

A WORLD IN MOTION



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THE NUMBERS:

US-NORTH KOREA



27.07.1953

The date the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed - a truce, not peace



230,000+

The estimated combined fatalities from the US bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (over 37% of their populations) to end WWII



6,800

The estimated number of US nuclear weapons



60

The estimated number of North Korean nuclear weapons

TRUMP AND KIM AGREE TO HISTORIC MEETING



By Andrew Richards

President Donald Trump has agreed to a historic first meeting with Kim Jong-un in a stunning development in America's high-stakes nuclear standoff with North Korea. Standing in front of the White House, South Korean National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong announced the first ever meeting between a US president and North Korean leader, which he said would take place by the end of May. Mr Trump hailed "great progress" in the push to persuade Pyongyang to end its nuclear weapons program. "Meeting being planned!" he tweeted. "Kim Jong Un talked about denuclearization with the South Korean Representatives, not just a freeze. Also, no missile testing by North Korea during this period of time." (AFP)

History

Since 1985 the world has been at odds with North Korea over its nuclear programme. Since then, various attempts have been made to either denuclearise North Korea, or at least help guide its nuclear programme towards the responsible use of nuclear energy.

In 1991, after a request from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect North Korean nuclear facilities, Kim Il-sung reiterated his counter-demand (first made in 1985) that the United States first withdraw its nuclear weapons from South Korea. The US (under leadership of President George HW Bush) agreed to the withdrawal of all tactical nuclear weapons deployed near North Korea - then estimated at 100 nuclear weapons. The US concession led to the 1992 signing of the 'South-North Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula', allowing for IAEA officials to

inspect the North's nuclear facilities and confirm whether the Il-sung regime were keeping to its commitment of denuclearisation. In 1994, it emerged that North Korea was not keeping to its commitment and had produced at least two nuclear weapons. Soon thereafter North Korea withdrew from the agreement and engaged in a 'cold war' with the US.

Since 1994, North Korea has tested six nuclear bombs, the latest a 100-kiloton yield bomb, five times stronger than the one that destroyed the Japanese city of Nagasaki during WWII. In response, the US placed nuclear strike capable Navy vessels in the region, with up to 30 000 troops stationed in South Korea. The latest deployment of US defensive weaponry was the placement of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) missile system in South Korea.

Peace offering, or a trap?

To date, dialogue between Mr Trump and Mr Kim, has never been that of equal peers, especially when considering their respective nicknames for each other, "little rocket-man" and "mentally deranged dotard". But that's all about to change, with some analysts even suggesting this could win the Nobel Peace Prize for Mr Trump.

The world was preparing for a nuclear showdown when Mr Trump promised "fire and fury" on North Korea and the North responded that they would create an "enveloping fire" around Guam if the US continued their threats. Then, almost out of nowhere, came a meeting between the North and South before the Winter Olympics and Kim Jong-Un's sister leading a delegation to the South during the games. The world was further surprised when dialogue between the two Koreas continued after the games, ending in an invitation to Mr Trump, to meet with Mr Kim in May, to discuss its denuclearisation.

To the amazement of his own political establishment, Mr Trump agreed to, what could well be the most prominent meeting of the century. If Mr Trump succeeds in cutting a deal, ending the North Korean nuclear crisis, his second term as US

NEWS HEADLINES



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met **Coptic** Pope Tawadros II at Cairo's largest Coptic cathedral, St. Mark's. This marks the first visit of its kind by a senior Saudi official to the seat of the Coptic Orthodox patriarchate. They tackled bilateral ties between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, stressing the role of different religions and cultures in bolstering tolerance and shunning violence, extremism and terrorism.



US President Trump has replaced US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson with CIA Director Mike Pompeo and tapped Gina Haspel to lead the CIA. His departure represents the biggest shakeup of the Trump Cabinet so far and had been expected since last October when reports surfaced about a falling out between Mr Trump and Tillerson who left his position as chief executive of Exxon Mobil to join the administration.



UK Prime Minister Theresa May said it was "highly likely" that Russia was behind a mysterious chemical attack on a former Soviet double agent, on UK soil — a strike that threatens to increase tensions between London and Moscow. In a statement, May requested that Russia help her government understand exactly what happened. If Moscow doesn't comply, the UK will consider the poisoning to be "an unlawful use of force by the Russian state against the United Kingdom."

President is certainly in the bag. However, military advisers and the media alike are warning that Mr Kim's invitation could be a trap.

As in 1985, North Korea may commit to denuclearisation only if military threats against it are cleared and the security of its regime is guaranteed. This implies that the US remove its defences against the North so that the North would have no need for nuclear weapons to protect itself. Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Non-proliferation Program at Middlebury Institute of International studies, maintains: "Kim is not inviting Trump so that he can surrender North Korea's weapons. Kim is inviting Trump to demonstrate that his investment in nuclear and missile capabilities has forced the United States to treat him as an equal."

Furthermore, if the US withdraws its troops from South Korea, in a show of good faith towards the North, South Korea's defence against an attack by the North will be severely impacted. If history is any indication of North Korea's commitment to denuclearisation agreements, the South could be vulnerable to invasion.

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Donald Trump's meeting with Kim Jong-Un could potentially have a similar effect to when Richard Nixon (in 1972) met with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai (and Chairman Mao Zedong). China became more open to the west after that. It is hoped that

Mr Trump's visit to North Korea could similarly lead to an easing of the persecution of Christians. Donald Trump's boldness in Saudi Arabia (2017), addressing Arab leaders on their responsibility to tackle Islamic terrorism led to the Arab embargo of Qatar. If Mr Trump continues to confidently tackle diplomatic challenges, such as North Korea, the result could be historic, especially for the Church.

There has clearly been another role player in this incredible turnaround of events, one who is able to stop nuclear war. This role player probably carries the most weight but is seldom mentioned or praised for His efforts. If man was left on his own, without the hand of God holding back destruction, nuclear war could have destroyed humanity long ago. And, because Christians have been praying for years, for peace, God has shown mercy.

However, when the country where Christians are most persecuted and the country with the most Christians come together to discuss peace, there is sure to be a clash in the spiritual realm. It is therefore imperative that Christians continue to pray for both leaders, especially in light of this potentially historic meeting.

PRAY > For the proposed meeting between these two key leaders to go ahead > For a mighty breakthrough in negotiations to de-escalate tensions and bring about transformation > For the long-suffering and severely persecuted remnant Church in North Korea

TERROR ATTACKS IN BURKINA FASO MORE BRAZEN



By **Donnelly McClelland**

Burkina Faso's leaders urged vigilance Saturday [3 March], a day after brazen Islamic extremist attacks on the army headquarters and French Embassy in the capital, which killed eight people. An al-Qaida-linked group based in neighbouring Mali claimed responsibility for the assaults. It was the third attack on Ouagadougou in just over two years and it was aimed directly at the army's central command and the heavily guarded embassy, raising concerns that extremists are growing bolder in their assaults on the West African nation. The attack on the army headquarters narrowly missed a conference of top military leaders, indicating the extremists may have had inside information. (*US News*)

Who is the JNIM?

The Group to Support Muslims and Islam – Jama Nusrat Ul-Islam wa Al-Muslimin (JNIM), issued a message claiming responsibility for the attacks in Ouagadougou. Part of a wider coalition linked to al-Qaeda, JNIM comprises several jihadist factions, including Ansar Eddine, al-Mourabitoun, and the

Macina Liberation Front. It is headed by Iyad ag Ghali, a Malian Tuareg. JNIM said the attack was in retaliation for a French airstrike on 14 February, which killed several JNIM leaders, including Mourabitoun deputy al-Hassan al-Ansari, and Malick ag Wanasnat, a close associate to Ghali.

Why Burkina Faso?

Burkina Faso (a landlocked West African nation, bordering troubled Mali, is one of the poorest countries in the world) has long been spared the violence found elsewhere in the Sahel, until jihadists struck two years ago. On 15 January 2016, 30 people - including 11 foreigners - were killed in a jihadist attack on a hotel and restaurant in the city centre. On 13 August 2017, two gunmen opened fire on a restaurant, killing 19 people and wounding 21. In this latest attack, however, two highly symbolic targets at the heart of power in the country: the army headquarters and the French Embassy, were struck. Both these targets are heavily protected, indicating a growing confidence and improved capabilities of terror groups in the area.

According to an article in *AFP*, Burkina Faso is: "A country whose security apparatus has been battered by the ouster of a dictator with military roots, and where poverty and unemployment provide jihadists with fertile ground for recruitment."

Paul Koalaga (quoted in *News24*), a professor of geopolitics and security expert asserts: "Burkina Faso is the 'soft underbelly' of the region. It has been fighting terrorists since 2015 - a commitment that has been strengthened by the G5 Sahel - and a riposte was just waiting to happen."



Sick and injured civilians left a rebel enclave in **Syria's** eastern Ghouta under the first medical evacuation since one of the deadliest assaults of the seven-year war began nearly a month ago. The army also evacuated hundreds of fighters and their families from a separate small rebel-held pocket south of Damascus.



The **EU** urged US President Donald Trump not to head down "a dead end" road of protectionism and warned of a damaging trade war over his new steel and aluminium tariffs. Economy ministers underlined that the EU — the world's biggest trading bloc — supports free and open trade but that its 28 countries will respond if they are targeted by the US tariffs, which are set to come into force soon.



Authorities in north-eastern **Democratic Republic of Congo** say more than 40 new deaths have been reported in an area where fighting has erupted between two communities in recent weeks. The latest cycle of violence between the Hema and Lendu communities broke out in December. More than 150 people are now believed to have died over the three-month period. Tens of thousands have fled the area in fear.

The G5 Sahel

The G5 Sahel, a 5,000-strong force combining troops from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania (all backed by France) was launched in 2017 to battle extremism in the region. Several extremist groups (including JNIM) have vowed to step up the bloodshed in response to the recent deployment of the multinational G5 Sahel force. By December 2017 the G5 had secured funding, begun formal planning for its relationship with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and conducted two operations in the border areas between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. According to Burkina Faso's minister of security, a meeting on the G5 may have been in progress at the army headquarters when the 2 March attack happened. In its statement, JNIM wrote that it wants to discourage the "Burkinabé regime and others that raced to join the G5 and fight on behalf of the French".

Fate of hostages

According to the *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin*: "On 1 July 2017 – a day before the G5 Sahel force was launched - JNIM released a disturbing video entitled 'The Correct Equation' in which al-Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, explains the Islamic doctrine of retaliation (Qisas) ['eye for an eye']. It was in that context that JNIM provided 'proof-of-life' of six captives: four Christian aid workers: Gloria Narvaez (Colombia), Sophie Petronin (France), Beatrice Stockly (Switzerland) and Ken Elliot (Australia), along with Romanian expatriate, Mr Iulian Ghergut, and South African charity worker, Stephen McGown, who subsequently converted to Islam and was released."

JNIM's message seemed clear, 'you kill ours, we will kill yours – or you can redeem them with cash'. As the pressure increases, so JNIM needs more funds, and these hostages are a means to collect much-needed revenue. On 29 January 2018 JNIM released a video featuring captive Gloria Narvaez, presenting her as abandoned, JNIM directed its appeal first to

Pope Francis and then to Narvaez's family. On 1 March (a day before the twin-attacks in the capital) JNIM released a short video featuring French hostage Sophie Petronin (72), lying on a cot looking exceedingly frail.

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

The *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin* highlights the plight of these hostages and their impact in the region: "The four Christian aid workers presently held by JNIM are not merely suffering believers targeted for their faith. Each one represents a frontline Christian ministry that had been taking the very practical love of God into a dark and desperately needy region. Sophie Petronin, a doctor specialising in nutrition and tropical diseases, founded and ran the medical charity 'Aide a Gao' (Help Gao). She had served the children of Gao, Mali, for 15 years before being abducted on 24 December 2016. The clinic in Djibo (northern Burkina Faso) which Dr Ken Elliot (82) built and had run with his wife Jocelyn since 1972 – is still the only medical clinic in that remote, impoverished region – has been closed since Dr Elliot's abduction two years ago. Before he was taken, Dr Elliot had been hoping to find someone to take over the practice as the Elliots are long past 'retirement' age."

These Christian workers, and those who they have been faithfully serving for years, need the global Church's help in this heated spiritual battle. While military forces like the G5 engage in the physical battle, Christians need to focus on the battle against evil spiritual forces. However, the challenge is also to continue the hard work of those who currently languish at the hands of terrorists, to dispel the darkness with physical demonstrations of Christ's love.

PRAY > For the G5 Sahel group to effectively counter terrorism in the area > For Christian hostages to impact the lives of their captors > For believers to continue the work started by those now held captive

NUCLEAR WAR: AN EVER-PRESENT DANGER



By Andrew Richards

President Vladimir Putin announced an array of new nuclear weapons on Thursday [1 March], in one of his most bellicose speeches in years, saying they could hit almost any point in the world and evade a US-built missile shield. Putin was speaking ahead of an election on 18 March that polls indicate he should win easily. He said a nuclear attack on any of Moscow's allies would be regarded as an attack on Russia itself and draw an immediate response. **(Reuters)**

Ever-present danger

With the Russian president making such boastful statements as to their nuclear capabilities and threatening anyone who attacks them, the thought of an all-out nuclear war comes to mind. Especially considering US President Donald Trump's proposal to upgrade the US nuclear arsenal. A proposal originally directed at North Korea, who has in recent days indicated an openness to denuclearisation talks.

But talk of nuclear war has always been a topic of backroom politics, and the idea that one country can be responsible for the deaths of thousands within seconds of launching a nuclear missile, is perhaps the one thing that has stopped it from happening. After the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 the world realised not only the destructive capabilities of such bombs, but also the huge responsibility the ownership of them carries. Yes, in short, the bombing of Japan sent such a big message to Japan that it led to the end of WWII, but it also encouraged others, like the Soviet Union, to pursue their own nuclear weapons as a safeguard against their enemies.

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The nuclear club

Today there are nine countries that have nuclear bombs as part of their weapons arsenal: The United States, Russia, The United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel (presumed). Their reasons for having nuclear weapons ranges from regional influence, to self-assured safety against their enemies.

During the Cold War (1947 – 1991) NATO and the Soviet Union were for all intents and purposes at war, but with both possessing nuclear weapons, they fought each other around the world by means of proxy wars, most recently the war in Syria has again seen the US and Russia supporting opposite sides in a war that has killed more than half a million people. But, why never directly? The answer is, “mutually assured destruction” (MAD), an unspoken agreement between nuclear states that if one nuclear state fires a nuclear weapon on the other, that it will be met with a nuclear retaliation resulting mutual destruction. MAD is also one of the reasons why nuclear states have nuclear weapons, to assure their own survival against attack. The theory is that nuclear weapons actually makes the world safer, because it stops world powers like Russia and the US from fighting each other directly, in a ‘Third World War’ that would be over a lot quicker than the previous two.

Nuclear energy

Having nuclear weapon capabilities is different from having nuclear energy capabilities that are used for the good of humanity, and not its destruction. From medicine, that saves us from diseases like cancer, to the food we eat, nuclear energy has been used as a counter to the death and destruction it can cause if used as a bomb.

Radiology is perhaps the best-known use of nuclear energy – from scanning your arms for broken bones, to helping doctors see the inside of your organs without having to cut you open – nuclear energy has saved millions of lives. Medicine, however, is only one of the many uses of nuclear energy being used to

improve our lives. In agriculture, nuclear energy is used in the irradiation of food, where gamma rays and electron beams are used to control micro-organisms that cause diseases, and to extend the shelf life of food.

So, while nuclear war might threaten the end of the world, the use of nuclear energy is helping humanity live longer, not to mention the world market for nuclear energy is projected at \$677 billion by 2030, up from \$271 billion in 2011.

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

In 1970 the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) came into force as a way of trying to secure the safety of the world during a time in which the Cold War was threatening to erupt in a nuclear confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union. The NPT aims to prevent the use and spread of nuclear weapons, and technology, to promote peaceful use of nuclear energy and the worldwide disarmament of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear war would see millions of people die instantly, with countless others in the aftermath as radiation continued to kill for decades thereafter. However, even in the face of worldwide opposition to nuclear weapons, the threat of nuclear war still persists today with North Korea threatening the South and the US, Iran threatening Israel and Saudi Arabia, while both Mr Putin and Mr Trump fight over who has the best nukes. So, with the possibility of nuclear war becoming a stark possibility, the glaring question is why hasn't it already happened? Nuclear states would say it's exactly because of nuclear weapons that nuclear war will never happen, as MAD discourages it. From a Christian perspective, the truth is that God's mercy is greater than man's vengeance. If not for the mercy of God, humankind would have destroyed itself.

PRAY > For a de-escalation in nuclear threats > For wisdom in the use of nuclear energy > For Godly wisdom to prevail in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and for leaders to take bold moves in this direction

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