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New York

President: Mr. Afonso (Mozambique)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Gaouaoui
China	Mr. Fu Cong
Ecuador	Mrs. Barba Bustos
France	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobic
Switzerland	Mr. Carpenter
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Eckersley
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.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 representative of the Democratic People's 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 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: At 10.45 p.m. local time on 27 May, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted what it described as the launch of reconnaissance satellite Malligyong-1-1 aboard the new-type satellite carrier rocket from the Sohae Satellite Launching Station. According to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the launch failed, owing to the air blast of the new-type satellite carrier rocket during the first-stage flight, as a result of the reliability of operation of the newly developed liquid oxygen and petroleum engine. That follows the successful launch of a satellite on 21 November 2023. In December 2023, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced that it will launch three additional military satellites in 2024.

While the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued a pre-launch notification to the Japanese Coast Guard, it did not issue airspace or maritime safety notifications to the International Civil Aviation Organization or the International Telecommunication Union. The unannounced launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea represent a serious risk to international civil aviation and maritime traffic.

As stated on previous occasions, sovereign States have the right to benefit from peaceful space activities. However, Security Council resolutions expressly prohibit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

from conducting any launches using ballistic missile technology. On 28 May, the Secretary-General strongly condemned the attempted launch of yet another military satellite using ballistic missile technology. He reiterated his call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions and to swiftly return to dialogue without preconditions to achieve the goal of sustainable peace and the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Developing a military reconnaissance satellite was part of the five-year military development plan of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, unveiled in January 2021. In line with the plan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has significantly increased its missile launch activities since 2022, including more than 100 launches using ballistic missile technology, in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Since the beginning of the year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has launched two intermediate-range solid-fuelled ballistic missiles, in January and April, respectively.

As previously highlighted, there is a need for practical measures to reduce tensions, reverse the dangerous dynamic and create space to explore diplomatic avenues. The Secretary-General has emphasized the importance of re-establishing communication channels, particularly between military entities. Exercising maximum restraint is critical to avoid unintended escalation.

The persistent pursuit by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, continues to undermine the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that underpins it. On 30 April, the mandate of the Panel of Experts that supported the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) expired, after having been continuously extended since 2009, when the Panel was first established by the Security Council.

We remain deeply concerned about growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. We encourage all Member States and members of the Council to seek unity, and all parties to create an environment conducive to dialogue and cooperation. At this particularly difficult moment for securing global peace and security, it is

imperative to de-escalate the rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Separately, I want to highlight that the United Nations and its partners are ready to assist the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in addressing the basic needs of its vulnerable populations. We note that international travel to and from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now taking place at a growing rate. We encourage the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to facilitate the full return of the international community, including the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the United Nations country team. A collective return would enhance international support for the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The President: I thank Mr. Khiari for his briefing to the Council.

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

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

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the 27 May and 29 May launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea using ballistic missile technology in direct violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. The Council has repeatedly called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its unlawful weapons programme and engage in diplomacy. Yet the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued to advance its unlawful weapons programme at an alarming rate, having launched well over 100 ballistic missiles since the beginning of 2022. Each of those launches — successful or not — is a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions. Each launch informs the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its capability gaps and allows Pyongyang to further advance its weapons programmes.

The Council has the responsibility to condemn those launches and to hold the Democratic People's Republic of Korea accountable for its violations. But two Council members, China and Russia, continuously block the Security Council from speaking against the behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with one voice, making us all less safe. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has also unlawfully transferred dozens of ballistic missiles

and more than 11,000 containers of munitions to aid Russia's war against Ukraine, prolonging the suffering of the Ukrainian people.

On 29 April, Reuters reported that the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) recently inspected debris in Ukraine from a missile fired into Kharkiv on 2 January. As reported, the Panel of Experts independently and conclusively determined that the debris derived from a Democratic People's Republic of Korea Hwasong-11 series ballistic missile, which was a violation of the United Nations arms embargo on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Panel of Experts reviewed telemetry from the Ukraine Prosecutor General's Office showing that the ballistic missile was launched from the Russian Federation, which, in conjunction with the Panel's identification of the missile as a Hwasong-11, helped to confirm that the Russian Federation procured the missile from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of Security Council resolutions. Earlier this week, the United States publicly released analysis by the Defense Intelligence Agency showing a visual comparison of images from State media in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and images of missile debris from Kharkiv, Ukraine — visual evidence confirming Russia's usage of Democratic People's Republic of Korea missiles against Ukraine.

It is no wonder that Russia vetoed the mandate renewal of the 1718 Panel of Experts in March (see S/PV.9591). Moscow did not want further scrutiny on its sanctions-violating activities with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Russia's veto denies all Member States objective, comprehensive reporting and analysis on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's compliance with United Nations sanctions, all of which remain in effect.

We also reject the disingenuous claims by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its supporters on the Council that its missile launches are merely a response to our bilateral and trilateral military exercises. Those excuses, offered by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its patrons to justify its nuclear weapons programmes, are groundless and transparent. The overwhelming majority of Council members have consistently condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's intensifying threat to international peace and security, are fully committed to upholding the Security Council resolutions and have

recommitted to our shared goal of denuclearization as fundamental to that effort. It is time to voice a united and clear denunciation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's behaviour, to call on all Member States to fully and faithfully implement Security Council resolutions and to work together to prevent the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's procurement activities and revenue flows, which support its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes.

To respond to the refrain that has been used over and over again that sanctions do not work and harm civilians, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's dire humanitarian situation is of the country's own making. Kim Jong Un could alleviate his people's suffering immediately by allowing international aid organizations to re-enter the country and by investing in his people's well-being instead of his unlawful weapons programmes. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's repressive political climate allows the Government to divert such a large share of its resources to weapons development without comment from its population. Sanctions have raised costs for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to advance its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes. But without the full implementation of those measures, we are unable to address the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued actions in violation of Security Council resolutions.

Mrs. Blokar Drobic (Slovenia): I wish to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

Let me make three points on behalf of my delegation.

First, Security Council resolutions are binding and must be implemented. Persistent and flagrant violations of those resolutions are unacceptable. Slovenia condemns the most recent launch of short-range ballistic missiles, which North Korea conducted yesterday, and the launch of a military reconnaissance satellite on Monday. The technology used in the satellite launch is directly related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ballistic missile programme. It represents another destabilizing act. Slovenia calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its provocative actions and to return to dialogue and diplomacy. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should ensure the full implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions, with a view to abandoning

its programmes on nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. Until then, we will continue to call on all States to fully and effectively implement the sanctions that are in force.

Secondly, regarding military cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the situation on the Korean peninsula has taken a wrong turn. While the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is developing its ballistic missiles in contravention of Security Council resolutions, evidence has emerged that Russia is procuring those same missiles in order to fuel its aggression against Ukraine. That is another serious violation of Security Council resolutions and must be addressed further.

Thirdly, regarding the termination of the work of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), after the military cooperation between the two countries expanded last year, the non-proliferation architecture suffered another hit, this time due to Russia's veto on the Panel of Experts' mandate extension (see S/PV.9591). It has been a month since the Panel terminated its work, and we are slowly beginning to grasp the consequences of that harmful decision. Slovenia is of the firm conviction that there is still a chance to bring the Panel back. The Council should not spare any effort on that front.

The Security Council should address and condemn all violations of international law and its own resolutions. Our inaction in cases in which permanent members are involved exposes double standards and puts at risk the Council's authority and efficacy in addressing matters of international peace and security, as it is entrusted to do by the Charter of the United Nations. We can do better, and we should do better.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

I must begin with our strong condemnation of yet another launch by North Korea using ballistic missile technology on 27 May and its launch of ballistic missiles on 30 May, local time, both of which, along with other missile launches, are flagrant violations of multiple Security Council resolutions.

Let us be clear again about why we, the responsible members of the Council, have gathered today. We have gathered here in this Chamber for one clear purpose under the collective and heavy responsibility

entrusted to us by all Member States. It is about violations of Security Council resolutions. It is about the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The Council unanimously adopted multiple resolutions obligating North Korea to refrain from conducting any further launches that use ballistic missile technology, because they contribute to developing its delivery systems for nuclear weapons and thereby pose a grave threat to the peace and security of the region and the entire international community. That is also why the Secretary-General strongly condemned the attempted launch of another military satellite using ballistic missile technology by North Korea (see SG/ SM/22248). It is particularly appalling that, in return, North Korea strongly condemned the Secretary-General, referring to the Charter of the United Nations and other international laws.

Let me ask one simple and easy question: who should reflect on obligations to the Charter of the United Nations and other international laws? I do not believe that anyone in this Chamber needs an answer. It is crystal clear. North Korea is in completely disrespect of Security Council resolutions, which are unanimously adopted, the Secretary-General and the Charter. Let me remind fellow colleagues once again that we, members of the Council, bear the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council should be united on non-proliferation matters. I urge all members of the Council to reaffirm our commitment to the global non-proliferation regime, which we must all value and uphold.

In that regard, it is highly regrettable that, despite the affirmative support of 13 members, the Council was compelled to silence the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) owing to a veto by one permanent member (see S/PV.9591), especially when the permanent member that wielded its veto power to defend North Korea's unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programme — Russia — has itself been violating the relevant resolutions by procuring military equipment and munitions from North Korea and using them in its unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. We continue to monitor closely what North Korea is gaining in return. We cannot let the current situation become a new normal.

Last but not least, yet another aspect of North Korea's reckless conduct should be well noted among

us. We are fully aware of the human rights situation in North Korea, and Council members have repeatedly expressed their grave concerns in previous meetings. Therefore, let me ask how many would have been fed if the money spent on launching military satellites and missiles had been spent on the people instead? The intertwining of the human rights situation with international peace and security cannot be more obvious in the case of North Korea.

Japan urges North Korea not to conduct further launches and once again urges North Korea to immediately and fully comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions and to engage in diplomacy and accept the repeated offers of dialogue.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (spoke in French): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

On 27 May, North Korea attempted to launch another military reconnaissance satellite. Last November, after two unsuccessful attempts, it succeeded in placing a satellite of that type into orbit. As the Secretary-General did, France condemns that launch attempt.

Those space launches use technologies that could contribute to advances in North Korea's ballistic missile programme. They constitute a violation of Security Council resolutions, which prohibit North Korea from carrying out activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

The space launches take place against a backdrop of increasing provocations by the North Korean regime. North Korea's ballistic missile launches are on the rise. Just yesterday, Pyongyang launched several missiles, including at least one ballistic missile, again in defiance of the Council's resolutions. Last September, North Korea enshrined the possession of nuclear weapons in its Constitution. That rhetoric and those destabilizing actions threaten regional and international security and the non-proliferation regime, which is in our common interest to preserve. Our common security is at stake.

It is more necessary than ever for the Council to ensure compliance with the resolutions it has adopted. Once again, we regret that the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) could not be renewed, owing to Russia's veto (see S/PV.9591). Russia does not wish to see any documentation of the military support it receives from North Korea in its war of aggression

against Ukraine in violation of the sanctions the Council has imposed on that country. The sanctions adopted to counter North Korea's destabilizing activities are still in force, and it remains the responsibility of the Council to ensure their implementation. France remains committed to ensuring that the Council continues to monitor the implementation of the resolutions and to share relevant information on that subject with all Member States.

We urge North Korea to cease its provocations, to comply with its international obligations and to resume dialogue with the international community, in order to finally initiate a process of complete, irreversible and verifiable abandonment of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes. We call on North Korea to give priority to the well-being of its population, rather than to the development of its nuclear arsenal, by speeding up the reopening of its borders and the return of humanitarian actors.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open briefing on the critical issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me also thank the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Mohamed Khaled Khiari, for his briefing. Sierra Leone thanks France, Japan, Malta, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States for requesting this important briefing. And we look forward to engaging in constructive discussions aimed at enhancing international peace and security.

This open briefing on the recent nuclear activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea presents a timely and significant opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to advancing the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially following the high-level briefing on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation held in March (see S/PV.9591). It also speaks to the current conundrum in which the Council finds itself in terms of finding a viable replacement for the reports that the dissolved Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) used to provide, for the benefit of all Council members, with a comprehensive update on the activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its nuclear weapons programme. It therefore reinforces the serious need for progress on the ongoing efforts to re-establish the mandate of the Panel of Experts and for the Council to remain seized of the developing situation.

We express serious concern about the escalation of missile capabilities by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and condemn the recent launch of a satellite into space. The recent attempted satellite launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea underscores the ongoing deep concern surrounding their ballistic missile programme. Such actions continue to raise the alarm regarding national stability, arms proliferation and compliance with United Nations resolutions and is seen as a blatant violation of United Nations resolutions prohibiting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from ballistic missile tests. We therefore restate the importance of diplomatic efforts to address security challenges on the Korean peninsula and promote denuclearization initiatives.

The recent launch adds to the already tense atmosphere on the Korean peninsula and increased tensions, which could lead to further military actions, a diplomatic stalemate and even the unthinkable — that is, a nuclear catastrophe. The perception of heightened threat makes it imperative that the Security Council take decisive steps to address the challenges and mitigate the risks of military activities in the region.

Sierra Leone calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage bilaterally and multilaterally to unequivocally commit to transparent, complete, verifiable, irreversible and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

Additionally, Sierra Leone welcomed the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. However, we are concerned that, 28 years after its establishment, the CTBT has yet to enter into force. The CTBT offers hope of halting further modernization and increases in vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

Sierra Leone reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles of disarmament, non-proliferation and international peace and security. To advance that, we wish to emphasize and strongly echo the goal of the Council, the international community and the sanctions measures currently in place in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner and the return of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

We recognize the paramount importance of concerted global efforts to address the challenges posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): We thank the Assistant Secretary-General for his briefing.

On Monday, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a military satellite for the fourth time. The launch failed, but make no mistake, that remains a flagrant violation of the Council's resolutions. It also recklessly endangered Japanese civilians — the launch triggered missile warnings in Okinawa, and missile debris fell into Japan's territorial waters. The next day, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fired a volley of 18 short-range ballistic missiles — the highest number of missiles fired in a single launch yet — again violating multiple Council resolutions.

The United Kingdom once again reiterates that the Council must take action. Such flagrant violations of Council resolutions cannot be ignored, nor can they be explained away by false equivalence with defensive military exercises.

Some Council members have argued that our inaction will somehow help the situation — that, if anything, we need to reduce our scrutiny and pressure on the country's illegal weapons programme. That approach has categorically failed. Those Council members have blocked meaningful action to address the activity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the situation has simply got worse. Their support for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not secured compliance with the Council's resolutions. It has led to more instability in the region and more disruption to the proliferation rules that keep us all safe.

But it goes beyond that. We are particularly disturbed to hear reports that Russian technicians may have assisted the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its space programme, following the Russian President's pledge last year to help the country with its space activities. And we deplore the evidence found by members of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that Russia is using missiles from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its illegal war in Ukraine. Deliberately undermining the global non-proliferation regime and the Council's authority is a risk to all of us.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is engaged in a long-term programme of military activity, involving massive use of State resources at the expense of its people. We remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in the country, and we encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reopen its borders and engage with the United Nations and its agencies.

The United Kingdom calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further launches, return to dialogue and abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. And we call on all members of the Council to address those threats responsibly and to renew their commitment to upholding the global non-proliferation regime.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his useful briefing, and I acknowledge the presence of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in this meeting.

The Security Council is meeting yet again to discuss another satellite launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of numerous Council resolutions. The country's launch of the satellite, on 27 May, using ballistic missile technology came amid heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula.

Guyana is deeply concerned about these recurring launches using ballistic missiles, which, in addition to violating the relevant Security Council resolutions, pose a security threat to neighbouring countries and a risk to aviation and maritime traffic in the absence of advance notice, as well as weaken the non-proliferation regime.

In that context, we condemn the recent launch, using ballistic missile technology, by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and implore its Government to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Government must desist from further launches, in violation of the Council's resolutions, suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile programme and abandon all other programmes involving weapons of mass destruction, as well as its ballistic missile programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

In order to resolve the conflict on the Korean peninsula, we encourage the parties concerned to utilize the tools of diplomacy by engaging in constructive

dialogue so that there can be progress towards the de-escalation of tensions and, ultimately, peace on the peninsula.

Guyana is also concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, alluded to by the Assistant Secretary-General. We have taken note of the readiness of the Organization's humanitarian agency to address the needs of the vulnerable population in the country.

Allow me to conclude by referencing the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, in which he states that,

"[t]he existential threat that nuclear weapons pose to humanity must motivate us to accomplish new and decisive action leading to their total elimination".

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is critical to that broad objective.

Guyana is firmly committed to the Council's efforts to bring about full compliance with its resolutions on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is in keeping with our principled stance on the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which we believe is paramount to ensuring international peace and security.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I, too, thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his informative briefing.

Malta strongly condemns yet another attempt to launch a military satellite by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Any launch using ballistic missile technology is a grave violation of multiple unanimously adopted Security Council resolutions. Accordingly, we joined other countries in calling for this important meeting.

While the launch reportedly failed, such tests can provide the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with useful technological insights to advance its unlawful ballistic missile programme. In fact, the rocket carrying the satellite allegedly tested a newly developed liquid oxygen and petroleum engine. We cannot remain silent in the face of those dangerous provocations.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to implement its five-year military plan, including through the relentless advancement of its illegal programme on weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). That is deeply disquieting. It is a threat

to international peace and security and severely undermines the non-proliferation regime.

For the past two years, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has escalated its reckless activities. It has conducted a record number of ballistic missile tests, including intercontinental ballistic missiles and solid-fuel hypersonic missiles. It has successfully placed a military reconnaissance satellite in orbit. It has incorporated nuclear policy into its Constitution, lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. Last, but not least concerning, it has engaged in arms and technology transfers, in blatant violation of the sanctions regime of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Meanwhile, the Council stood idly by. We have repeatedly failed to collectively condemn these violations. That silence has emboldened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and, even worse, has sent a message of impunity to potential proliferators and enablers around the world.

Furthermore, the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 Committee was terminated after 15 years due to the veto of a permanent member. We had a duty to support the Panel's professional and impartial investigations into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's sophisticated architecture of sanctions evasion. Instead, we have deprived the wider membership of an invaluable source of information on sanctions implementation or lack thereof. That is deeply regrettable.

Lastly, we are concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in the country, as well as the grave human rights violations perpetrated by the regime. Those are closely linked to the promotion of its illicit WMD programme and cannot be overlooked.

We once again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in meaningful dialogue towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible abandonment of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. We call on the Council to finally unite in the face of this growing threat to stability in the region and beyond.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing and welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative

of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at this meeting.

The Korean peninsula is right at the doorstep of China. No one cares more about the peace and stability of the peninsula than us. At present, the situation on the Peninsula is highly tense, with the escalation of antagonism and confrontation. China is deeply concerned about that. We have noted the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's recent launch of a satellite and the responses by all relevant parties. We call on all parties to maintain calm and exercise restraint, avoid any action or rhetoric that might increase tensions and antagonism, jointly maintain peace and stability on the Peninsula and promote the political settlement of the Peninsula issue.

That issue is in essence a security issue. The crux lies in the lingering legacy of the cold war, the absence of a peace mechanism and a lack of mutual trust between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. There have been multiple moments in the past when the situation seemed to be turning around and we could see the dawn of a political settlement. However, owing to the failure of one of the parties concerned, the efforts failed at the last hurdle and opportunities were missed. The imperative now is for all the parties to adopt a rational and practical approach, resume engagement, build mutual trust, restart a dialogue as soon as possible and seek a solution in a calm, cool-headed and stable manner. That means showing goodwill and meeting each other halfway instead of intensifying the antagonism and tensions. Together with various relevant countries, the United States plans to conduct a large-scale joint military exercise on the Peninsula in August, practicing a scenario involving a nuclear war. Such plans will only increase tension and the risk of war and turmoil on the Peninsula, making the goal of long-term peace and stability ever more elusive, and China is opposed to the plan.

When dealing with this issue, the Council should help to ease tensions, increase mutual trust and promote solidarity, rather than focusing solely on sanctions and pressure. As it happens, the Council's resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea include provisions not only on sanctions but on supporting a political settlement and avoiding any negative impact on the humanitarian situation. They must be implemented in a comprehensive, balanced and accurate manner. China and Russia's intention in jointly introducing a draft resolution on the Peninsula issue

is to use the humanitarian issue as an entry point for sending a positive message of goodwill and creating the conditions needed to enhance mutual trust among all the parties and promote a resumption of dialogue. I hope all the parties involved can give it serious consideration.

Security is indivisible. Building a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture and realizing universal and common security is the sustainable, long-term solution to security challenges of all kinds, including the issue of the Korean Peninsula. Countries should not ignore the legitimate security concerns of others in order to achieve their own. They should not base their own security on the insecurity of other countries, let alone build security fences on others' doorsteps.

Last month, using the pretext of a military exercise, the United States deployed a mid-range-capability missile system to the Philippines and threatened to deploy such systems regularly in the Asia-Pacific region within the year. That is the first time the United States has deployed such systems since its universally condemned withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019. Its fundamental purpose is seeking unilateral military superiority and creating more options for its policies of military blackmail and expansion. It is worth pointing out that the United States deploys such weapons not on its own soil but rather on that of other countries, and in particular on the doorsteps of countries that they claim are their competitors. Under the banner of a military alliance, the United States is instigating military confrontations in its own geopolitical interests.

As the world's number-one military Power and nuclear-weapon State, the United States should live up to its responsibilities to maintain a global strategic balance and stability, regional peace and security and the international arms-control treaty system, rather than fanning flames, creating tensions and exacerbating confrontation. The Cuban missile crisis and the European missile crisis, both of them events of the not-so-distant past, nearly dragged the world into a hot war. The United States, as a party concerned in both those crises, should learn from them rather than ignoring the lessons of history and acting arbitrarily. China urges the United States to fulfil its responsibilities and obligations in earnest, respond to the aspirations of the international community and countries in the region for stability, cooperation and development, cease any related dangerous and wrongful acts and

once and for all abandon its plan to deploy a land-based intermediate-range missile programme in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. Carpenter (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in our discussions.

Following the tests and announcements of recent months, Switzerland watched with great concern the latest attempt by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to launch a satellite last Monday. Its failure should not distract us from the fact that it is a violation of the Security Council's resolutions. Switzerland condemns it, as we do all such violations. That is why we also condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's even more recent launch of a salvo of short-range ballistic missiles. While we note that the Japanese authorities were notified of the attempted satellite launch, such a warning is effective only if all relevant regional actors and international organizations are informed in advance. In that context, I would like to emphasize three points.

First, we reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any future attempts to launch ballistic missiles. Any launch using ballistic missile technology is a violation of international law, including Security Council resolutions. As has been said at recent meetings, the question of the rocket's payload has no bearing on such a situation. The Council should therefore condemn and respond to those launches.

Secondly, 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 obliged to effectively implement the Council's sanctions. Unless previously exempted by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), cooperative projects in the areas of space and armaments are incompatible with compliance with Security Council sanctions as a matter of principle. Furthermore, as State parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we are obliged to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Any attempt to legitimize the development of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme and delivery systems violates the spirit of the Council's resolutions and the Treaty. Continued vigilance on

the part of all States Members of the United Nations is therefore essential. We must all act in support of disarmament and the maintenance of the nuclear taboo. That is a legal obligation, a moral duty and an existential necessity.

Thirdly, let us not forget the plight of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who must not be left behind. We are troubled to see that even after the relaxation of the heavy restrictions put in place by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in connection with the coronavirus disease pandemic, international humanitarians still have no access to the country. The United Nations system and bilateral and non-governmental actors are nonetheless ready to resume their support for the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We reiterate, however, that they should enjoy safe and unhindered access.

The Council must not remain passive in the face of tests that, in conjunction with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme, constitute a threat to international peace and security. The Council plays an indispensable role in encouraging dialogue, de-escalation and the quest for diplomatic solutions. As recommended in the New Agenda for Peace, that involves remedying the breakdown of international norms aimed at preventing the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons. We also stress that serious and systematic human rights violations and impunity must cease.

Finally, any action by the Council should be based on reliable and independent information. In that context, Switzerland deeply regrets that following the casting of a veto in the Council in March (see S/PV.9591), the mandate of the Committee's Panel of Experts has not been renewed. For its part, Switzerland will continue to work within the Council and the Sanctions Committee, as well as on the ground, towards a denuclearized and peaceful Korean Peninsula.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We listened carefully to the briefing by Assistant Secretary-General Khiari. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in this meeting.

We regret that once again there was no place in today's meeting for a comprehensive analysis of the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Instead, the Secretariat, like a number of Council members, once again prefers to point only to the consequences of the

escalation in the region, while turning a blind eye to its genuine underlying causes. Such an approach can have no practical benefits when it comes to addressing the problems that exist. As for the situation on the Peninsula, the increasing military activity by the United States and its allies has continued to be one of the key catalysts for the growing tensions in the region. The so-called decapitation drills aimed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and numerous other hostile acts with a threatening military component have provoked countermeasures from North Korea, which has been forced to take action to strengthen its national defence capabilities.

Let us acknowledge what is obvious. The unstable situation around the Korean Peninsula plays into the hands of Washington, which continues to confidently and deliberately pursue a path of confrontation rather than dialogue. Meanwhile, its closest allies in the region have become blind hostages to its anti-Pyongyang policy. They fail to recognize that in doing so, they are not strengthening their security but are on the contrary bringing additional and unnecessary risks upon themselves, and the result is the current impasse in the efforts to reach a settlement. Opportunities to reactivate the negotiation process have been squandered, and unfortunately there seem to be no prospects for the conditions that could enable new opportunities to emerge.

We can no longer believe the United States' routine statements about its commitment to a diplomatic settlement. Their only purpose is to conceal the country's unchanged policy of seeking to dismantle the political system of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which for many decades has firmly rebuffed Washington's geopolitical appetites. What is needed is concrete steps showing genuine consideration for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's legitimate security priorities, which would help to restore trust. It is deeply regrettable that the divisions between the two neighbouring and friendly Korean peoples have been deepening rapidly, something in which the unnecessary provocations instigated from across the ocean play no small part. There are numerous examples of that, most recently the United States' April deployment in the northern Philippines of a Typhon medium-range-capability missile system, which has brought new risks of military escalation to the Asia-Pacific region.

We remain concerned about contradictory signals from America's allies in north-east Asia in Tokyo and

Seoul regarding their so-called strengthened cooperation with Washington in the nuclear arena. We demand that the United States delegation give a straight answer to the question about its intentions regarding the possible deployment of its nuclear weapons on the territory of its allies or the provision of assistance in developing their own. Russia has consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution of the entire range of issues on the Korean Peninsula without external pressure or blackmail. It is unfortunate, but at the same time very telling, that this approach has failed to elicit serious interest among Pyongyang's opponents for many years. Their reliance on pressure, suffocation and the collective punishment of the North Korean people remains unchanged, despite the fact that it is clearly not working.

Today some delegations once again accused Russia of so-called illegal military and technical cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, allegations that are absolutely unfounded. Russia is responsibly fulfilling its international obligations in its cooperation with its friendly neighbour. That cooperation is exclusively constructive and legitimate and, most importantly, threatens no one, unlike the militaristic activities of the United States and its allies.

As for the assertions about Russia's use of North Korean missiles as part of its special military operation in Ukraine, they are simply untrue. The so-called inspection report by three former sanctions experts from the United Kingdom, Japan and South Korea on that topic will never be an independent or trustworthy document, and that will remain true even if the United States says it 100 times and the Ukrainian Prosecutor-General rubber-stamps it. It is a classic commissioned piece prepared by non-professionals with numerous procedural violations and logical inconsistencies. We call on those who commissioned it to instead focus on addressing the deteriorating situation on the Korean Peninsula, which they continue to push towards the dangerous brink of an open military confrontation, with unpredictable consequences.

Mrs. Barba Bustos (Ecuador) (spoke in Spanish):
I am grateful for the briefing by Assistant Secretary-General Khiari.

The Pyongyang regime has once again demonstrated its disdain for the broader international community's call for respect for international order and global security. That has been confirmed by various recent provocative acts that include a failed attempt to launch

a military reconnaissance satellite, ballistic missile launches and even the deliberate launch of balloons carrying garbage. My delegation stands in solidarity with the peoples of the Republic of Korea and Japan following those events, which exacerbate tensions in the region and constitute a clear and serious threat to international peace and security.

Ecuador reaffirms its commitment to peace, security, disarmament and non-proliferation. My country will continue to work together with the members of the Council to promote a peaceful solution and constructive dialogue that will reduce tensions and eventually achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In that regard, I welcome the recent high-level meeting between the authorities of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea on 27 May.

Ecuador joins in calling on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and resume a path of cooperation and dialogue in good faith. Only through diplomacy and mutual respect can we achieve a lasting solution to the crisis and guarantee regional and global stability and security. The Security Council's responsibility in that regard obliges it to speak out — unanimously, we hope — against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's flagrant and repeated violations and to reaffirm the binding nature of its decisions.

Mr. Gaouaoui (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Khiari for his valuable briefing.

Algeria expresses its concern about the escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula, which recently manifested itself in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's attempt to launch a new satellite through the use of ballistic missile technology. The launch process entails obvious risks that could have irreparable consequences. We therefore call for the avoidance of all issues that could lead to escalation and for putting an end to this cycle, which is a threat to the peoples of the region, while adhering to the provisions of international law, including the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As emphasized in resolution 2397 (2017), we note the importance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and stress the need for the international community to commit to seeking a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the current

situation. Dialogue and diplomacy, not isolation, are the only way forward.

Despite the numerous meetings held on the North Korean dossier in the past few years, the lack of consensus among the members of the Security Council has hindered any progress in defusing the crisis. We therefore urge all Council members to adopt a united position that can help to achieve tangible progress in realizing peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. We believe it is the Council's duty to explore practical measures to stop the current deterioration and make maximum use of the tools of dialogue, diplomacy and negotiation, while fully adhering to all relevant United Nations resolutions. As parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it is our collective responsibility to prevent the proliferation of such weapons and work for their complete elimination.

Algeria firmly believes that only negotiation and dialogue, not isolation and polarization, can guarantee a nuclear-weapon-free Korean Peninsula that enjoys peace and stability. We emphasize that we will continue to contribute to any efforts that promote effective participation in reducing tensions and the risk of escalation. Dialogue among the parties is absolutely essential, and we must work together to create an environment conducive to a resumption of serious negotiations that can lead to lasting solutions.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this urgent meeting of the Security Council. I also thank 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 so-called military reconnaissance satellite launch on 27 May local time, in flagrant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. The launch took place only a few hours after the trilateral Korea-Japan-China summit concluded in Seoul. The summit's joint declaration emphasized the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, as well as peace, stability and prosperity in the region. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again ignored those calls. Like many previous launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, this one was illegal. The rocket was based on ballistic missile technology, which can contribute to further advancing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear delivery systems. That is why multiple Security Council resolutions prohibit

any launch using ballistic missile technology by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. And the launch was anything but peaceful. After the alleged successful launch of its first military satellite in November, North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un said that "we have now acquired an eye that can look down at 10,000 miles alongside a powerful fist that can hit 10,000 miles". By "fist" he meant the intercontinental ballistic missile used to deliver nuclear warheads, and by "eye" he meant the satellite. The purpose of the satellite could not be clearer.

The launch was an extremely expensive firework display on which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wasted its scarce resources, resources that could have been better spent on feeding its people. Meanwhile, its leaders enjoy luxury goods and showing off their military arsenal at the expense of the country's people, who are suffering from chronic food shortages. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has no one to blame but itself for its own humanitarian crisis. It is estimated that the cost of launching a so-called satellite is equivalent to several months' worth of food for the entire population of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Despite the claim of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the Council's meeting in November (see S/PV.9485), the launch is not a legitimate use of outer space, as it contravenes the same legal documents that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea invokes. The representative invoked the Outer Space Treaty as a legal basis, but according to article III of the Treaty, the use of outer space should be in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. All Member States are bound to accept the obligations contained in the Charter, per Article 4. Member States agree to accept and carry out the Security Council's decisions, per Article 25. There are 10 binding Security Council resolutions that ban the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from conducting nuclear tests or any launch using ballistic missile technology. However, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has declared in this Chamber that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has never recognized the resolutions of the Security Council, nor will it ever be bound by them in the future, denouncing them as unlawful and unwarranted. I can hardly believe how a Member State, in particular a member of so-called Group of Friends in

Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, can make such a preposterous claim.

The same goes for the right to self-defence. That is what we, the Republic of Korea, should claim as a defender. It is not something that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the offender, can claim. Pyongyang has proved that by increasing escalatory action near the demarcation line this week, including with multiple short-range ballistic missile launches, Global Positioning System jamming and the uncivilized and nonsensical sending of hundreds of balloons filled with excrement and trash. The Kim regime's attempt to frame that as the North Korean people's exercise of freedom of expression is downright absurd and ironic.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear policy and its rhetoric are becoming increasingly aggressive and hostile. Pyongyang no longer regards its nuclear arsenal as merely a deterrent against the United States but rather as a means to attack my country, the Republic of Korea, which in January the North Korean leader himself called not a fellow nation but an entirely hostile foreign enemy to be subjugated. His powerful sister, Kim Yo-jong, also offered a chilling reminder two weeks ago that the only purpose of their tactical nuclear weapons is to teach Seoul a lesson. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has introduced arguably the most arbitrary and aggressive nuclear doctrine in the world, even stating the possibility of a pre-emptive nuclear attack. Just this morning, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced that yesterday's multiple short-range ballistic missile launches were aimed at the Republic of Korea and that it will not hesitate to carry out a pre-emptive attack on the enemies. Faced with those menacing threats, the Republic of Korea must take all necessary measures to protect its national security and people by maintaining a robust, combined defence and deterrence posture.

This is the first Security Council meeting to be convened in response to a provocative action by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) was disbanded because of a veto by the Russian Federation (see S/PV.9591). While we are seeking an alternative mechanism to bridge the gap created in the wake of the dissolution of the Panel, I once again express my deepest regret and disappointment in that regard. The Council should redouble its efforts to ensure the implementation of sanctions and scrutinize any evasions or violations of sanctions, such as illicit

maritime transshipments, North Koreans working overseas and arms deals between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We have heard some worrisome news reports that a large number of Russian experts recently visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to support its satellite launch efforts. That coincides with a statement by the official North Korea news agency announcing that the satellite was launched aboard a new type of carrier rocket and that its failure was attributable to its newly developed liquid oxygen and petroleum engine. There simply cannot be such a quantum leap in highly complicated rocket science in such a short period of time, and therefore it is natural that we suspect a possible technology transfer. I want to emphasize that, besides arms transactions, any technical cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the field would be a clear violation of multiple Security Council resolutions.

Imagine what the world would look like if a permanent member of the Security Council with the world's largest number of nuclear weapons and top military technology colluded with a pariah State that denounced Security Council resolutions as unlawful and unwarranted; whose leader publicly announced plans to exponentially increase its nuclear arsenal; whose information technology workers conducted illegal cyberactivities to finance its illicit weapons of mass destruction programme and whose people were suffering from brutal oppression and undernourishment, not to mention a 10-year-long military conscription. Let us remain vigilant and work together so that the world will not stray into such darkness.

Let me close my statement by once again urging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to halt all provocative actions, abandon its nuclear weapons and missile programmes and accept our standing call for dialogue.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Mozambique.

We thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Mohamed Khaled Khiri, for his important briefing. We acknowledge the presence of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in this meeting.

The situation on the Korean peninsula remains a matter of global concern. Reports indicate that the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea unsuccessfully launched satellites earlier this week. We wish to recall that, during the annual debates of the General Assembly, world leaders have emphasized time and again that confrontation, unilateral action and interference in the internal affairs of States must yield to dialogue, cooperation and the adherence to international norms of conduct. In that regard, we express our deepest concern about the unilateral actions of the concerned parties. Those actions constitute a threat to peace and security both in the region and in the world.

Mozambique has consistently been calling for prudence and responsibility from the involved parties on issues relating to non-proliferation.

The relative calm in the tensions observed in the first quarter of this year should be used as an opportunity to lay the solid foundations for initiating an inclusive and meaningful peace process and dialogue between North Korea and South Korea, as well as involving regional and international stakeholders. Leveraging periods of relative calm to foster dialogue and build trust is essential for sustainable peace.

We are mindful that the situation on the Korean peninsula is complex and delicate. However, all stakeholders and involved Member States are duty bound to comply with the international obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, under the relevant Security Council resolutions and under treaties.

The threat of proliferation is a matter of concern not only for those on the Korean peninsula, but also for the entire international community, since any miscalculation could cause a global tragedy. In that vein, it is essential that we adhere to the agreements we have established to prevent the misuse of emerging technologies as weapons. By doing so, we can promote safety, security and responsible innovation.

I wish to conclude by reiterating our adherence to the imperative of non-proliferation, while advocating our strong commitment to the promotion of dialogue, security and peace on the Korean peninsula, through a constructive and genuine engagement of the parties concerned.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the United States of America has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor, but I felt it necessary to respond to some comments made by the representatives of Russia and China — two countries that are unfortunately preventing us from moving forward on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issue here in the Council.

As we have said many times, both publicly and privately, the United States is in no way a threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In fact, as we have said over the past few years, we are willing to sit down with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and have discussions with no preconditions whatsoever. That effort by the United States to reach out its open hand has been met with a clenched fist, unfortunately.

One of the things we have heard mentioned, I believe by my Chinese colleague, was that Russia and China have a draft resolution that they believe would help the situation with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in regard to sanctions relief. One thing that the Council cannot do is to reward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come to the table. The message that would send to would-be North Koreas out there would be chilling and dangerous. We do not want to encourage that kind of behaviour — that all you have to do is violate Security Council resolutions and then get offered something to return to the table. That, as I said, would be dangerous.

China and Russia must understand that walking back on their commitments to uphold Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will force the United States and its allies to take additional steps to defend their security. Please have no doubt about that.

In regard to comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation, let me just be very clear: the United States is in full compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

One last point — we have heard some comments from our Russian colleague about the legitimacy of military cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia. Let me just say that the transfer of missiles to Russia by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is in clear violation of Security Council resolutions. There can be no arguing with that fact. I will stop there.

The President: The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I have just delivered a full statement on China's position on the Korean peninsula.

With regard to the further statement delivered by the representative of the United States, I would like to make a few points.

I would like to emphasize that China has always maintained a prudent and responsible position with regard to the Korean peninsula, and it considers the issue on basis of its merit. We will neither level accusations at anyone nor will we try to protect anyone from blame. Accusations, blame-shifting and smearing by any side will not end the stalemate over the Korean peninsula issue. The only way to do so is to build mutual trust and ease tensions. That is the only way to resolve the Korean peninsula issue.

If the United States is sincere about wanting to end the stalemate right now, it should put an end to its military exercises and its measures to exert pressure and should immediately take genuine action, demonstrate sincerity and promote the easing of the tensions on the peninsula, instead of accusing other parties for no reason at all.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to begin by reiterating what I already said in my earlier statement, namely, that the cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is exclusively constructive and lawful. It does not threaten or violate anyone, and it will continue. I would also like to refute the accusations made against my country by the Permanent Representative of South Korea.

There is no doubt that the technological progress achieved by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is astonishing and is taking place despite the many years of sanctions that the country has endured. The progress is comparable to that made by Seoul. After all, South Korea also conducted a similar launch, on 2 December 2023, sending its first reconnaissance satellite into space from a launch pad in California. Therefore, we understand that hearing the recent news can be painful. However, we urge South Korea not to engage in mutual accusations, but rather to think about how to put an end to the spiral of escalation and overcome the dangerous impasse in which South Korea currently finds itself.

The President: The representative of the United States of America has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize once again for taking floor, and I will be brief. With regard to the issue of military exercises, if Council members recall, during the period of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, we in essence suspended our military exercises because of what was going on with regard to the COVID-19 situation. And during that time, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea accelerated its ballistic missile and weapons of mass destruction programmes and activities, so maybe during his statement the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regime can explain why it chose to do that during the COVID-19 period.

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

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): With the change of the times, it has become a well-established fact that countries compete with each other in the exploration of outer space to gain an upper hand in the most recent space technology. However, the Security Council is still repeating its anachronistic and shameful practice of taking issue with the launch of a satellite which is a legitimate and universal right of a sovereign State.

Now that the Security Council meeting is convened, at the outrageous demand of the United States and its allies, to unjustly deal with the exercise of the sovereign right of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, our delegation echoes the indignation of the entire Korean people and resolutely denounces it as the gravest act of political provocation and a flagrant violation of sovereignty.

Now, we are finding massive deployment of strategic assets and aggressive war exercises being conducted frequently by the United States on the Korean peninsula and in the region, which are breaking records. Consequently, the military balance in the region is seriously destroyed, and the Korean peninsula is turning into the most fragile zone in the world, fraught with the danger of the outbreak of war.

In August last year, the United States invited the leaders of Japan and the Republic of Korea to Washington to give shape to, plan and formalize its attempt at a nuclear war provocation against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and a decision was reached to conduct

annual tripartite military drills on a regular basis. Accordingly, the United States-led nuclear war rehearsal has continued to be staged on the Korean peninsula since the beginning of this year.

Early this year, the United States sent nuclear aircraft carrier *USS Carl Vinson* and its followers to carry out joint naval drills. In March, the United States conducted Freedom Shield, a large-scale joint military exercise. In April, it conducted a tripartite air drill by flying the strategic bomber B-52H and a naval drill with the participation of the nuclear aircraft carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt*, thereby aggravating military tension in the region to the extreme.

Given the grave threats to our security environment, our possession of space reconnaissance capacity to monitor military attempts and the moves of the hostile forces is an exercise of sovereign rights to safeguard national security that no one can deny, as well as an indispensable prerequisite for us. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea could have prioritized the launch of communication or meteorological observatory satellites for peaceful purposes instead of the reconnaissance satellite in its work in the exploration of outer space, if the United States had not created such a dangerous security landscape, as that which exists now on and around the Korean peninsula, while making it its policy to use nuclear weapons against the State and operating a nuclear consultative group.

As in the past, this time we also issued an advance warning in conformity with international law to ensure the transparency of the satellite launch and the safety of ships and airplanes. We have also taken all necessary measures in advance to prevent any impact on the security of neighbouring countries.

What cannot be overlooked is that the Republic of Korea, as the war henchman of the United States, responded to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's satellite launch by inciting a tense atmosphere of confrontation, going crazy and becoming hysterical with muscle-flexing such as conducting a flight in attack formation and a strike drill. It dared to threaten the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's sovereign activities with war weapons. That is an extremely dangerous act which could induce the just exercise of the right to self-defence of a sovereign State stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

If an undesirable, grave situation is created on the Korean peninsula owing to the war mania of the United States and the Republic of Korea, the Security Council

deserves to be held accountable for criminalizing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's righteous exercise of its sovereignty and acquitting the United States and the Republic of Korea of their acts of war provocation by applying extreme prejudice and double standards.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's right to the use of outer space is a fair and square, legitimate right of a sovereign State, provided for under the Outer Space Treaty and other international law. If the possession of a military reconnaissance satellite is regarded as threat to international peace and security, as claimed by the United States and its vassal forces, then the United States is indeed the one that should be the subject of deliberations and placed at the top of the Security Council's agenda, as it has the greatest stockpile of military reconnaissance satellites in the world and poses a grave danger to global strategic stability with its reckless moves to militarize outer space.

As witnessed by the world, in April, the United States provided its projectile to launch the second spy satellite of the Republic of Korea aimed at acquiring capability for a pre-emptive strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. More recently, the United States staged the so-called joint space operations drill, together with the Republic of Korea, to launch a precision strike at military installations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In the long run, the ulterior motive of the United States and its allies is to eventually stifle us with force by permanently restricting the exercise of our sovereign rights, including the right to space development, and giving a free rein to the expansion of their military strength through their absurd assertion that our reconnaissance satellite launch is a violation of the resolutions of the Security Council.

One can hardly imagine that any country in the world, save the colonial servant State the Republic of Korea, would accept such coercive demands, which literally mean the renunciation of sovereign rights and self-destruction. That is the true nature of the sanctions resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is an unprecedented rejection of the history of the United Nations. For that reason, we have never recognized the illegal sanctions resolutions, which run counter to the spirit and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council is facing fierce criticism from the world public opinion for the deliberate negligence of its mission and its malfunction. That being the case, it is taking issue with a sovereign State's exercise of its legitimate rights. That cannot be seen as anything other than a flagrant challenge to the Charter of the United Nations, which defines respect for sovereignty, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States as a fundamental principle.

Owing to the unjust behaviour of the United States, the Security Council is failing to discharge any of its duties or its role in establishing a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, which is a pressing task for the international community. In such a position, there is no justification for submitting for consideration and discussing a sovereign State's open and aboveboard exercise of its rights, nor does the Council have the authority to do so.

For the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the launching of a military reconnaissance satellite is not simply an indispensable undertaking for strengthening self-defence capabilities but also a crucial issue of whether it can defend its sovereign right or not. For the international community, whether it upholds the spirit of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is a fundamental issue.

The Security Council should not waste its time and energy debating the exercise of the legitimate right of a sovereign State, given the arbitrary and high-handed practices of specific forces, but should direct its due attention to putting an immediate end to the massacre of civilians in the Gaza Strip, which continues unabated under United States patronage. We would like to make it clear once again that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's possession of space reconnaissance capabilities is an independent right that can never be abandoned or bartered for anything else. It is an important undertaking of absolute necessity for the defence of State sovereignty and legitimate self-defence.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to proudly exercise its sovereign rights, including the right to satellite launch, regardless of any change in conditions or in the environment. It will fully discharge its responsibility to reliably defend peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the region vis-à-vis external threats of all kinds.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m