Korea about the possible testing of nuclear weapons. The first official round of the Six-Party Talks was conducted with Japan, South Korea, the United States, China and Russia in August of 2003. North Korea again threatened to test a nuclear bomb.

From October 2003 to July 2005, the nations involved in the Six-Party talks have endeavored to find a solution to the crisis that might evolve on the Korean Peninsula. Various programs to alleviate some of the stress on North Korea—such as South Korea's "Sunshine Policy" (a program of humanitarian aid and family visits between North and South Koreans)—have done little to help the situation. At present, no solution has been reached in this ongoing crisis.

Maintaining a balance of power and dealing with issues amicably is critical for keeping peace in the region. Your mission as a delegate is to deal with a potential crisis and determine the best solution for all nations involved.

HANDOUT 2: SCENARIO CARDS

Situation 1

Japan, bowing to the wishes of 60-percent of their population, changes their Constitution and develops a large military.

Situation 2

The United Nations formally recognizes Taiwan as a sovereign nation.

Situation 3

Instead of removing troops, the United States decides to expand its military presence in South Korea.

Situation 4

Russia's 2006 elections place a majority of Communist Party members into the Duma. A Communist is likely to be elected in the 2008 presidential election.

Situation 5

Famine in North Korea forces a mass exodus across the Chinese border into Jilin Province.

Situation 6

An American spy plane crashes into an area close to the Hwangcho Pass in North Korea.

Delegates _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

PREPARATION SHEET FOR THE DELEGATION FROM THE UNITED STATES

Your Concerns:

Any potential strike against North Korea by the United States would result in an almost suicidal strike by North Korea against South Korea.

Economic sanctions do not work—the government of North Korea values its military capability more than the lives of its people.

As America plans to withdraw 12,500 troops and move South Korean bases further from the border of North and South Korea, concerns over the collapse of the North Korean regime pose potential problems.

Research the number of American troops and bases in South Korea. Where are the major bases? What branches of the military are represented? How many American troops are currently stationed in South Korea?

Delegates _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

PREPARATION SHEET FOR THE SOUTH KOREAN DELEGATION

Your Concerns:

The Sunshine Policy was not effective in reducing tensions between South Korea and North Korea.

South Korea feels trapped between North Korea and the United States. The North Koreans are kinsmen. They share the ancestors and many cultural values with South Koreans.

South Korea wants to continue to promote reunions between family members from South Korea and North Korea.

In the event of a nuclear "incident"—either intentional or accidental—heavily populated South Korea could suffer tremendous casualties.

What was the Sunshine policy? Why was it ineffective?

What does South Korea provide in aid to North Korea?

How are reunions between family members from the North and South conducted?

Delegates _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

PREPARATION SHEET FOR THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION

Your Concerns:

Nuclear weapons seem to be the only way to deter attacks from the United States.

Nuclear weapons make your bargaining position stronger.

Your nation is dependent to some extent on aid from China. If the issues at hand are not settled and handed over to the United Nations to resolve, the United Nations will force China to cut aid.

At the present time, China is the only nation providing crude oil to North Korea. What else does North Korea import, and from which nations?

Which nations provide humanitarian aid for North Korea?

Delegates _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

PREPARATION SHEET FOR THE CHINESE DELEGATION

Your concerns:

You do not want North Korea to have nuclear capabilities. To allow this to might encourage the United States to provide weapons to Taiwan.

Maintaining the status quo is beneficial: at present your economy is growing at an unprecedented rate.

It would be disadvantageous for North Korea to give in to pressures from South Korea and the United States quickly. Turmoil could result on the Chinese-North Korean border.

Research the ongoing issues between the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Why might these issues be a consideration in your negotiations?

Approximately one million ethnic Koreans live in China, in relative proximity to the border with North Korea. How might this factor into negotiations?

Delegates _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

PREPARATION SHEET FOR THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION

Your Concerns:

As a nation, you have little diplomatic leverage in this conflict. You share no borders with North Korea, and have not committed troops in the area.

Russia is suffering from internal conflicts that limit public and political interests in North Korea. The Russian people are more concerned with issues of Slavic nationalism, Euro-Russianism and Atlanticism.

Russia provides no financial support for North Korea, so your political influence is negligible.

What is Atlanticism? Why is this a concern for Russia?

What current political and economic issues face Russia today?

PREPARATION SHEET FOR THE JAPANESE DELEGATION

Your concerns:

As a country, you have limited political leverage. :Your traditional policy has been to follow and support the United States.

You have little economic leverage. Japan does not engage in trade with North Korea.

You have little diplomatic leverage. Japan has no diplomatic ties with North Korea.

The Japanese people are still resentful over the abduction issue.

The Japanese constitution does not provide for a large military. Peace education has been encouraged since 1945.

Research the release of Japanese prisoners of North Korea that occurred in October of 2002. Why did North Korea kidnap these Japanese citizens? How did the Japanese public respond to their return? What impact might this incident have upon the negotiations?

How extensive is Japan's military? Why?