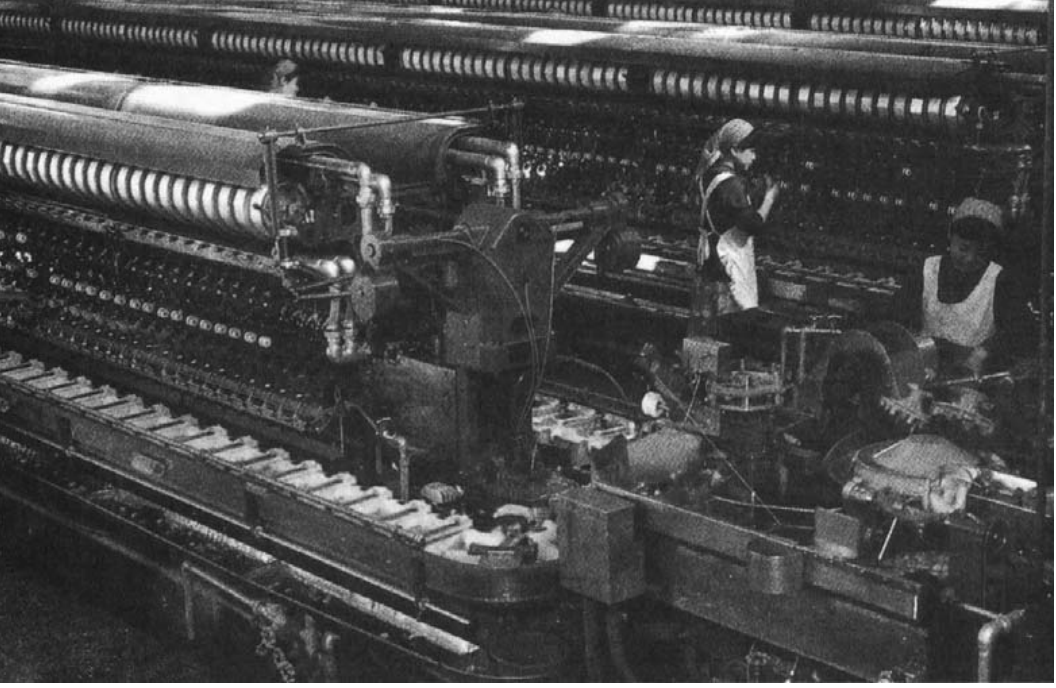


The P'yŏngyang Silk Mill, P'yŏngyang
Courtesy Korea Today *(P'yŏngyang), January 1997, 6*

that P'yŏngyang would borrow money from the public by issuing bonds. The bonds, floated on May 1, 2003, had a maturity date of April 30, 2013, in denominations of 500, 1,000, and 5,000 wŏn. The bonds carried no interest rate and were redeemable in installments starting in December 2008, but if their holders drew lucky numbers in lotteries to be held once every six months, they would receive an unspecified "prize."

Some observers believe that the bond program is a positive step as a fiscal policy improvement measure that brings North Korea further into the modern world. Others believe it will only add to the burdens of workers and laborers and was designed by the government to increase its budget by using surplus money that currently resides in the hands of citizens.

Although there has been some reform in the financial sector in the first years of the century, on the whole the financial system remains tightly controlled. The government has made little effort to establish a viable financial capital market, and, as of 2007, there were no independent financial institutions and no appreciable bond market other than the unusual system P'yŏngyang had set up.

Legal and Administrative Reforms

In addition to changes to the centrally planned economy itself, the government changed a number of laws and amended the constitution

to provide a legal framework for domestic economic reform and to increase foreign trade and investment. A major element of those legal changes were the constitutional revisions of September 1998, which formally permitted private ownership of assets, provided a more clearly delineated basis for foreign investment and trade, and established the Cabinet of Ministers, composed mainly of the heads of economic ministries. Concurrently, the administrative reform of September 1998 aimed to reduce government expenditures and increase government efficiency through greater consolidation of functionally related bureaucracies at the center, and through delegation of responsibilities to local units. This reform had the result of decreasing central control over local administrative authorities.

Although there has been foreign investment in North Korea since the 1970s, a relatively major effort to open the North to the international economy has occurred only since the mid-1990s. There were 11 constitutional amendments relating to foreign investment in 1998 alone. In 1999 the government amended joint-production and joint-venture laws to allow for projects outside the Najin–Sŏnbong International Trade Zone. Until that time, 100 percent foreign-owned investment enterprises were allowed to set up businesses only in the Najin–Sŏnbong zone. The government continues to establish the legal foundations that permit and regulate international investment. The Processing Trade Law, Lock Gate Law, and Copyright Law came into effect in April 2001 to expand the scope of foreign trade. These measures regulate which sectors are open to foreign investment and in which sectors foreign firms may own 100 percent of the capital, with protection from nationalization and guarantees of the right to lease and use land for up to 50 years and of tax and tariff preferences.

As part of the July 1, 2002, reforms, the KWP formally abandoned the Taean Work System and introduced a new economic-management system. The new system turned over to the manager responsibility for running a factory and reduced the political and economic role of the factory party secretary. It tasked the manager with running the factory on a self-accounting system and changed the wage system. In the new system, salaries for workers were raised, and merit pay was introduced to reward those who work harder or more efficiently. However, the factory party committee is still the formal leadership of the factory, and the party secretary retains the chairmanship of the committee, which continues to provide the secretary with the opportunity to wield power in the factory. Thus, although nominally the power of the KWP was reduced and the actual manager's power was increased, it is not clear how dramatic this shift is in practice.

North Korea set up the External Economic Legal Advice Office in June 1999 in order to settle legal issues with regard to international investment and trade relations. In August 2004, the North also allowed the establishment of the country's first private law firm, as part of its efforts to attract international investors. Hay, Kalb Associates, a British-owned firm, opened a joint-venture company employing a dozen local lawyers with offices on Kim Il Sung Square on August 15, 2004.

In a revision of its criminal law on April 29, 2004, North Korea changed and strengthened legal measures to protect private property while stiffening penalties for antistate crimes. The revision, the fifth since 1950, reflects P'yŏngyang's ambition to achieve two goals at the same time: safeguarding its regime and boosting its impoverished economy. The law introduced lengthy new provisions regarding the principle of legality and classified in detail previously obscure provisions regarding private ownership. The number of articles dealing with economic crimes increased from 18 to 74. These articles cover such issues as provisions punishing foreign investors for tax evasion, infringement of trademark rights, illegal commercial transactions, and violation of import and export orders.

In December 2004, North Korea announced a real estate law that gave individuals some rights to sell their houses at will in the first half of 2005. Because the number of illegal house trades among individuals increased after the "economic adjustment policy" in July 2002, regulating the trade gave the government some control over such activities.

Many of the legal and administrative changes since 1998 were designed to clarify and further strengthen the rights and responsibilities of foreign firms in North Korea. Other changes covered the organization and control of domestic economic activity. Because so many of the laws have been enacted relatively recently, it is unclear how they will operate in practice and how vigorously the government will enforce and implement them.

Special Economic Zones

A major element of North Korea's reform was the development of special economic zones. These zones vary in their particulars, but all were established with special tax and tariff incentives for foreigners, with the aim of attracting investment and foreign exchange, spurring employment, and boosting the local development of improved technologies and infrastructure through greater interaction with foreign firms. North Korea has established four such zones. The first of these areas was the Najin–Sŏnbong International Trade Zone, established in 1991 and located in territory carved out of the northeast

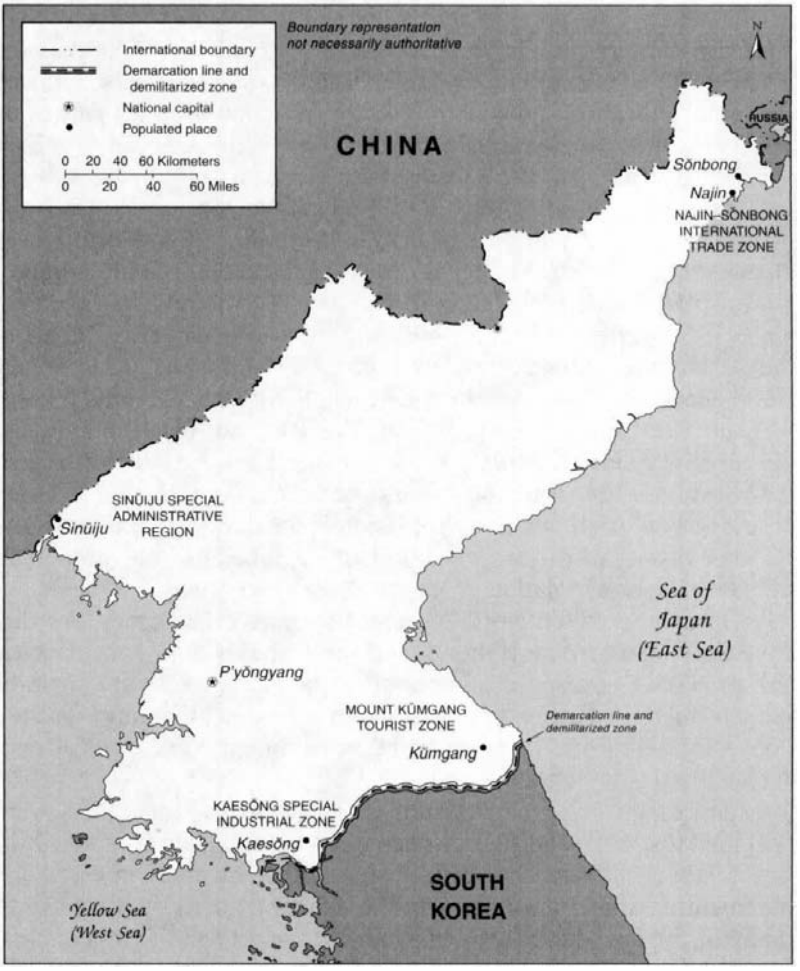


Figure 9. Special Economic Zones, 2006

province of North Hamgyŏng, near the border with Russia. By the early twenty-first century, three more regions had been added: the Sinŭiju Special Administrative Region, in North P'yŏngan Province, along the border with China on the Yellow Sea (or, as Koreans prefer, the West Sea) was established in 2001; the Mount Kŭmgang Tourist Zone, in Kangwŏn Province, in the southeast coastal area along the DMZ, was established in 1998; and the Kaesŏng Special Industrial Zone, in the city of Kaesŏng (formerly Kaesŏng Province), within sight of the DMZ near P'anmunjŏm, was established in 2002 (see fig. 9).

Like most other policies undertaken by the North Korean regime, the zones show slow and halting progress. The Najin–Sŏnbong zone has had a mixed history: by the end of 1999, total foreign investment was estimated at US$125 million, almost half of which came from the Emperor Group of Hong Kong for its construction of a hotel and casino. However, with help from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in late 1998 North Korea opened its own business school in the zone, the Najin Business Institute, along with a business information center.

In January 2001, the government announced the establishment of a large special economic zone in the city of Sinŭiju, located on the Amnok River (known as the Yalu in China) border with China and intended to encompass 128 square kilometers. As planned, the Sinŭiju region would allow foreign currencies to be used and was designed to take advantage of the restored railroad link between North Korea and South Korea. Sinŭiju reportedly was given 50 years of independent authority in almost all political and economic aspects, including legislation, administration, and judicial power. P'yŏngyang claimed that it would not interfere except to handle diplomacy and national defense issues. Sinŭiju was even to be given the right to issue visas independently. A Chinese businessman, Yang Bin, originally was put in charge of the zone, although Yang's legal complications with the Chinese government over unrelated business activities in China sidetracked his appointment. Sinŭiju has made little progress, in large part as a result of difficulties over its administration and leadership. However, it is important to note that it was the Chinese who held up progress, not North Korean mismanagement.

Since its opening in 1998, the Mount Kŭmgang Tourism Zone has shown more success. In accordance with an agreement signed between the Hyundai Group in South Korea and the North Korean government, the Mount Kŭmgang zone allows South Korean cruiseship passengers to take tours of Mount Kŭmgang, one of Korea's most famous and beautiful mountains. Hyundai Asan started the three-day packages to Mount Kŭmgang in 1998 using a sea route, and an overland route has been available since September 2003. On July 3, 2004, a one-day trip to the mountain became possible as the two Koreas agreed to extend the hours during which visitors may pass through the DMZ. The total number of visitors to the Mount Kŭmgang zone reached 800,000 by the start of 2005.

A fourth zone, in Kaesŏng, a historical capital of Korea, was established in 2002 and began operations in 2004; it has been more successful. The Kaesŏng Special Industrial Zone is mainly a North Korean–South Korean joint venture (see Kaesŏng Industrial Venture, this ch.).

Mount Kŭmgang Tourist Zone, 2006
Courtesy Munhwasarangbang Company, Seoul

Top-Down Reform Measures

In assessing the reforms, an important point to be made about North Korea's economic policy is that the reform measures were centrally planned and top-down, and thus the measures enjoyed the support of the highest political levels in North Korea. For example, Kim Jong Il himself was quoted as saying, "Things are not what they used to be in the 1960s. So no one should follow the way people used to do things in the past.... We should make constant efforts to renew the landscape and replace the one which was formed in the past, to meet the requirements of a new era." This reform initiative was a gamble for Kim because it also meant that he risked being personally connected to its failure.

An article in the semi-official English-language *People's Korea* in 2002 reflected this attitude. It said, "these measures, effective July 1, are intended to comprehensively improve the people's living standard based on the new economic policy mapped out by General Secretary Kim Jong Il to build an economically powerful nation." The article continued, "the recent series of economic measures came in line with General Secretary Kim Jong Il's new economic policy, whose essence is that the basic method of socialist economic management is to gain maximum profits while adhering to socialist principles."

In addition, the regime emphasized that the reforms were a gradual and long-term process, writing that: "it was in the year 2000 that this new economic policy of Kim Jong Il began to be put into practice in earnest on a national scale. It contained the strengthening of the cabinet's role as the headquarters of the national economy, the transfer of authority of economic planning to each leading economic organ at all levels, the rational reorganization of factories and enterprises and the improvement of their management; and the differentiation and specialization of production." Choe Hong-kyu, a bureau director in the State Planning Commission, was quoted in *People's Korea* as saying: "Kim Jong Il stresses that all the outworn and dogmatic 'Soviet-type' patterns and customs should be renounced in the fields of economic planning, financing, and labor management ... he also points to the fact that foreign trade should be conducted in accordance with the mechanism and principles of capitalism."

These official pronouncements by the leadership echoed the increasingly open admission that society was changing in response to the economic difficulties that North Korea was experiencing. On August 1, 2002, Supreme People's Assembly president Kim Yong-nam said: "We are directing our whole efforts to restructure our economic base to be in line with the information technology revolution ... we are reforming the economic system on the principle of profitability."

There is further evidence of the explicit consent of the top leadership. The 2003 New Year's Day editorials in *Nodong Shinmun* (Workers' Daily) cited "new measures for economic management," and noted that "it is urgent to improve economic management and rapidly develop science and technology: we should manage and operate the economy in such a way as to ensure the largest profitability while firmly adhering to socialist principles." Minister of Finance Mun Il-bong gave a speech on March 26, 2003, saying that "in all institutions and enterprises a system of calculation based on money will have to be correctly installed, production and financial accounting systems be strengthened, production and management activities be carried out thoroughly by calculating the actual profits." Thus, the government has attempted to retain control of the system, while at the same time recognizing the need to make changes in its economic practices.

Assessment of the Economic Reforms

Since the formal abrogation of the centrally planned economy in July 2002, most anecdotal reports indicate that the markets—after experiencing an initial and significant surge in prices—have continued to function relatively normally. There was no widespread chaos, farmers' markets moved to fill the void in supplies caused by rationing, and the population appeared to have adjusted to the changing circumstances. The economic reforms tested the government's ability to deal with inflation, troubled enterprises, and the urban poor created by the monetization of the economy. Low supply and low output have led to massive increases in prices and further devaluation of the wŏn.

The FAO's World Food Programme estimated that the price of rice and corn rationed through the public distribution system remained low and stable, 44 wŏn and 24 wŏn per kilogram, respectively. Yet prices at the private markets were much higher. The nominal price of rice increased 550 percent, and perhaps even more. In November 2004, the price of rice was 600 wŏn per kilogram, almost 30 percent of a typical monthly wage. Corn was 320 wŏn per kilogram. In the months following the introduction of price reforms, there was rapid inflation.

By comparison, in 1979 China's initial price reforms drove up the price of rice by 25 percent. In North Korea, prices have gone up by at least 600 percent, and the wŏn has depreciated from the official exchange rate of 150 wŏn to US$1 in 2002 to at least 1,000 wŏn, with some estimating the black-market values at between 2,500 and 3,000 wŏn to the dollar in 2006. The reforms probably enabled Kim Jong Il to gain some measure of control of the economy by hurting

those black marketeers who held large amounts of wŏn before the currency devaluation, because the value of their wŏn holdings plummeted with the devaluation against the dollar. However, fixed-income workers also were badly affected by the rise in prices. In addition, many workers were laid off by companies forced to cut costs. Finally, fragmentary evidence suggests that even those sectors of the labor force favored with the largest wage hikes (6,000 wŏn) were discontented. Defectors crossing into China complained that the promise of higher wages had not been kept, with workers receiving only an additional 800 wŏn and then nothing extra after October 2003. This failure may have created a new class of urban poor that could be difficult to control in the future, although there is only limited evidence of any unrest.

The regime has made major changes in the way in which the economy functions. Undoubtedly these changes have been designed by Kim Jong Il and the ruling regime to retain control while dealing with the undeniable economic problems in the country. However, the changes have created confusion and perhaps even chaos. While there is considerable disagreement among observers as to what the actual motivations of the regime are, and also skepticism as to whether the reforms can work, the point remains that the changes affect the entire society and are thus politically consequential.

The evidence points to the conclusion that North Korea's economic reforms are cautious and tentative, not wholesale. They also are clumsy. Inflation is rampant, but production has not been freed to respond accordingly. A North Korean opening up will not foster the kind of immediate wholesale rhetorical and practical changes that the United States apparently expects. Examining the reforms, economist Marcus Noland wrote in 2003: "It is not at all clear that the current leadership is willing to countenance the erosion of state control that would accompany the degree of marketization necessary to revitalize the economy."

Indeed, it is unclear whether any reform measures can actually make much of a difference in North Korea's economy. Nevertheless, these reforms are significant, and, more importantly, they will be extremely difficult to reverse. It is one thing to declare a special economic zone in the northeastern region of Najin–Sŏnbong and far more significant to affect the daily lives of every citizen by introducing market reforms. Willingly or unwillingly, the Kim Jong Il regime has started down a path that is difficult to reverse and also holds the potential to spark real change in North Korea.

Foreign Economic Relations

In addition to domestic economic reforms that began in 2002, North Korea has become increasingly open to a foreign presence. The legal and constitutional changes that the regime has made since 1998 provide a more clearly delineated framework for foreign trade and investment in North Korea. By 2005 overall levels of trade had surpassed those of 1991 (when trade was US$2.5 billion), as the upward trend continued from a nadir in 1998 (when trade decreased to US$1.4 billion). Total foreign trade for 2005 was around US$4 billion, or around 10 percent of GDP.

The regime also began to take small and tentative steps aimed at exposing North Korean bureaucrats to how market capitalism functions in practice. Because government bureaucrats have been trained entirely in a system of central planning, they lack the basic knowledge about how markets function and how to operate in such an environment. Beginning in 2001, former military officers were assigned as directors of factories and enterprises, in an apparent attempt to transform them from military elites into economic elites. There is skepticism on this point, with some observers seeing this action as an attempt by the military to increase its control over the economy. Even if this assumption were true, however, the result is that the military itself is becoming more involved in the daily functioning of economic matters.

Political scientist Park Kyung-ae notes that nongovernmental contacts between North Korea and various foreign nations increased significantly in the late 1990s. For example, two North Korean medical and energy delegations visited the United States in 1999, and other visits to the United States in 1998 included economic delegations that focused on poultry, academic exchanges, and energy. In 2001 more than 480 North Koreans visited Australia, China, Italy, and Sweden for training programs in finance, trade, and accounting. Other groups of officials have studied in Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. By far, the most delegations have traveled to China, although industrial management training also has occurred in India and Malaysia. In Europe, North Koreans have studied medical techniques in Switzerland, and agricultural and cultural groups have visited Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

In the wake of the agricultural and economic troubles of the 1990s, North Korea also has depended heavily on foreign aid. From 1995 to 2000, North Korea received more than US$2 billion in aid from other nations and international organizations. The bulk of this aid was from South Korea and covered projects such as the Mount

Kŭmgang zone, the 1994 Agreed Framework, and food and medical aid for famine victims.

Despite political troubles with the North, the United States also has been a major donor to North Korea for humanitarian reasons. Between 1995 and 2003, the United States contributed US$615 million in food aid and US$5 million in medical assistance. The U.S. contribution to KEDO amounted to more than US$400 million before all work on the KEDO project was stopped in 2004.

Although North Korea remains a very closed and isolated country, there has been considerable opening in foreign economic policy since the late 1990s. Mostly because of economic stagnation earlier in the decade, the North also has been far more open to international aid donors. As a result of this opening, foreign firms had achieved more penetration into North Korea in the early twenty-first century than at any time since the Korean War.

North–South Relations

Sunshine Policy and New Economic Development

South Korea is clearly the country that has most vigorously pursued attempts to engage North Korea economically. In 1998 South Korean president Kim Dae Jung developed the Sunshine Policy, whereby South Korea abandoned its long-standing policy of hostility to the North and instead began to follow a path designed to engage the North through economic and cultural contacts. The change in strategy has proved popular in the South. Roh Moo Hyun won the 2002 presidential election by a resounding 49 percent to 40 percent over competitor Lee Hoi Chang, based largely on Roh's campaign promise to continue the Sunshine Policy.

Following the shift to the Sunshine Policy, South Korea rapidly increased its contacts with the North: North–South merchandise trade increased 50 percent from 2001 to 2002, to US$641.7 million. The following year, trade between North Korea and South Korea rose 13 percent, to US$724.2 million.

South Korean conglomerates rapidly expanded their activities in the North with the official approval of both South Korean and North Korean governments. In 2002 permission was granted to 39 South Korean firms to establish cooperative partnership arrangements with North Korea. In 2005 Samsung successfully negotiated with the North Korean government to place its logo in P'yŏngyang and had begun exporting consumer electronics from its electronic industrial complex of more than 1.6 million square meters in factories in the North. LG Corporation has been manufacturing televisions in North

The port of Namp'o, South P'yŏngan Province
Courtesy Korea Today *(P'yŏngyang), January 1997, 6*

Korea since 1996. By 2004, there were more than 1,000 South Koreans living and working in North Korea, and the port of Namp'o had 180 South Korean companies.

By the end of 2004, more than 400 South Korean companies had set up offices in Yanji, a city in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in China's Jilin Province, close to its border with North Korea. These firms have invested a total of US$161.8 million, the greatest amount of all the foreign investors. Indications are that the South Korean investments will keep growing. Of these companies, about 40 already have moved into North Korea's Sŏnbong and Najin development districts, establishing food, cigarette, and garment factories. The garment factories alone were employing 20,000 North Koreans in 2005. In addition, many other companies are pursuing joint ventures in transportation, wood processing, cultivation of marine products, agricultural development, restaurants, trade, and tourism.

Cooperation also increased rapidly between the two Korean governments in the early 2000s. In November 2004, the Korea Resources Corporation, a quasigovernmental organization in South Korea, announced that it would open a liaison office in North Korea. Park Yang-soo, president of the corporation, said that in order "to cooperate on economic development between South Korea and North Korea, our state-run corporation plans to set up a liaison office

or branch office for raw materials in P'yŏngyang next year." South Korea had never had a liaison office in the North, and at the time of Park's announcement, South Korea and North Korea technically were still at war. The goal of the liaison office is to exploit mineral deposits in the North, beginning with an annual goal of exporting 10,000 to12,000 tons of graphite to the South. As of late 2007, the opening of the office was on hold.

More than 200,000 South Koreans visited North Korea in 2003–4. The number of South Korean visitors to the North, excluding South Korean tourists to the Mount Kŭmgang resort, has experienced yearly increases of 20 percent since 2000.

Another governmental project was the plan to reconnect the Kyŏngŭi Railroad—a connection between North Korea and South Korea through the DMZ, which had been severed since the Korean War. This railroad will connect the entire Korean Peninsula to Chinese and Russian railroad networks that, in turn, connect to cities in China and European Russia. The economic and political implications of the railroad reconnection are potentially fairly large, because it would allow shipment of goods from Japan and South Korea to Europe via North Korea. It also could be a conduit for further trade and investment in the region. The Korea Transport Institute estimates that earnings could be significant within three years of completion of the railroad, perhaps up to US$149 million in fees annually.

The Kyŏngŭi Railroad also is significant in political terms. Even during the 2002 United States–North Korea standoff, North Korea and South Korea continued to work toward reconnecting the Kyŏngŭi Railroad. The railroad has required clearing a section of the DMZ of land mines. In order to actually clear the DMZ, military meetings were required, and the fact that both militaries were able to agree is a significant step in the reduction of tension on the peninsula. Work on the line continued throughout the crisis of 2002. The land mines were cleared by December 2002, and the laying of railroad track was completed. Construction work was completed in 2006.

Kaesŏng Industrial Venture

The major venture between North and South is the establishment of a special economic zone and industrial district just north of the DMZ in the ancient capital city of Kaesŏng. Planned to use South Korean capital and North Korean labor, the zone includes a railroad and a highway that connect North and South through the DMZ. Hyundai Asan of South Korea and the Asia–Pacific Peace Committee of the North struck a deal in August 2000 to develop an industrial

Workers sorting and weighing new prescription drugs at a Sariwŏn pharmaceutical factory, North Hwanghae Province
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), December 2005, 32*

park. The Land Corporation, a South Korean state-invested corporation, contracted with the North for a 50-year lease of the area, and the North provided South Korean businesses favorable tax rates and currency-exchange conditions in return. The two Koreas broke ground on the first phase of development on June 30, 2003, a ceremony to mark the inauguration of the Kaesŏng Special Industrial Zone Management Committee and start the construction of enterprises to operate in the zone was held in Kaesŏng in October 2004, and the entire park was expected to be completed by 2007. When finished, the park will cover 66 square kilometers and might eventually employ 100,000 North Koreans and 150,000 South Koreans. The potential value of products produced in Kaesŏng could reach US$21 billion per year, according to the Federation of Korean Industries.

On December 1, 2004, the highway through the DMZ to Kaesŏng was officially opened. After completion of the 4.2 kilometer-long highway crossing the Demarcation Line (see Glossary) that divides the DMZ up to the Tongil Tower and connecting the two Koreas, the road officially opened as the Main East Sea Road. The railroad connecting Kaesŏng to the South was also completed in June 2003, nine months after beginning work clearing land mines in the DMZ. In December 2004, the North and the South also reached an agreement on the supply of electric power to the Kaesŏng Special Industrial Zone, according to the Korea Electric Power Corporation. Under the

agreement, the South began transferring electric power to the North in January 2005, marking the first time electricity has been transferred across the DMZ since the Korean War broke out in 1950. The South Korean government said it would seek provisions in future free-trade talks that will permit preferential duties for products from the Kaesŏng zone so that they will be treated as if they had been produced in the South.

North Korean-made iron kitchen pots began to appear in department stores in Seoul in December 2004, as the first products of an inter-Korean joint economic project to become available in the South. The South Korean manufacturing company, LivingArt, is one of 15 companies from South Korea that have begun to produce in Kaesŏng's pilot area of nearly 100,000 square meters. Such was the excitement in South Korea that the first set of 1,000 pots sold out in the first day. Woori Bank, South Korea's second-largest lender, opened a branch in Kaesŏng in December 2004.

The Economy in Transition

North Korea's economy is in transition. The old, centrally planned economy has essentially been abandoned, but a full embrace of market capitalism has not yet occurred. Some 15 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, North Korea continues to survive, stumbling along with an economy that is barely functional. The North has endured far longer than most observers expected, and although it is tempting to predict that the regime—and the economy—will collapse in the near future, prudence cautions against any predictions about prospects. Market signals are beginning to pervade the economy, and more information from the outside world is beginning to penetrate the country. Ultimately, this development will have a transformative effect in North Korea. How soon this transformation will occur is far less certain.

* * *

The economy of North Korea is in tremendous flux, and new sources of information are constantly appearing. The South Korean Ministry of Unification has an excellent English-language Web site (http://www.unikorea.go.kr/en/), and both the Korean and English sites have detailed and comprehensive information that is consistently the most up-to-date available. The Nautilus Institute of Berkeley, California, has an informative Web site (http://www.nautilus.org/) that includes briefings, policy papers, and data on all aspects of North

Korea, including extensive discussion of the economic reforms. South Korea's Naewoe Press publishes a monthly review of North Korea called *Vantage Point* that incorporates the best English- and Korean-language information available. The Economist Intelligence Unit offers reliable economic data on North Korea through its quarterly *Country Report: North Korea*.

The Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) of the DPRK has a Web site that contains its current and past news releases (http://www.kcna.co.jp/). Among other North Korean sources that consistently contain economic topics are *Chosŏn chungang yŏn'gam* (Korean Central Yearbook), an annual with sections on the economy and other related topics; *Kŭlloja* (The Worker), a monthly journal of the KWP Central Committee; *Nodong Shinmun* (Workers' Daily), the KWP's daily newspaper; and *Foreign Trade of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* and *Korea Today*, monthly English-language periodicals.

Other South Korean research institutes that have extensive scholarly publications on North Korea are the Korea Institute of National Unification (www.kinu.or.kr), the Sejong Institute (www.sejong.org), and the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (www.ifans.go.kr). The most useful Japanese source is *Kita Chōsen no keizai to bōeki no tenbō* (North Korean Economic and Trade Prospects), an annual published by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) that contains up-to-date surveys of the economy and statistical data on trade. Another informative Japanese source is the monthly periodical *Kita Chōsen kenkyū* (Studies on North Korea).

Other valuable sources in English are the January–February issue of *Asian Survey*, which carries the annual survey on North Korea; the United Nations' *International Trade Statistics Yearbook*; the International Monetary Fund's *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook*; and the U.S. Open Source Center (formerly the Foreign Broadcast Information Service) translations of North Korean broadcasts available via the U.S. National Technical Information Service's World News Connection (http://wnc.fedworld.gov/). (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 4. Government and Politics

Three strong arms—from top: the farmer, the party intellectual, and the worker—grasping the pole of the Korean Workers' Party flag with the three-part symbol of the hammer, writing brush, and sickle. The caption at the bottom reads: "Party's leadership means our life"; the inscription at top reads: "Victory if protected, death if abandoned."
Courtesy Chosŏn Yaesul *(P'yŏngyang), January 1996, 66*

THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (DPRK), or North Korea, was founded on September 9, 1948. Its claim to sovereignty was facilitated by the World War II Allied powers' defeat of imperial Japan in 1945, ending Japan's 35-year occupation of the Korean Peninsula, and was the direct result of failed attempts at trusteeship models and later of failed United Nations (UN)–administered elections in 1948 to unify the two occupation zones. The North was under the sway of the Soviet Union while the South was under U.S. control. UN-administered elections—impeded by the Soviets in the North—were held only in the South on May 10, 1948, leading to the establishment in August of that year of the Republic of Korea (South Korea).

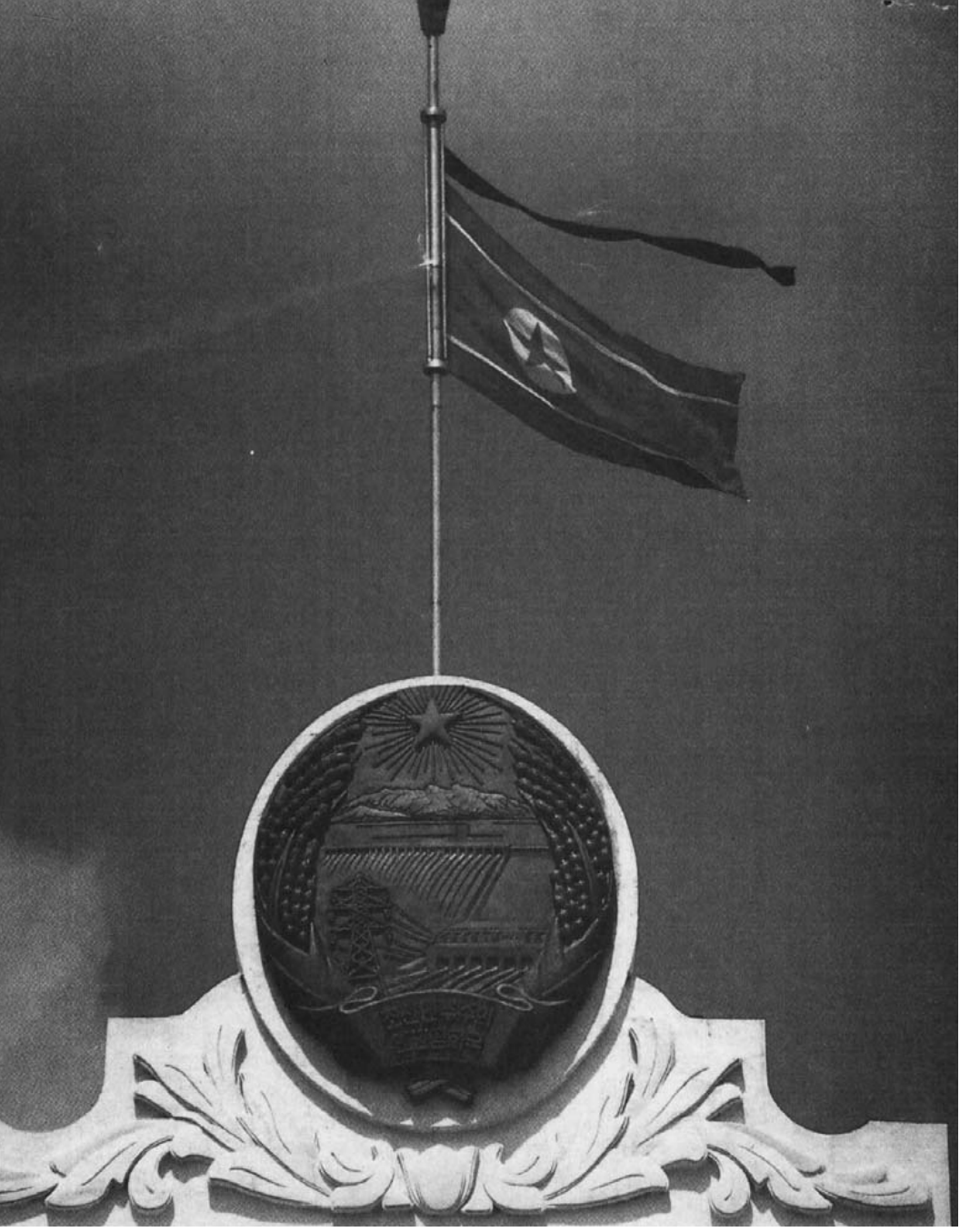
North Korea is one of modern history's few truly Orwellian and nepotistic systems. The first leader of North Korea, Kim Il Sung, was born in 1912. He served as an officer in the Soviet army and was an anti-Japanese guerrilla fighter in Manchuria in the 1930s, before returning to North Korea in September 1945, whereupon Soviet authorities anointed him as leader. Kim had taken a position of power in 1946, soon holding absolute, solipsistic control as general secretary of the North's communist Korean Workers' Party (KWP) and president of the state until July 8, 1994, when his sudden death led to the ascension of his son Kim Jong Il as the next leader. Born on February 16, 1941 (although, since 1982 his official birth date has been February 16, 1942, to match it symbolically with Kim Il Sung's birthday, which was April 15, 1912), and groomed since the early 1970s as the heir apparent, Kim Jong Il was given positions of increasing importance in the KWP hierarchy throughout the 1980s. At the KWP's Sixth Party Congress in October 1980, Kim Jong Il's succession was consolidated with his phased assumption of control over the civil administration, followed by his designation as supreme commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA) in December 1991. His assumption of rule was formalized in September 1998, presumably after the official period of mourning for Kim Il Sung had ended. Kim Jong Il rules the country as supreme commander of the military and as chairman of the National Defense Commission. The formal position of president remains held posthumously by his father.

The cult of personality and the nepotism of the Kim family constitute unique features of North Korean politics. In the past, for example, Kim Il Sung's wife, Kim Song-ae, was a member of the KWP Central Committee, a member of the Standing Committee of the

Supreme People's Assembly, a deputy to the assembly, and chairwoman of the Korean Democratic Women's Union Central Committee. Kim Il Sung's daughter, Kim Kyong-hui, was a member of the KWP Central Committee and deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly, and his son-in-law, Chang Song-taek, was premier, alternate member of the KWP Central Committee, and deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly. Kang Song-san, Kim Il Sung's cousin by marriage, was premier and a member of the KWP Central Committee and its Political Bureau, deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly, and member of the state Central People's Committee. Ho Tam, who died in 1991, was Kim Il Sung's brother-in-law, a member of the KWP Central Committee and Political Bureau, chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee, deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly, and chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland. In 2005 Kim Jong Il appeared to be grooming one of his sons, Kim Jong Chul, to succeed him. His eldest son, Kim Jong Nam, was another possibility for succession, but he appeared to have lost standing in the family hierarchy as a result of his arrest and detainment at Japan's Narita International Airport in 2001 while traveling on a forged passport.

Although the Korean Communist Party dated from the 1920s, North Korea claims that the KWP was founded by Kim Il Sung in 1945. Since that time, despite the existence of other small political organizations, North Korea has been under the one-party rule of the KWP (see Mass Organizations, this ch.). Throughout Kim Il Sung's reign, the party remained the most politically significant entity; its preeminence in all spheres of society placed it beyond the reach of dissent or disagreement. Party membership is composed of the "advanced fighters" among North Korea's working people: workers, peasants, and working intellectuals who are said to struggle devotedly for the success of the socialist and communist cause. The KWP claims a membership of 3 million. The ruling elite considers KWP members the major mobilizing and developmental cadres, or *kanbu* (see Glossary). In principle, every worker, peasant, soldier, and revolutionary element can join the party.

What distinguishes Kim Jong Il's rule from his father's has been the relative decline in influence of the KWP and the rise of the military as the predominant organ of government and society. "Military-first" (*sŏngun*) politics is reflected not only in the leadership positions held formally by Kim Jong Il (chairman of the National Defense Commission) but also in the relative elimination of many major KWP functions (for example, plenary meetings). The most powerful government institution under Kim Il Sung was the Political Bureau of the KWP Central Committee. The National Defense Com-



The national flag has three horizontal bands of blue (top), red (triple width), and blue; the red band is edged in white; on the hoist side of the red band is a white disk with a red five-pointed star. The official seal shows a large hydraulic power plant under Mount Paektu and the light of a five-pointed red star with ears of rice forming an oval frame bound with a red ribbon inscribed: "Democratic People's Republic of Korea."
Courtesy Korea Today *(P'yŏngyang), August 1994, front cover*

mission has effectively displaced the Political Bureau as the predominant decision-making authority. The privileging of the military undeniably is related to Kim Jong Il's moves to consolidate both power and legitimacy in the shadow of his father's military credentials and uncontested rule.

The political system is guided by the concept of *chuch'e* (see Glossary)—"national self-reliance" in all activities. The essence of *chuch'e* is to apply creatively the general principles of Marxism and Leninism in the North Korean way. As historian Dae-Sook Suh has noted, *chuch'e* is "not the philosophical exposition of an abstract idea; rather, it is firmly rooted in the North Korean people and Kim Il Sung." In April 1992, North Korea promulgated an amended state constitution that deleted Marxism and Leninism as principal national ideas and instead emphasized *chuch'e.* Reinforcing this trend, constitutional amendments in 1998 recognized the concept of private ownership for the first time and granted some autonomy to technocrats and local light industry from central party control. The regime, moreover, now admits flaws in the socialist-style economy as the source of the problems rather than blaming its economic woes on outside forces, as it traditionally has done. A *Nodong Shinmun* (Workers' Daily) editorial on November 21, 2001, thus declared: "... the socialist economic management method is still immature and not perfect .... If we stick to this hackneyed and outdated method, which is not applicable to the realities of today, then we will be unable to develop our economy." Wide-ranging economic reforms announced in July 2002 represented further steps away from the Marxist and socialist models (see Prospects: The Significance of Reform, this ch.). But in spite of these changes, the regime clings firmly to the *chuch'e* ideology.

This apparent contradiction, in large part, is because the ideology is inextricably intertwined with the glorification, bordering on deification, of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il's authority and cult of personality. Kim and his father used the ideology, party, military, and government to consolidate power. The two Kims have been addressed by many honorary titles, including "great leader (father)," "dear leader (son)," and *suryŏng* (see Glossary), which can be taken to mean the son of the nation, national hero, liberator, and fatherly leader. According to the party, there can be no greater honor or duty than being loyal to one or the other of the two Kims "absolutely and unconditionally." Executive power is not checked by any constitutional provision. The government structures' principal purpose is to ensure strict popular compliance with the policies of Kim Jong Il; such compliance implants an appearance of institutional imprimatur on Kim's highly

personalized and absolute rule. Although the internal workings of North Korean politics are extremely opaque, politics as a function of competition for power by aspiring groups and promotion of the interests of special groups appears to be less germane to the North Korean setting.

The most significant twenty-first-century political event in North Korea relates to the July 2002 market-liberalization reforms (see Economic Reforms, ch. 3). These are generally associated with four measures: basic monetization of the economy and the legalization of makeshift markets; currency depreciation; transplanting managerial decisions for industry and agriculture from the central government (factory party committees) into the hands of local production units; and pressing forward with special administrative and industrial zones to induce foreign investment. These measures represent both the North's best attempt at serious reform and its most dangerous gamble in terms of regime resiliency. If major change is the objective, the reforms are the clearest expression of P'yŏngyang's genuine intentions to move away from a command-style economy to one that might enable the regime to reach some modicum of economic stability, which, in turn, could mean that the North is serious about trading away its nuclear threat for the aid necessary to push forward with these reforms. If the liberalization is a gamble, the North may be pursuing the reforms despite its nuclear ambitions, with the hope that it can achieve both goals (that is, hard currency inflows and retention of some nuclear capabilities). The reality may lie between these two. But there is no denying that these reforms also make the regime more vulnerable to basic supply and demand and price pressures in a way never encountered before in North Korea.

Relationships Among the Government, Party, and Military

From the founding of the DPRK in 1948 through the early 1990s, the KWP held a commanding position vis-à-vis the government. A definitive shift toward "military-first," or *sŏngun*, politics took place with the 1994 death of Kim Il Sung and the succession to power of Kim Jong Il. The significance of this shift meant the promotion of the military as the central organ of government at the expense of the KWP.

Also, from 1948 to the early 1990s, government organs were regarded as executors of the general line and policies of the KWP. Government was expected to implement the policies and directives of the party by mobilizing the masses. All government officials or functionaries were

exhorted to behave as servants of the people, rather than as overbearing "bureaucrats." The persistence in party literature of admonitions against formalism strongly suggests that authoritarian bureaucratic behavior remains a major source of concern to the party leadership. This concern may explain in part the party's intensified efforts, beginning in the early 1970s, to wage an ideological struggle against the bureaucratic work style of officials. The general trend was toward tightened party control and supervision of all organs of administrative and economic policy implementation.

In January 1990, Kim Jong Il introduced the slogan "to serve the people" and directed party functionaries to mingle with the people and to work devotedly as their faithful servants. Kim stated that the collapse of socialism in some countries was a stern lesson to North Korea and was related to failures in party building and party activity. He stressed the importance of reinforcing the party's ideological unity and cohesion and elucidated tasks that would strengthen education in the principle of *chuch'e*, revolutionary traditional education, and socialist and patriotic education.

The KWP continues to be the formulator of national purpose, priorities, and administrative hierarchy. It is the central coordinator of administrative and economic activities at the national and local levels. Through its own organizational channels, which permeate all government and economic agencies, the party continues to oversee administrative operations and enforce state discipline. Without exception, key government positions are filled by party loyalists, most of whom are trained in the North Korean system, which emphasizes ideology and practical expertise.

The shift to "military-first" politics is generally associated with Kim Jong Il's formal assumption of the National Defense Commission chairmanship after the death of Kim Il Sung in July 1994. In a 1991 plenary session of the KWP Sixth Party Congress, Kim Il Sung made his son the supreme commander of the KPA. A few months later, the elder Kim named the younger Kim marshal (*wŏnsu)* of the DPRK, effectively putting operational control of the military under his son. Kim Il Sung held the National Defense Commission chairmanship until April 1993, when he turned this position over to his son, who assumed full duties only upon the death of his father.

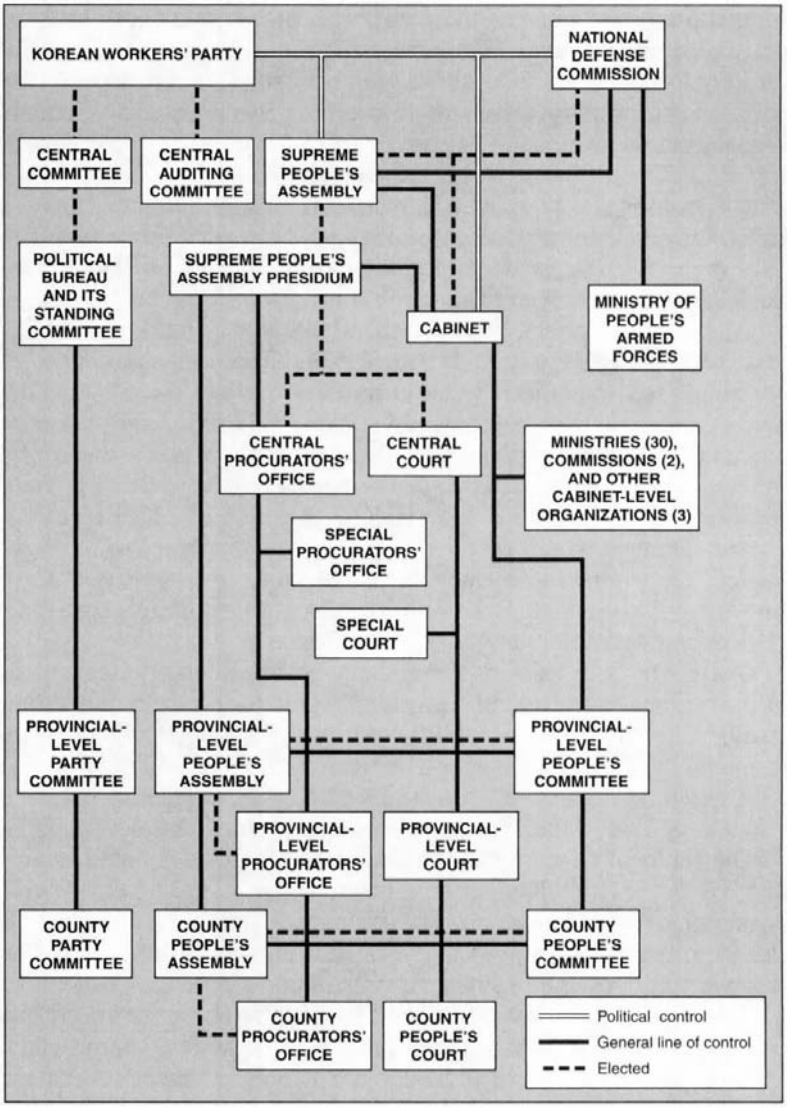
The National Defense Commission constitutionally is the highest institution within the military establishment only, but in practice, under Kim Jong Il, the National Defense Commission has become the dominant decision-making body of the state (see fig. 10). Many believe this shift is the manifestation of the younger Kim's consolidation of power and legitimacy after the death of his father. Kim

Jong Il possessed none of the credentials of his father, either in the party or in the military. The younger Kim thus sought to co-opt the military by elevating its position within North Korea relative to the party as the primary means of legitimizing his own rule. There is speculation that Minister of People's Armed Forces O Chin-u, a confidant of Kim Il Sung, was a key figure in assuring the military's obedience and acceptance of Kim Jong Il, despite the young Kim's lack of any military credentials such as his father had possessed. The only other possible leadership candidate, Premier Kim Il (no relation), had been removed from his post in 1976.

Military-first politics was formalized in about 1995. It was at this time that the concept was introduced as "a revolutionary idea of attaching great importance to the army" and "politics emphasizing the perfect unity and the single-hearted unity of the Party, Army and people, and the role of the army as the vanguards." Phrases such as "the *sŏngun* revolutionary idea," "*sŏngun* revolutionary leadership," and "*sŏngun* politics" also have been employed since 1998. The basic concept of *sŏngun* is to rely on the military as the primary leg of the "revolution," economic reconstruction, and North Korean–style socialism. Implicit in this principle is the prioritization of the military's needs as a key component of the state's national objectives.

One of the justifications for military-first politics is achievement of the national objective of *kangsong taeguk* (rich nation and strong army), a concept introduced in 1999 by Kim Jong Il. As such, an inseparable link between North Korean patriotism and support for Kim's grip on the military has been established, explaining why the majority of Kim's public appearances have been with the KPA.

The National Defense Commission's rise as the hegemonic institution within the North Korean government began in April 1992, when a constitutional revision separated the National Defense Commission's chairmanship from the presidency, establishing the commission as an independent body. The 1992 state constitutional revisions also ended long-held practices in which the president was supreme commander of the armed forces and chairman of the National Defense Commission, shifting power instead to the Supreme People's Assembly and the National Defense Commission. The key significance of these revisions is that the president (a position that only two years later would be held posthumously by Kim Il Sung) was made the nominal head of state, but with the power to appoint the National Defense Commission chairman. The first session of the 10-term Supreme People's Assembly on September 5, 1998, reinforced the National Defense Commission's grip by empowering it with authority over all military affairs and defense projects. The National Defense Commission, although



Source: Based on information from Republic of Korea, Ministry of Unification, Information Center on North Korea, "Power Structure of North Korea," 2006, http://unibook.unikorea.go.kr/dataroom/images/table_d_01.gif; and U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "North Korea," *Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments*, June 28, 2006, https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/chiefs94.html.

Figure 10. Party, State, and Government Power, 2006

nominally under the Supreme People's Assembly, essentially constitutes the highest executive body, headed by its chairman, Kim Jong Il. The primary military organ in the KWP is the Military Affairs Department, also run by Kim Jong Il through his position as party general secretary (see National Defense Organizations, ch. 5).

In 2007 the National Defense Commission consisted of a chairman (Kim Jong Il); first vice chairman (Cho Myŏng-nok); two vice chairmen (Kim Yŏng-chun and Yi Yong-mu); and three members (Kim Il-ch'ŏl, Chŏn Pyŏng-ho, and Kim Yang-gŏn), each with five-year terms. The National Defense Commission has the power to direct all activities of the armed forces and national defense projects, establish and disband central defense institutions, appoint and dismiss senior military officers, confer military titles and grant titles for top commanders, and declare a state of war and issue mobilization orders in an emergency.

The Korean Workers' Party

The Korean Workers' Party (KWP), according to the preamble of the party constitution, is the "vanguard organization of the working class," and the "highest type of revolutionary body among all organizations of the working masses." The National Party Congress is the supreme party organ and approves reports of other party organs, adopts basic party policies and tactics, and elects members to the KWP Central Committee and the Central Auditing Committee. The elections, however, are perfunctory because the members of these bodies are actually chosen by Kim Jong Il and his few trusted colleagues. When the National Party Congress is not in session, the Central Committee acts as the official agent of the party. The Central Committee is supposed to meet at least once every six months and has the responsibility of electing the party general secretary (Kim Jong Il), members of the Political Bureau, and its Standing Committee (or Presidium, the highest operational party organization). The Central Committee also elects members of the KWP Secretariat (which implements administrative decisions, personnel management, and other important party matters) and members of the Central Military Commission (which formulates the party's military policies, action plans, and defense industry development. The commission's last known chairman was Kim Il Sung; it should not be confused with the similarly named Military Affairs Department. The Central Committee additionally elects the members of the Central Inspection Committee, which maintains party discipline, reviews petitions and appeals from provincial and directly governed city party organizations, and investigates members violating party policies or at odds

with the top leadership. A party congress is supposed to be convened every five years, but as of 2007, one had not been held since the Sixth Party Congress in 1980. Party congresses are attended by delegates elected by the members of provincial-level party assemblies at the ratio of one delegate for every 1,000 party members.

Until his death in July 1994, Kim Il Sung held all key party positions, including being KWP general secretary, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, and chairman of the Central Military Commission. Kim Jong Il was not appointed general secretary until October 8, 1997. Although technically open to mass membership, access to the KWP is denied to those without a "reliable" class background. The KWP operates as the core of the North Korean polity, with more than 3 million members. The party carries the identity of a class-based and individual-leadership organization. The KWP has two alliance parties, the Korean Social Democratic Party and the Chongu (Friends) Party, supportive of the Ch'ŏndogyo religion (see Religion, ch. 2). Kim Jong Il has formally led the KWP since 1997, although informally the party has been under his control since 1994. Kim Jong Il's accession was followed by a round of purges in the KWP, in which some of his father's old followers were removed from office.

The Sixth Party Congress, convened October 10–14, 1980, was attended by 3,220 party delegates (3,062 full members and 158 alternate members) and 177 foreign delegates from 118 countries. Attendance significantly increased from the approximately 1,800 delegates who attended the Fifth Party Congress in November 1970. The 1980 congress was convened by the KWP Central Committee to review, discuss, and endorse reports by the Central Committee, the Central Auditing Committee, and other central organs covering the activities of these bodies since the previous congress 10 years earlier. The Sixth Party Congress also elected a new Central Committee.

In his report to the congress, Kim Il Sung outlined a set of goals and policies for the 1980s. He proposed the establishment of a Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryŏ as a reasonable way to achieve the independent and peaceful reunification of the country. He also clarified a new 10-point policy for the unified state and stressed that North Korea and South Korea should recognize and tolerate each other's ideas and social systems, that the unified central government should be represented by P'yŏngyang and Seoul on an equal footing, and that both sides should exercise regional autonomy with equal rights and duties. Specifically, the unified government should respect the social systems and the wishes of administrative organizations and of every party, every group, and every sector of people in the North and the South, and the central government should prevent one side from imposing its will on the other.

Kim Il Sung also emphasized the Three Revolutions (see Glossary), which are aimed at hastening the process of political and ideological transformation based on *chuch'e* ideology, improving the material and technical standards of the economy, and developing socialist national culture. According to Kim, these revolutions were the responsibility of the Three Revolutions Team Movement (see Glossary)—"a new method of guiding the revolution," which combined political and ideological guidance with scientific and technical guidance. This approach enabled superior authorities to help the lower levels and rouse masses of the working people to accelerate the Three Revolutions. The teams performed their guidance work by sending their members to factories, enterprises, and cooperative farms. Their members are party cadres, including those from the KWP Central Committee, reliable officials of the government, persons from economic and mass organizations, scientists and technicians, and young intellectuals. Kim Il Sung left no question that the Three Revolutions Team Movement had succeeded the Ch'ŏllima Movement (see Glossary) and would remain the principal vehicle through which the party pursued its political and economic objectives in the 1980s.

The linkage between party and economic work also was addressed by Kim Il Sung. In acknowledging the urgent task of economic construction, he stated that party work should be geared toward efficient economic construction and that success in party work should be measured by success in economic construction. Accordingly, party organizations were told to "push forward economic work actively, give prominence to economic officials, and help them well." Party officials also were advised to watch out for signs of independence on the part of technocrats. The membership and organization of the KWP are specified in the party rules.

There are two kinds of party members: regular and probationary. Membership is open to those 18 years of age and older but is granted only to those who have demonstrated their qualifications; applications are submitted to a cell along with a proper endorsement from two party members with at least two years in good standing. An application is acted on by the plenary session of a cell; an affirmative decision is subject to ratification by a county-level party committee. After approving an application, a one-year probationary period is mandatory, but it may be waived under certain unspecified "special circumstances," allowing the candidate to become a full member. Recruitment is under the direction of the Organization and Guidance Department and its local branches.

The Constitutional Framework

The state constitutions of North Korea have been patterned after those of other communist states. The constitutional framework delineates a highly centralized governmental system and the relationship between the people and the state. The constitution was adopted in 1948, completely revised in December 1972, revised again in April 1992, and then amended and supplemented in September 1998. Innovations of the 1972 constitution included the establishment of the positions of president and vice presidents and a supercabinet called the Central People's Committee.

The revised 1998 state constitution has 166 articles (15 fewer than the 1992 constitution) in seven chapters. As with the 1992 revision, the 1998 constitution continues to uphold *chuch'e* at the expense of Marxism–Leninism and includes articles encouraging joint ventures within special economic zones, guaranteeing the "legal rights and interests of foreigners," and establishing a framework for expanded ties with capitalist countries. The 1992 revision had provided a legal framework for the 1991 appointment of Kim Jong Il as supreme commander of the armed forces by removing the military from the command of the president and by placing the military under the control of the National Defense Commission, of which he is chairman. The 1998 constitution confirms this power.

The 18 articles of chapter 1 of the 1998 constitution deal with politics. Article 1 defines North Korea as an independent socialist state representing the interests of all the Korean people. Article 15 states that the DPRK defends the democratic, national rights of Koreans overseas and their rights as recognized under international law. Sovereignty emanates from four expressly mentioned social groups: "workers, peasants, working intellectuals, and all other working people." State organs are organized and operate on the principle of democratic centralism. Article 9 declares that "the complete victory of socialism in the northern half of Korea" will be accomplished through the execution of the three revolutions of ideology, technology, and culture, while struggling to realize unification of the fatherland by following the principles of independence, peaceful unification, and grand national unity. In the 1972 constitution, socialism was to have been accomplished by driving out foreign forces on a countrywide scale and by reunifying the nation peacefully on a democratic basis. Other articles in this chapter of the 1998 constitution refer to the main party line, the Ch'ŏngsan-ni Method (see Glossary) and spirit, and the Three Revolutions Team Movement. The constitution states that foreign policy and foreign activities are based on the principles of independence, peace, and solidarity. Diplomatic, political, economic, and cultural

relations are to be established with all friendly countries based on the principles of complete equality, independence, mutual respect, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, and mutual benefit.

Economic affairs were codified in chapter 2. The constitution declares that the means of production are owned by state and social cooperative organizations. Article 22 reiterates that natural resources, railroads, airports, transportation, communication organs, major factories, enterprises, ports, and banks are state owned. Article 24 defines personal property as that "meeting the simple and individuals aims of the citizen." Benefits derived from supplementary pursuits, such as the small garden plots of collectivized farmers, are considered personal property; such benefits were protected by the state as private property and are guaranteed by law as a right of inheritance. According to article 33, the planned, national economy is directed and managed through the now largely abandoned Taean Work System (see Glossary; Organization, ch. 3).

Culture, education, and public health are covered in chapter 3. Article 45 stipulates that the state develop a mandatory 11-year education system, including two years of compulsory preschool education (see Education, ch. 2). Article 47 says that education is provided at no cost and that the state grants allowances to students enrolled in universities and colleges. Article 56 notes that medical service is universal and free (see Health Care, ch. 2). (Medical care and the right to education are also covered in articles 72 and 73 in chapter 5.) Article 57 places environmental protection measures before production; this emphasis is in line with recent attention given to preserving the natural environment and creating a hygienic living and working environment by preventing environmental pollution.

Chapter 4, consisting of only four articles, covers national defense. Emphasis is given to the mission of the armed forces, a self-reliant defense, and unity between the military forces and the people.

Chapter 5 extensively details the fundamental rights and duties of citizens. Citizens over the age of 17 may exercise the right to vote and be elected to office regardless of gender, race, occupation, length of residency, property status, education, party affiliation, political views, or religion. Citizens serving in the armed forces may vote and be elected; insane persons and those deprived by court decisions of the right to vote are disenfranchised. According to article 67, citizens have freedom of speech, press, assembly, demonstration, and association. Citizens also have the right to work, and article 70 stipulates that they work according to their ability and be remunerated according to the quantity and quality of work performed. Article 71 provides for a system of working hours, holidays, paid leave, sanatoriums, and rest homes funded by the state, as well as for cultural facilities. Article 77

accords women equal social status and rights with men. Women are granted maternity leave and shortened working hours if they have large families. Marriage and the family are protected by the state, according to the next article.

Chapter 6, on the structure of the state, has 75 articles in seven sections. The chapter covers the Supreme People's Assembly, the National Defense Commission, the Central People's Committee, the State Administration Council, local people's assemblies, local people's committees, the Central Procurators' Office, and the Central Court.

Chapter 7 covers the national emblem, flag, and capital. It describes the first two items, designates P'yŏngyang as the national capital, and identifies the national anthem as the "Patriotic Song." In a change from the 1972 constitution, the 1992 and 1998 revisions mandated that "the sacred mountain of the revolution"—Mount Paektu—be added to the national emblem. It stands above the previously existing symbols: a hydroelectric power plant, the beaming light of a five-pointed red star, ovally framed ears of rice bound with a red band, and the inscription Chosŏn Minjujuŭi Inmin Konghwaguk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea).

With the 1998 constitution, the post of state president, the Central People's Committee, and the Supreme People's Assembly Standing Committee were abolished, giving most of the power shared by these institutions to the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium. The constitution's preamble states that Kim Il Sung is the "eternal president" of North Korea and stipulates that the constitution itself "shall be called Kim Il Sung's Constitution." Under these revisions, the president of the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium became the de jure head of state, representing North Korea in external affairs, and head of the supreme sovereign institution. Article 100 notes that the National Defense Commission is the "highest military leading organ of state power and an organ for general control over national defense." Although article 105 states that the commission is "accountable to the Supreme People's Assembly," with Kim Jong Il as chairman, the commission holds the de facto supreme power of state.

The Structure of Government

The Legislature

According to article 87 of the 1998 constitution, the Supreme People's Assembly is "the highest organ of state power." However, it is not influential and does not initiate legislation independently of other party and state organs. Invariably, the legislative process is set in motion by executive bodies according to the predetermined policies of the party leadership. The Supreme People's Assembly is not known

Supreme People's Assembly, P'yŏngyang
Courtesy Tracy Woodward
Hall inside the Supreme People's Assembly
Courtesy Tracy Woodward

ever to have criticized, modified, or rejected a bill or a measure placed before it, or to have proposed an alternative bill or measure.

The constitution provides for the Supreme People's Assembly to be elected every five years by universal suffrage. Article 88 indicates that legislative power is exercised by the Supreme People's Assembly and its Presidium when the full Supreme People's Assembly is not in session. Earlier the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly exercised this power, but in 1998 it was abolished and replaced with the Presidium. Elections to the Eleventh Supreme People's Assembly were held in August 2003, with 687 deputies elected. The KWP approves a single list of candidates who stand for election without opposition. Deputies usually meet once a year in regular sessions in March or April, but since 1985 they also have met occasionally in extraordinary sessions in November or December.

The president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly represents North Korea in relations with foreign countries. Assembly sessions are convened by the Presidium, whose president since 1998 has been Kim Yong-nam, a former vice premier and former minister of foreign affairs. There are also two vice presidents, two honorary vice presidents, a secretary general, and 12 members of the Presidium. Until April 1994, the Supreme People's Assembly convened nearly every year, but after Kim Il Sung's death in July 1994, it did not convene until the tenth term was held in September 2000. Supreme People's Assembly Presidium members are elected by the deputies, as are the Supreme People's Assembly president and vice presidents. The Supreme People's Assembly has three committees: bills, budget, and qualifications screening. Before the September 1998 constitutional amendments, the Supreme People's Assembly also had foreign affairs and reunification-policy deliberation committees.

Article 91 states that the Supreme People's Assembly has the authority to adopt, amend, and supplement the constitution and departmental laws; establish the basic principles of domestic and foreign policies; and approve major departmental laws adopted by the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium in the intervals between the sessions of the Supreme People's Assembly. It also may elect or transfer the chairman and other members (on recommendation of the chairman) of the National Defense Commission; elect or remove the president of the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium; elect or transfer the premier and vice premiers and members of the cabinet; appoint or remove the procurator general; elect or transfer the chief justice; and elect or transfer its own top officials. The Supreme People's Assembly is empowered to examine and approve the state plan for the development of the national economy and a report on its fulfillment;

examine and approve a report on the state budget and on its implementation; receive a report on the work of the cabinet and national institutions and adopt measures, if necessary; and decide whether to ratify or abrogate treaties. Assembly decisions are made by a simple majority and signified by a show of hands. Deputies, each representing a constituency of approximately 30,000 persons, are guaranteed inviolability and immunity from arrest. Between assembly sessions, the Presidium acts for the Supreme People's Assembly.

The Executive

President and Vice Presidents

Prior to Kim Il Sung's death in July 1994, the president was the head of state and the head of government in his capacity as chairman of the Central People's Committee. The constitution stated that two vice presidents were to "assist" the president, but it did not elaborate on a mode of succession. Following Kim's death and the constitutional amendments of 1998, Kim Jong Il as National Defense Commission chairman assumed presidential responsibilities but not the title. The preface to the constitution as amended in 1998 reads: "The DPRK and the entire Korean people will uphold the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung as the eternal President of the Republic." Thus, Kim Il Sung posthumously occupies the presidency; the positions of vice president remain unfilled. The titles of president and vice president in North Korea now refer only to the president and vice presidents of the Supreme People's Assembly.

Presidential powers were stated only in generalities. The chief executive convened and guided the State Administration Council as occasion demanded. Under the 1972 constitution, he was also the supreme commander of the armed forces and chairman of the National Defense Commission, although Kim Il Sung appointed his son to the former position in December 1991 and to the latter position in April 1993 (see National Command Authorities, ch. 5). The president's prior assent was required for all laws, decrees, decisions, and directives, and his edicts commanded the force of law more authoritatively than any other legislation. The president promulgated the laws and ordinances of the Supreme People's Assembly; the decisions of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly (abolished in 1998); and the laws, ordinances, and decisions of the Central People's Committee. The president also granted pardons, ratified or abrogated treaties, and received foreign envoys or requested their recall. No one served in top government posts without the president's recommendation. Even the judiciary and the

prosecutors were accountable to Kim Il Sung. In accordance with article 91 of the 1998 constitution, these presidential functions now reside with the Supreme People's Assembly.

It was not until 1997 that the younger Kim officially took over the leadership of the KWP. The following year, the presidency was reserved for the revered deceased leader. Kim Jong Il consolidated his power in the positions left to him. The 1998 constitution declares that the chairman of the National Defense Commission "holds the highest post of the state."

Cabinet

Between 1972 and 1998, the highest administrative arm of the government was the State Administration Council. Before then, the cabinet had been the highest level of the executive branch, but the 1972 constitution changed its name and function. The council was directed by the president and the Central People's Committee and was composed of the premier, vice premiers, ministers, commission chairmen, and other cabinet-level members of the central agencies.

The 1998 constitution changed the State Administration Council into a cabinet and upgraded its status and power. The cabinet is the supreme administrative and executive organ and a general state management organ. Previously the State Administration Council had been subject to the control of the president and the Central People's Committee. Since 1998 the cabinet has had the authority to formulate measures for the implementation of national policies; enact, amend, or supplement regulations pertaining to national administration; establish or abolish key administrative economic organs and industrial establishments and formulate plans to improve national management organizations; and implement inspection and controlling activities to maintain order in national management. The cabinet has exclusive responsibility for all economic administrative projects.

Under the 1998 constitution, the premier represents the government (article 120) and functions independently. In 2007 the cabinet was headed by Premier Kim Yong-il. Under him were three vice premiers, 30 ministers, two cabinet-level commission chairmen, the president of the Academy of Sciences, the president of the Central Bank, the director of the Central Statistics Bureau, and a chief secretary of the cabinet. Besides the 30 civilian ministries that are part of the cabinet, there is a thirty-first ministry—the Ministry of People's Armed Forces—that is not subordinate to the cabinet but reports instead to the National Defense Commission.

The Judiciary

In the North Korean judicial process, both adjudicative and prosecuting bodies function as powerful weapons for the proletarian dictatorship. The constitution states that the Central Court, courts at the provincial or special-city level, the people's courts, and special courts administer justice. The Central Court, the highest court of appeal, stands at the apex of the court system. The president of the Central Court since September 1998 has been Kim P'yŏng-ryul. In the case of the one special city (Namp'o) directly under central authority, provincial or municipal courts serve as the courts of first instance for civil and criminal cases at the intermediate level. At the lowest level are the people's courts, established in ordinary cities, counties, and urban districts. Special courts exist for the armed forces and for railroad workers. The military special courts have jurisdiction over all crimes committed by members of the armed forces or the personnel of the Ministry of People's Security. The railroad courts have jurisdiction over criminal cases involving rail and water transport workers. In addition, the Korean Maritime Arbitration Committee adjudicates maritime legal affairs.

In theory, the corresponding local people's assemblies elect judges and people's assessors, or lay judges. In practice, however, the KWP generally appoints judges, who do not require legal education or practical legal experience for their roles. In addition to administering justice based on criminal and civil codes, the courts are in charge of political indoctrination through "re-education." The issue of punishment is not expressly stated in the constitution or the criminal code.

The collective interests of the workers, peasants, soldiers, and working intellectuals are protected by a parallel hierarchy of organs controlled at the top by the Central Procurators' Office (accountable to the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium when the full Supreme People's Assembly is in recess). This office acts as the state's procurator and checks on the activities of all public organs and citizens to ensure their compliance with the law and their "active struggle against all lawbreakers." Its authority extends to the courts, the decisions of which (including those of the Central Court) are subject to routine scrutiny. A judgment of the Central Court may be appealed to the plenary session of the Central Court, of which the state's chief procurator is a statutory member.

The chief prosecutor, known as the procurator general, is appointed by and accountable in theory, although not in fact, to the Supreme People's Assembly. There are one procurator general and three deputy procurator generals.

Local Government

There are three levels of local government: provinces (*do*) and provincial-level municipalities (*chikalsi*, or *jikhalsi*); a special city (*t'ŭkpyŏlsi*), ordinary cities (*si* or *shi*), urban districts (*kuyŏk*), and rural counties (*gun*, or *kun*); and traditional villages (*ri*, or *ni*). Cities are subdivided into wards (*gu*), and some cities and wards are subdivided into neighborhoods (*dong*), the lowest level of urban government to have its own office and staff. Towns and townships (*myŏn*) have not functioned as administrative units in North Korea since the Korean War (1950–53), but they still exist in South Korea. At the village level, administrative and economic matters are the responsibility of the chairman of the cooperative farm management committee in each village.

North Korea has nine provinces: Chagang, North Hamgyŏng, South Hamgyŏng, North Hwanghae, South Hwanghae, Kangwŏn, North P'yŏngan, South P'yŏngan, and Yanggang. There also are two provincial-level municipalities—P'yŏngyang and Najin–Sŏnbong—and one special city, Namp'o. Kaesŏng, which was once a *chikalsi*, had its territory incorporated into South Hwanghae Province in 2003. Additionally, there are 17 ordinary cities under provincial authority; 36 urban districts; more than 200 counties; and some 4,000 villages. Among these divisions, the counties serve as the intermediate administrative link between provincial authorities and the grass-roots-level village organizations. Local organs at the county level provide other forms of guidance to such basic units as neighborhoods (*dong*) and workers' districts (*nodongja-ku*).

Three types of local organs elect local officials to carry out centrally planned policies and programs. These organs are local KWP committees, local people's assemblies, and local administrative committees, with functions such as administrative and urban and rural economic guidance committees. These committees are local extensions of higher bodies at the national level, namely, the KWP, the Supreme People's Assembly, and the cabinet.

The local people's assemblies, established at all administrative levels, perform the same symbolic functions as the Supreme People's Assembly. They provide a façade of popular support and involvement and serve as a vehicle through which loyal and meritorious local inhabitants are given visible recognition as deputies to the assemblies. The assemblies meet once or twice a year, for only a few days at each session. Their duties are to approve the plan for local economic development and the local budget; to elect the officers of other local bodies, including the judges and people's assessors of the courts within their jurisdictions; and to review the decisions and

directives issued by local organs at their corresponding and lower levels. The local people's assemblies have no standing committees. Between regular sessions, their duties are performed by the local people's committees, whose members are elected by assemblies at corresponding levels and are responsible both to the assemblies and to the local people's committees at higher levels.

The officers and members of the people's committees are influential locally as party functionaries and as senior administrative cadres. These committees can convene the people's assemblies; prepare for the election of deputies to the local assemblies; implement the decisions of the assemblies at the corresponding level and those of the people's committees at higher levels; and control and supervise the work of administrative bodies, enterprises, and social and cooperative organizations in their respective jurisdictions.

The day-to-day affairs of local communities are handled by the local administrative committees. The chairman, vice chairmen, secretary, and members of these bodies are elected by the local people's committees at the corresponding levels.

Political Ideology

The Role of *Chuch'e*

Chuch'e ideology is the basic cornerstone of party construction, party works, and government operations. *Chuch'e* is sanctified as the essence of what has been officially called Kim Il Sung Chuui (Kimilsungism) since April 1974. *Chuch'e* is also claimed as "the present-day Marxism–Leninism." North Korean leaders advocate *chuch'e* ideology as the only correct guiding ideology in their revolutionary movement.

Chuch'e also is referred to as "the unitary ideology" or as "the monolithic ideology of the Party." It is inseparable from and, for all intents and purposes, synonymous with Kim Il Sung's leadership and was said to have been "created" or "fathered" by the great leader as an original "encyclopedic thought which provides a complete answer to any question that arises in the struggle for national liberation and class emancipation, in the building of socialism and communism." *Chuch'e* is viewed as the embodiment of revealed truth attesting to the wisdom of Kim's leadership as exemplified in countless speeches and "on-the-spot guidance."

Chuch'e was proclaimed in December 1955, when Kim emphasized the critical need for a Korea-centered revolution rather than one designed to benefit, in his words, "another country." *Chuch'e* is designed to inspire national pride and identity and to mold national

consciousness into a potentially powerful focus for internal solidarity centered on Kim and the KWP.

According to Kim, *chuch'e* means "the independent stance of rejecting dependence on others and of using one's own powers, believing in one's own strength and displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance." *Chuch'e* is an ideology geared to North Korea's contemporary goals—an independent foreign policy, a self-sufficient economy, and a self-reliant defense posture. Kim Il Sung's enunciation of *chuch'e* in 1955 was aimed at developing a monolithic and effective system of authority under his exclusive leadership. The invocation of *chuch'e* was a psychological tool with which to stigmatize the foreign-oriented dissenters and remove them from the center of power. Targeted for elimination were groups of pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese dissenters who opposed Kim.

The Origins of *Chuch'e*

There are three major schools of thought regarding the origins of the *chuch'e* ideology: the instrumental, traditional political culture, and individual original perspectives. The instrumental viewpoint emphasizes both domestic and foreign political factors as the root of the *chuch'e* ideology. Some believe that Kim's unstable hold on power during and immediately following the Korean War caused him to deploy ideological purges in order to consolidate his political position, using the *chuch'e* principle of national solidarity as a domestic instrument to forge his personality cult.

The second perspective on *chuch'e*'s origin takes a longer view and focuses on the influence of traditional political culture in Korea, seeing *chuch'e* as a reflection of a centuries-old tradition of independence from foreign powers. Geographically central to the strategic interests of powerful neighbors, Korea has long been a pawn in great power rivalries, with perhaps more recorded foreign invasions than any other territory in history.

The third explanation for the origin of the *chuch'e* ideology is the North Koreans' broadly accepted view that it is a prime example of their late supreme leader's brilliance and originality. This perspective insists that *chuch'e* was the intellectual result of Kim Il Sung's highly exaggerated and romanticized personal experience as a guerrilla fighting Japanese imperialism in the 1930s.

Chuch'e did not become a prominent ideology overnight. During the first 10 years of North Korea's existence, Marxism–Leninism was accepted unquestioningly as the only source of doctrinal authority. Nationalism was toned down in deference to the country's connections to the Soviet Union and China. In the mid-1950s, however, *chuch'e*

Monument in P'yŏngyang to the founder of the nation. The inscription reads "Comrade Kim Il Sung is our eternal sun." Courtesy Korea Today *(P'yŏngyang), April 1995, 2*

was presented as a "creative" application of Marxism–Leninism. In his attempt to establish an interrelationship between Marxism–Leninism and *chuch'e*, Kim contended that although Marxism–Leninism was valid as the fundamental law of revolution, it needed an authoritative interpreter to define a new set of practical ideological guidelines appropriate to the revolutionary environment in North Korea.

Application of *Chuch'e* in the North Korean State

Kim Il Sung's practical ideology was given a test of relevance from the outset. In the late 1950s, he was able to mobilize internal support when he purged pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese dissenters from party ranks. During the first half of the 1960s, Kim faced an even more formidable challenge when he had to endure a series of tense situations that had potentially adverse implications for North Korea's economic development and national security. Among these were a sharp decrease in aid from the Soviet Union and China; discord between the Soviet Union and China and its disquieting implications for North Korea's confrontation with the United States and South Korea; P'yŏngyang's disagreements with Moscow and apprehensions about the reliability of the Soviet Union as an ally; and the rise of an authoritarian regime in Seoul under General Park Chung-hee, in power 1961–79.

These developments emphasized self-reliance—the need to rely on domestic resources, heighten vigilance against possible external challenges, and strengthen domestic political solidarity. Sacrifice, austerity, unity, and patriotism became dominant themes in the party's efforts to instill in the people the importance of *chuch'e* and collective discipline. By the mid-1960s, however, North Korea could afford to relax somewhat; its strained relations with the Soviet Union had eased, as reflected, in part, by Moscow's decision to rush economic and military assistance to P'yŏngyang.

Beginning in 1965, *chuch'e* was presented as the essence of Kim Il Sung's leadership and of party lines and policies for every conceivable revolutionary situation. Kim's past leadership record was put forward as the "guide and compass" for the present and future and as a source of strength sufficient to propel the faithful through any adversity. Nonetheless, the linkage of *chuch'e* to Marxism–Leninism remained a creed of the party. The April 1972 issue of *Kulloja* (The Worker) still referred to the KWP as "a Marxist–Leninist Party"; the journal pointed out that "the only valid policy for Korean communists is Marxism–Leninism" and called for "its creative application to our realities."

Since 1974, however, it has become increasingly evident that the emphasis is on the glorification of *chuch'e* as "the only scientific revolutionary thought representing our era of *chuch'e* and communist future and the most effective revolutionary theoretical structure that leads to the future of communist society along the surest shortcut." This new emphasis was based on the contention that a different historical era, with its unique sociopolitical circumstances, requires an appropriately unique revolutionary ideology. Accordingly, Marxism and Leninism were valid doctrines in their own times but had outlived their usefulness in the era of *chuch'e*, which prophesies the downfall of imperialism and the worldwide victory of socialism and communism.

As the years have passed, references to Marxism–Leninism in party literature have steadily decreased. By 1980 the terms "Marxism" and "Leninism" had all but disappeared from the pages of *Kulloja*. An unsigned article in the March 1980 *Kulloja* proclaimed, "within the Party none but the leader Kim Il Sung's revolutionary thought, the *chuch'e* ideology, prevails and there is no room for any hodgepodge thought contrary to it." The report Kim Il Sung presented to the Sixth Party Congress in October 1980 did not contain a single reference to Marxism–Leninism, in marked contrast to his report to the Fifth Party Congress in November 1970. In the 1980 report, Kim declared: "the whole party is rallied rock-firm around its Central Committee and knit together in ideology and purpose on the

basis of the *chuch'e* idea. The Party has no room for any other idea than the *chuch'e* idea, and no force can ever break its unity and cohesion based on this idea."

Chuch'e is instrumental in providing a consistent and unifying framework for commitment and action in the North Korean political arena. It offers an underpinning for the party's incessant demand for spartan austerity, sacrifice, discipline, and dedication. Since the mid-1970s, however, it appears that *chuch'e* has become glorified as an end in itself. In his annual New Year's message on January 1, 1992, Kim Il Sung emphasized the invincibility of *chuch'e* ideology: "I take great pride in and highly appreciate the fact that our people have overcome the ordeals of history and displayed to the full the heroic mettle of the revolutionary people and the indomitable spirit of *chuch'e* Korea, firmly united behind the party.... No difficulty is insurmountable nor is any fortress impregnable for us when our party leads the people with the ever-victorious *chuch'e*-oriented strategy and tactics and when all the people turn out as one under the party's leadership."

After Kim Il Sung's death, Kim Jong Il continued to use *chuch'e* ideology to consolidate his tight control of his regime. It became legally embodied in the 1998 constitution, and throughout the 1990s and early 2000s Kim Jong Il espoused *chuch'e* ideology in various publications, emphasizing "*chuch'e* realism," as a uniquely creative method in North Korean socialist realism, quite different from the existing "socialistic realism." Such writings presumably were an attempt to explain the necessity of North Korea's pursuit of socialist ideals, despite the crumbling of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc states.

More recently, a new interpretation of the "self-reliant revival" has seen greater emphasis since the declaration of the "New Thinking Initiative" in 2001, which was an attempt at economic rehabilitation. In the past, "self-reliant revival" was widely understood as a phrase used to describe the spirit of the struggle necessary to produce on one's own things that were lacking or in short supply, or to resolve problems, no matter what, even if that meant resorting to old and antiquated methods. However, Kim Jong Il declared that "self-reliant revival is not possible apart from science and technology," while talking with party officials in December 2000. And a February 28, 2001, *Nodong Shinmun* article claimed that "building a self-reliant national economy does not mean building an economy with the doors closed," reminding readers that the country had departed from a closed economy. The article signaled that North Korea is pursuing the construction of a strong and prosperous nation, and the concept of self-reliant revival is changing with the time and circumstances.

Such changes may be a reflection of Kim Jong Il's decision to pursue self-reliant revival as long as it is economically beneficial, although it is unclear whether a commensurate relaxation of economic and political control will necessarily result.

Party Leadership and Elite Recruitment

Composition

The party congress, the highest KWP organ, meets infrequently. The most recently held congress was the Sixth Party Congress of October 1980. The official agent of the party congress is the Central Committee. In 2005 the Central Committee had 329 members: 180 full members and 149 alternate members. Nearly 40 percent of these members—131 individuals—are first-term members. The technocrats—economists, managers, and technicians—predominate among the membership. The Central Committee is supposed to hold a plenum, or plenary session, at least once every six months to discuss major issues. However, the Central Committee has not convened since Kim Il Sung's death in 1994. The plenum also elects the general secretary, members of the Political Bureau (called the Political Committee until October 1980), and its Standing Committee, or Presidium, established in October 1980.

Influence and prestige within the party power structure are directly associated with the rank order in which the members of the Central Committee are listed. Key posts in party, government, and economic organs are assigned; higher-ranking Central Committee members also are found in the armed forces, educational and cultural institutions, and other social and mass organizations. Many leaders concurrently hold multiple positions within the party, the government, and the military.

The Political Bureau has 14 members. Several central organizations are subordinate to the Political Bureau Standing Committee (of which the only known member is Kim Jong Il). One of the most important executive organs is the Secretariat of the Central Committee, led by General Secretary Kim Jong Il and eight other secretaries. Each secretary is in charge of one or more departmental party functions. Other key bodies include the Central Military Commission headed by Kim Jong Il; the Central Auditing Committee, the fiscal watchdog of the party; and the Central Inspection Committee, which enforces party discipline and acts as a trial and appeals board for disciplinary cases.

The various departments of the Secretariat of the Central Committee depend for implementation of party policies and directives on

Kim Il Sung (left) with Kim Jong Il during the Sixth Korean Workers' Party Congress, P'yŏngyang, October 1980
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), September 2000, 6*

the party committees in the provincial- and county-level administrative divisions and in organizations where there are more than 100 party members—for example, major enterprises, factories, government offices, military units, and schools. In the countryside, village party committees are formed with a minimum of 50 party members. The basic party units are cells to which all party members belong and through which they participate in party organizational activities. Attendance at cell meetings and party study sessions, held at least once a week, is mandatory.

Party Members

The KWP claimed a membership of more than 3 million persons as of 1988, a significant increase from the 2 million members announced in 1976. Later information on party membership strength has not been forthcoming from North Korea. This increase may have been a result of the active mobilization drive for the Three Revolutions Team Movement. The KWP has three constituencies: industrial workers, peasants, and intellectuals, that is, office workers. Since 1948 industrial workers have constituted the largest percentage of party members, followed by peasants and intellectuals. Beginning in the 1970s, when North Korea's population reached the 50 percent urban mark, the composition of the groups belonging to the party changed. More people

working in state-owned enterprises became party members, and the number of members working in agricultural cooperatives decreased.

Party Cadres

The recruitment and training of party cadres (*kanbu*) has long been the primary concern of party leadership. Party cadres are those officials placed in key positions in party organizations, ranging from the Political Bureau to the village party committees; in government agencies; in economic enterprises; in military and internal security units; in educational institutions; and in mass organizations. The duties of cadres are to educate and lead party and nonparty members of society and to ensure that party policies and directives are carried out faithfully. The party penetrates all aspects of life. Associations and guidance committees exist at all levels of society, with a local party cadre serving as a key member of each committee.

Some cadres are concerned principally with ideological matters, whereas others need to be both ideologically prepared and able to give guidance to the technical or managerial activities of the state. Regardless of specialization, all party cadres must devote two hours a day to the study of *chuch'e* ideology and Kim Il Sung's policies and instruction. The party has a number of schools for cadre training. At the national level, the most prestigious school is the Kim Il Sung Higher Party School in P'yŏngyang, administered directly by the Central Committee and attended by high-level party officials. Below the national level, there are communist colleges in each province for the education of county-level cadres. Village-level cadres are sent to county training schools.

The rules governing cadre selection have undergone subtle changes in emphasis. Through the early 1970s, "good class origin," individual ability, and ideological posture were given more or less equal consideration in the appointment of cadres. Since the mid-1970s, however, the doctrinally ordained "class principle" has been downgraded on the assumption that the actual social or class status of people should not be judged on the basis of their past family backgrounds but on their "present class preparation and mental attitudes." The party increasingly stresses individual merit and "absolute" loyalty as the criteria for acceptance into the elite status of cadre. Merit and competence have come to mean "a knowledge of the economy and technology." Such knowledge is considered crucial because, as Kim Il Sung stressed in July 1974, "Party organizational work should be intimately linked to economic work and intra-party work should be conducted to ensure success in socialist construction and backup economic work."

An equally important, if not more important, criterion for cadre selection is political loyalty, inasmuch as not all cadres of correct class origin or all highly competent cadres are expected to pass the rigorous tests of party life. These tests entail absolute loyalty to Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il and the party, thorough familiarity with *chuch'e* ideology, refusal to temporize in the face of adversity, and a readiness to respond to the party's call under any conditions and at all times.

Although information on the composition of cadre membership is limited, the number of cadres of non-worker and non-peasant origin has increased steadily. These cadres generally are classified as "working intellectuals" engaged in occupations ranging from party and government activities to educational, technical, and artistic pursuits. Another notable trend is the infusion of younger and better-educated cadres into the party ranks. An accent on youth and innovation was very much in evidence after 1973 when Kim Jong Il assumed the leading role in the Three Revolutions Team Movement.

The Ruling Elite

Persons with at least one major position in leading party, government, and military organs are considered the ruling elite. This group includes all political leaders who are, at a given time, directly involved in the preparation of major policy decisions and who participate in the inner circle of policy making. The ruling elite includes Political Bureau members and secretaries of the KWP, Central People's Committee members, members of the State Administration Council, and members of the Central Military Commission and the National Defense Commission. Because overlapping membership is common in public office, top-ranking officeholders number less than 100. In any event, those having the most influential voice in policy formulation are members of the Political Bureau Standing Committee.

Top leaders share a number of common social characteristics. There is no clear evidence of regional underrepresentation. Nonetheless, many Hamgyŏng natives are included in the inner circle.

Leadership Succession

Beginning in the fall of 1975, North Koreans used the term *party center* to refer to Kim Jong Il. However, for a few years after its initial introduction the term appeared only infrequently, because Kim Il Sung's efforts to promote his son met some resistance. Kim Il Sung purged many of his son's opponents, however, and neither Kim faced any active opposition thereafter.

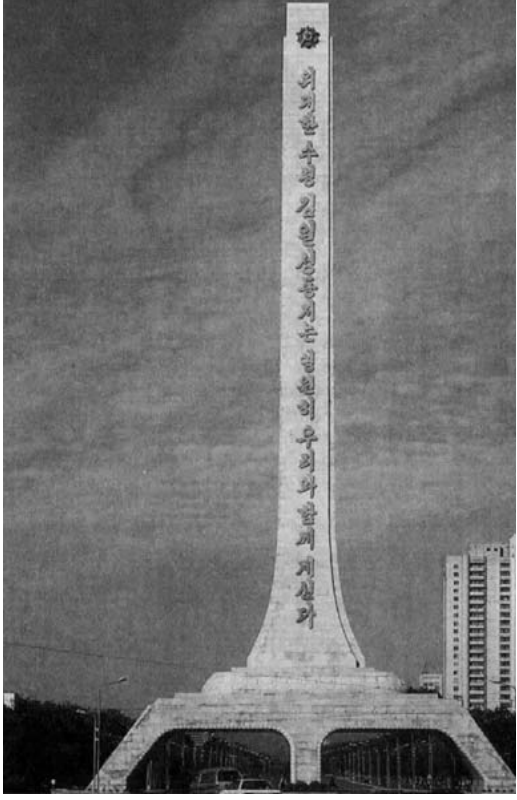
Kim Il Sung took the rank of grand marshal (*taewŏnsu*) on April 13, 1992, and on April 20, 1992, Kim Jong Il, as supreme commander of the armed forces, gained the rank of marshal (*wŏnsu*). Kim Il Sung was the president and chairman of the National Defense Commission, with command and control of the armed forces, until Kim Jong Il assumed the latter position in April 1993.

There were many scenarios for leadership succession. Some of the prospects derived from a common postulation that arrangements after the death of Kim Il Sung would take at least a few years to clarify because of the decades-long preparation of a succession plan. South Korean scholar Yang Sung-chul labeled this "positive skepticism" and called short-term failure, such as a coup d'état or a revolution, "negative skepticism." "Negative skepticism" was not to be dismissed, however, because of Kim Jong Il's weaknesses—his lack of charisma, poor international recognition, and unknown governing skills—as well as the sagging domestic economy and external factors, such as inter-Korean, North Korea–Japan, and North Korea–United States relations (see Foreign Policy, this ch.).

Kim Jong Il's appointment as commander of the Korean People's Army suggested that the succession issue had finally been solved because the military was once considered his weak point; he already had full control of the state and the economic administration. Kim Jong Il also manages political affairs and KWP commercial operations as a primary authority and handles symbolic roles, such as meeting with foreign leaders and appearing at national celebrations.

In addition, Kim Jong Il plays a prominent role in the KWP propaganda machine—mass media, literature, and art. Many literary works and performance works—including films, operas, and plays—have been produced under the "revolutionary tradition" of the KWP and Kim's guidance. Kim uses popular culture to broaden his public image and gain popular support (see Leisure Activities, ch. 2; Japan, this ch.).

Kim Jong Il tried to expedite economic growth and productivity using the Three Revolutions Team Movement, which was designed to inspire the broad masses into actively participating in the Three Revolutions. At the Fifth Party Congress, Kim Il Sung emphasized the necessity of pressing ahead more vigorously with the Three Revolutions so as to consolidate the socialist system. In response, Kim Jong Il developed the follow-up slogan, "Let us meet the requirements of the *chuch'e* in ideology, technology and culture." Most units forged ahead with "ideological education" to teach the party members and other workers to become revolutionaries of the *chuch'e* idea. In many spheres of the national economy, productivity also is expected to increase as a result of the technology emphasis of



The Tower of Immortality in P'yŏngyang; the inscription reads "The Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung Is with Us Forever."
Courtesy Korea Today *(P'yŏngyang), December 1997, 31*

the campaigns. In addition, the "cultural revolution" addresses promoting literacy and cultural identity.

Chuch'e, instrumental in providing a consistent and unifying framework for commitment and action in the political arena, offers a foundation for the party's incessant demand for spartan austerity, sacrifice, discipline, and dedication. It has not yet been determined, however, whether *chuch'e* is an asset or a liability for Kim. Nonetheless, Kim is likely to continue to emphasize *chuch'e* as the only satisfactory answer to all challenging questions in North Korea, particularly because he attributes the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and East European countries to their lack of *chuch'e* ideology.

Graduates of the first class of the Man'gyŏngdae Revolutionary Institute, established in 1947, support Kim Jong Il's power base. Many of these graduates occupy key positions in government and the military. For example, O Guk-nyol and General Paek Hak-nim—the latter, the former minister of people's security—are members of the Central Military Commission, the KWP Central Committee, and the Supreme People's Assembly; Kim Hwan, a former minister of chemical industry and vice premier, is a member of both the KWP Central Committee and the Supreme People's Assembly; and Kim Yong-sun, an alternate member of the Political Bureau, is the director of the International Affairs Department, KWP Central Committee.

Kim Jong Nam, the eldest of Kim Jong Il's children, appeared likely to be the chosen successor until 2001, when he was arrested in Narita International Airport in Japan for traveling on a forged passport from the Dominican Republic. It is now believed that Kim Jong Chul, Kim's second son, will be the heir. Kim Jong Chul holds a position at the KWP Central Committee Leadership Division, just as Kim Jong Il did when he was trained to succeed his father.

In May 2005, reports of dissident activities against the regime began to trickle out of the country, including video images purported to be of defaced Kim Jong Il portraits. Other rumors indicated that official Kim Jong Il portraits were being removed from public buildings. It is unclear whether these reports were authentic and whether the incidents were isolated or widespread, but shortly thereafter, public executions of traitors also were reported.

Mass Organizations

All mass organizations are guided and controlled by the KWP. A number of political and social organizations appear concerned with the promotion of special-interest groups but actually serve as auxiliaries to the party. Many of these organizations were founded in the early years of the KWP to serve as vehicles for the party's efforts to penetrate a broader cross section of the population.

Mass organizations have another important function: to create the impression that there are noncommunist social, political, cultural, and professional groups that can work with their South Korean counterparts toward national reunification. Most of these organizations were established to develop a unified strategy in dealing with the ruling establishment of South Korea and other foreign countries and organizations. As of 2006, these included the Korean Social Democratic Party, Chongu Party, Socialist Working Youth League, Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, Korean Democratic Women's Union, Korean National Peace Committee, Korean Students Committee, General Federation of Trade Unions, and many others. The Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland has been actively involved in the two Koreas' reconciliation talks since the early 1990s.

Among auxiliary organizations, one frequently covered in the media is the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League. Directly subordinate to the party Central Committee, it is the only mass organization expressly mentioned in the KWP constitution. The league is the party's most important ideological and organizational training ground, with branches and cells wherever there are regular party organizations. Youth league cells exist in the army, factories, cooper-

ative farms, schools, cultural institutions, and government agencies. The organization is hailed as a "militant reserve" of the party; its members are described as heirs to the revolution, reliable reserves, and active assistants of the party. Young people between the ages of 14 and 26 are eligible to join the league regardless of other organizational affiliations, provided they meet requirements similar to those for party membership. The junior version of the youth league is the Young Pioneer Corps, open to children between the ages of nine and about 15. The P'yŏngyang Children's Palace is maintained by league members for the extracurricular activities of Young Pioneer Corps members.

The principal vehicle for P'yŏngyang's united front strategy in dealing with South Korea and foreign counterparts is the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, popularly known as the Fatherland Front. The Fatherland Front actually is an umbrella for various other organizations and thus ostensibly is a nonpolitical, nongovernmental organization. Choch'ongryŏn (see Glossary), the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, is one of the best known of the foreign auxiliary organizations. Its mission is to enlist the allegiance of the more than 600,000 Korean residents in Japan. At least one-third of these residents, who also are courted assiduously by Seoul, are considered supporters of P'yŏngyang. The remaining two-thirds of the members are either South Korean loyalists or neutral. Those who are friendly toward North Korea are regarded by P'yŏngyang as its citizens and are educated at Korean schools in Japan that are financially subsidized by North Korea. These Koreans are expected to work for the North Korean cause either in Japan or as returnees to North Korea.

The activities of these mass organizations occasionally are reported in the news; however, it is usually difficult to ascertain what they actually do. Organizations such as the Korean Social Democratic Party and the Chongu Party disclose only the officially published names of their leaders and do not report anything about their membership or activities.

The Media

Article 67 of the 1998 constitution states that North Korean citizens are guaranteed freedom of speech, press, assembly, demonstration, and association. Of course, such activities are permitted only in support of government and KWP objectives. Kim Jong Il has even written a handbook for aspiring journalists, entitled *The Great Teacher of Journalists*. It provides guidelines on portraying the leadership in the most favorable way. Other articles of the constitution

require citizens to follow the socialist norms of life; for example, a collective spirit takes precedence over individual political or civil liberties.

Domestic media censorship is strictly enforced, and deviation from the official government line is not tolerated. The regime prohibits listening to foreign media broadcasts, and violators reportedly are subject to severe punishment. Senior party cadres, however, have good access to the foreign media. No external media are allowed free access to North Korea, but an agreement to share in Japan's telecommunications satellites was reached in September 1990.

Newspapers, broadcasting, and other mass media are major vehicles for information dissemination and political propaganda. Although most households have radios and some have television sets, neither radios nor televisions can be tuned to anything other than official programming. Only some 10 percent of the radios and 30 percent of the televisions are in private households (see Telecommunications and the Internet, ch. 3). Government control extends to artistic and academic circles, and visitors report that the primary function of movies, books, and the performing arts is to contribute to the cult of personality surrounding Kim Il Sung.

The media are government controlled. As of 2006, there were four main television stations, approximately 17 AM stations, 14 FM stations, 14 domestic shortwave stations, and a powerful international shortwave station. The latter broadcasts in English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, and several Asian languages. Korean Central Broadcasting Station and P'yŏngyang Broadcasting Station (Radio P'yŏngyang) are the central radio stations; there are also several local stations and stations for overseas broadcasts. "One marginally positive development in the past couple of years," according to a 2003 International Press Institute report, "was the decision by the government to scrap radio broadcastings aimed at blaming South Korea for almost everything."

A number of newspapers are published. *Nodong Shinmun*, the news organ of the party Central Committee, has a circulation of approximately 1.5 million. *Kulloja*, the theoretical organ of the party Central Committee, claims a circulation of about 300,000 readers. *Minju Chosŏn* (Democratic Korea) is the government newspaper, and *Nodong Chŏngnyŏn* (Working Youth) is the newspaper of the Socialist Working Youth League. There also are specialized newspapers for teachers, the army, and railway workers.

The Korean Central News Agency (Chosŏn Chungyang Tŏngsinsa —KCNA) is the primary agency for gathering and disseminating news. KCNA publishes the daily paper *Chosŏn Chungyang T'ongsin* (Korean Central News), *Sajin T'ongsin* (Photographic News), and *Chosŏn*

The Unification of the Fatherland Three-Constitutions Memorial; the inscription at top, with the unified Korean Peninsula, reads "Three Constitutions."
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), March 2002, 15*

Chungyang Yŏnbo (Korean Central Yearbook). KCNA issues daily press releases in English, French, Spanish, and Russian; newscasts in these and other languages are beamed overseas. The Foreign Languages Press Group issues the monthly magazines *Korea Today* and *Korea Pictorial*, the quarterly *Foreign Trade of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, and the weekly newspaper the *P'yŏngyang Times* published in English, French, and Spanish. All of these latter publications are available on the Internet from an official North Korean Web site.

Despite all of these media, information from the outside world is not freely available, nor is information from North Korea available without censorship. Very few ordinary people in North Korea have access to the Internet. Although in the early twenty-first century more foreign journalists have been allowed into the country than in earlier years, movement within North Korea is restricted, and what is allowed is closely monitored.

Foreign Policy

North Korea's foreign relations are shaped by a mixture of historical, nationalistic, ideological, and pragmatic considerations. The territorial division of the peninsula looms large in the political thinking

of North Korean leaders and is a driving force in their management of internal and external affairs. Over the centuries, unequal relations, foreign depredation, dependence on foreigners for assorted favors, and the emulation of foreign cultures and institutions are less the exception than the rule in Korea's perceptions of the outside world. These patterns give rise to the widely shared assumption among Koreans that their capacity to control their national destiny is limited by geopolitical constraints.

Inter-Korean Affairs

The reunification of the two Koreas is seen as a difficult goal by both the North and South. Although P'yŏngyang and Seoul agreed in principle in 1972 that unification should be achieved peacefully and without foreign interference, they continued to differ substantially on the practical methods of attaining reunification; this area of disagreement has not narrowed in subsequent years. Inter-Korean dialogue in North Korea is the responsibility of the State Security Department (see State Security Department, ch. 5).

North Korea's goal of unification remains constant, but tactics have changed depending on the perception of opportunities and limitations implicit in shifting domestic and external currents and events. From the beginning, North Korea has insisted that an inter-Korean political formula should be based on parity or equality, rather than population. Because South Korea has more than twice the population of North Korea, a supreme Korean council set up according to a one-person, one-vote formula would give South Korea a commanding position. Another constant is P'yŏngyang's insistence that the Korean question be settled as an internal Korean affair without foreign interference.

P'yŏngyang's position that unification should be achieved by peaceful means was belied by circumstances surrounding the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and by subsequent infiltrations, the digging of invasion tunnels under the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ—see Glossary), and other incidents. North Korea's contention that the conflict was started by South Korea and the United States failed to impress South Korea's population and has been proven false by Soviet archives. The war, in effect, reinforced the obvious ideological and systemic incompatibilities that were in place at the time of the division of the peninsula in 1945. At the 1954 Geneva Conference, North Korea proposed the formation of an all-Korean commission to achieve unification and a single, elected legislature; the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Korean Peninsula; and the formal declaration by outside powers of the need for peaceful development and unification in Korea. P'yŏngyang also proposed that the armies of both countries

Kim Dae Jung, president of South Korea, meets Kim Jong Il, P'yŏngyang, June 2000. Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), August 2000, 1*

be reduced to 100,000 persons each within a year, that neither side enter into any military alliance, and that measures be taken to facilitate economic and cultural exchanges. The sincerity of these proposals is at best debatable, but the positions taken by North Korea in the early Cold War years clearly reflected confidence and competitiveness with South Korea in military, economic, and political terms.

Inter-Korean affairs became more complex in 1970 and 1971, in part because of the U.S. decision to withdraw some of its troops from South Korea and because of moves by the United States and China to improve their relations. In August 1971, amid signs of a thaw in the Cold War and an uncertain international environment, the Red Cross societies of Seoul and P'yŏngyang agreed to open talks aimed at the eventual reunion of dispersed families. These high-level talks—between Kim Il Sung's brother and the chief of the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency—were held alternately in the two capitals and paralleled behind-the-scenes contacts to initiate political negotiations, reportedly at South Korea's suggestion. The talks continued to make progress and resulted in a joint communiqué issued on July 4, 1972, in which the two countries agreed to abide by three principles of unification: to work toward reunifying the country independently and without foreign interference; to transcend differences in ideology and political systems; and to unify the peninsula peacefully without the use of armed force.

Despite the various committees set up by the 1972 communiqué, it quickly became obvious to both sides that they had fundamentally divergent approaches. North Korea's position "front-loaded" all significant concessions from the South, including the withdrawal of all foreign troops from South Korea, while the South sought to build transparency and trust first through confidence-building measures and "low politics" cooperation.

At the Sixth Party Congress in October 1980, Kim Il Sung proposed the establishment of the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryŏ, which would be based on a single unified state, leaving the two systems intact and federating the two governments. The Supreme National Assembly, with an equal number of representatives from North and South and an appropriate number of representatives of overseas Koreans, would be formed with a confederal standing committee to "guide the regional governments of the North and the South and to administer all the affairs of the confederal state." The regional governments of the North and South would have independent policies—within limits—consistent with the fundamental interests and demands of the whole nation and would strive to narrow their differences in all areas. But South Korea rejected the confederation as a propaganda ploy.

No significant dialogue occurred between the two countries until the middle of 1984, when South Korea suffered a devastating flood. North Korea proposed to send relief goods to flood victims in South Korea, and the offer was accepted. This occasion provided the momentum for both sides to resume their suspended dialogue. In 1985 the two countries exchanged performing arts groups, and 92 members of separated families met. In January 1986, however, North Korea once again suddenly cut off all talks with South Korea, blaming "Team Spirit," the annual U.S.–South Korean joint military exercise.

In 1988 the South Korean government of Roh Tae-woo pursued a new "northern diplomacy" or Nordpolitik (see Glossary) aimed at North Korea's allies. Ostensibly, it was an initiative to prevent ideology from trumping national interest as Seoul sought to broaden relations in the region, but the strategy's true payoff was its ability to woo both China and the Soviet Union into diplomatic relations, thereby constituting the ultimate diplomatic coup over the North. South Korea's efforts in conjunction with the North's economic difficulties compelled a basic change in P'yŏngyang's strategy toward Seoul.

Five rounds of meetings were held alternately in Seoul and P'yŏngyang before the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, Exchanges, and Cooperation between the South and the North

was signed on December 13, 1991. The accord reaffirmed the 1972 principles of peaceful unification, issued a joint declaration of nonaggression, and instituted a variety of other confidence-building measures (for example, advance warning of troop movements and exercises and the installation of a telephone hot line between top military commanders). Several joint inter-Korean subcommittees were established to work out the specifics for implementing the general terms of the accord on economic cooperation, travel and communication, cultural exchanges, political affairs, and military affairs. Separate from the prime minister-level dialogue, yet closely associated with it, were talks held between the two Red Cross organizations about reunification of families.

The two Koreas also stated in a parallel agreement that their peninsula should be "free of nuclear weapons." The ensuing Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which was signed on January 20, 1992, and took force on February 19, 1992, called for the establishment of a Joint Nuclear Control Commission to negotiate a credible and effective bilateral nuclear inspection regime. Although negotiations produced substantive progress on the drafting of detailed accords to achieve ratification of the 1991 Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, Exchanges, and Cooperation, nothing was implemented.

The next major watershed in inter-Korean relations revolved around the Sunshine Policy of the South Korean government under Kim Dae Jung. Various events led to the formation of this policy. Kim Dae Jung entered office in 1998 at the height of South Korea's financial crisis, and after a period of time in which the lessons of German unification had seeped into all of South Korean society. The focus of national attention on extricating South Korea from its economic crisis, in combination with the liberal ideologies long held by the new president, allowed Kim to put forward a new view of inter-Korean relations with relatively little opposition. Kim called for an open-ended engagement of North Korea in which unreciprocated cooperation was acceptable, and indeed expected. The Sunshine Policy encouraged all countries to engage with the North, in a departure from the position of his predecessor, South Korean president Kim Young-sam, who desired all engagement with the North to be routed through Seoul. This new approach facilitated the North's normalization of diplomatic relations with a number of European countries, including the United Kingdom and other European Union nations. By seeking to create a modicum of trust and transparency through Seoul's one-sided generosity, the Sunshine Policy constituted an entirely different stance from the decades of zero-sum diplomatic contention between North and South. The policy also

resulted in the establishment of a joint-venture scenic sport and tourism project, at Mount Kŭmgang, in the North near the DMZ, as well as the reconnection of railroad lines between the two Koreas.

The Sunshine Policy's culmination was the historic June 2000 summit in which Kim Dae Jung went to North Korea to meet with Kim Jong Il. The joint communiqué from the meeting reaffirmed the principles of peaceful unification and proposed more family reunions. But the most long-lasting impact of the summit was the image of the two leaders embracing, broadcast throughout South Korea. A cathartic moment for many Koreans, this event had the effect of changing South Korean popular views of the North, virtually overnight. Images of a demonized North Korean leader were replaced by an infatuation with him. Views of a North Korean "threat" were lost on much of the younger generation of South Koreans, despite the absence of any amelioration of the military situation on the ground (see Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics, ch. 5).

In spite of later revelations that the South Korean government made unofficial cash payments to facilitate the June 2000 summit, the Sunshine Policy continued to gain popularity among the younger generation in the South and in the government of Roh Moo Hyun (president of South Korea, 2003–8), although it was renamed the Peace and Prosperity Policy. A wave of demonstrations, which accompanied the electoral victory of Roh in 2002, have led some to believe that the younger generation (that is, under age 50) in South Korea has aligned itself more with the fate of North Korea than with the country's traditional ally, the United States. While not denying that South Koreans are in the midst of a new reconciliation mood with the North in the aftermath of the Sunshine Policy, this mood is subject to several constraints.

First is the sober realization that the U.S. military presence is still critical to South Korean security. Demonstrations protesting that presence died down significantly after Washington initiated plans to reduce its troops on the peninsula as part of a larger realignment of forces in Asia. Second, changes in North Korea's nuclear posture could result in changes in the public perception. If part of the generosity toward the North stemmed from an inner confidence in Seoul that South Korea holds decisive superiority across all national indicators of power, the 2006 nuclear test by the North altered those visions. Third, it remains unclear whether any of the impact of the Sunshine Policy has reached deep into North Korea. Should these engagement efforts reveal no change in North Korean preferences over the long term, South Korean supporters of the policy might be discouraged.

China and the Soviet Union/Russia

North Korea owes its survival as a separate political entity to China and the Soviet Union. Both countries provided critical military assistance—personnel and matériel—during the Korean War. From then until the early 1990s, China and the Soviet Union both were North Korea's most important markets and its major suppliers of oil and other basic necessities. Similarly, China and the Soviet Union were reliable pillars of diplomatic support.

Moscow and Beijing's normalization of diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1990 and 1992, respectively, presaged a sea change in North Korea's foreign policy. Despite the professed *chuch'e* ideology, Soviet and Chinese patronage to the North constituted mainstays of the economy. When both Cold War patrons terminated this support on normalization of relations with Seoul, the North's economy began to register negative growth rates for much of the rest of the decade (see Collapse in the 1990s, ch. 3). Famine conditions in the mid-1990s were also partially a consequence of the North's loss of aid from its patrons. P'yŏngyang's relations with the Soviet Union and then Russia were permanently damaged. Moscow's abrupt shedding of the North as Russia sought to gain access to US$3 billion in loans from the wealthier South Korea (as part of its 1990 diplomatic normalization with Seoul) greatly offended Kim Il Sung. China sought a less draconian break with the North, emphasizing the need for strong relations with both Koreas.

Close North Korea–China ties continue, but Beijing strives to maintain a balance in its relationship with the two Koreas, a far cry from its previous four decades of dealing solely with P'yŏngyang. China welcomed the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, making clear its preference for a nonnuclear Korea. Beijing also urged P'yŏngyang to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA—see Glossary). Beijing clearly views its economic interest on the peninsula as being linked with the South; China has surpassed the United States as South Korea's largest trading partner. Yet, for strategic and historical reasons, China maintains its policy of keeping the North Korean regime afloat.

Since 2003, talks among six nations (North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States)—the so-called Six-Party Talks—have offered a forum that enabled China to play a larger diplomatic role on the Korean Peninsula. Hosting the talks in Beijing and taking on the self-proclaimed label of "honest broker," China sought to score diplomatic points in the region and enhance its influence. In the end, however, the equation for Beijing remains a

peculiar but compelling one. It seeks a nonnuclear North Korea as well as an economically reformed state, but China continues to provide energy and food assistance to the North even in the absence of progress on denuclearization or reform because of the potential costs of regime collapse.

The Soviet Union stunned North Korea in September 1990 when it established diplomatic relations with South Korea. Since then and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union in August 1991, North Korea has worked to build a relationship with Russia's new political leaders. North Korea's efforts to recapture some of the previous closeness and economic benefits of its relationship with the former Soviet Union are seriously hampered, however, by Russia's preoccupation with its own political and economic woes. Trade between the two nations has dropped dramatically since 1990, as North Korea cannot compete with the quality of goods South Korea can offer. Whereas in the past the Soviet Union had readily extended credit to North Korea, Russia has demanded hard currency for North Korea's purchases. Russia also has signaled North Korea that it intends to revise a 1961 defense treaty between North Korea and the Soviet Union. The revision most likely will mean that Russia will not be obligated to assist North Korea militarily except in the event that North Korea is invaded.

In large part as a result of changes in its historical relationships with China and the Soviet Union, North Korea faces a foreign policy paradox. Although it arguably has more diplomatic relations with Western countries than ever before, as a result of the Sunshine Policy, P'yŏngyang is at the same time more diplomatically, politically, and economically isolated. The end of both China's and the Soviet Union's Cold War patronage has much to do with this new situation. The future direction of North Korea–China relations will be a critical indicator of the viability of the North Korean regime. If Beijing continues to view the costs of "muddling through"—a phrase coined by Marcus Noland, a noted economist, and now widely used—North Korea's economic hardship as better than the costs of collapse, then the regime may be capable of subsisting in its current state. If, however, the status quo results in a nuclear North Korea, then the costs to Beijing of "muddling through" may grow sufficiently high to warrant change of the regime itself.

Japan

Until the late 1980s, North Korea's post–World War II policy toward Japan was mainly aimed at minimizing cooperation between Japan and South Korea and at deterring Japan's rearmament while

Kim Jong Il shaking hands with China's President Hu Jintao, Beijing, April 2004
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), June 2004, 1*
Russia's President Vladimir V. Putin holds talks with Kim Jong Il, P'yŏngyang, July 19–20, 2000.
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), September 2000, 4*

striving for closer diplomatic and commercial ties with Japan. Crucial to this position was the fostering within Japan of support for North Korea, especially among the Japanese who supported their nation's communist and socialist parties and the ethnic Korean residents of Japan. Over the years, however, North Korea did much to discredit itself in the eyes of many potential supporters in Japan. The cases of missing Japanese citizens attributed to North Korean kidnappings went unresolved. And Japanese citizens who had accompanied their spouses to North Korea had endured severe hardships and were prevented from communicating with relatives and friends in Japan. Japan watched with dismay as, in April 1970, North Korea gave safe haven to elements of the Japanese Red Army, a terrorist group. North Korea's inability and refusal to pay its debts to Japanese traders also reinforced popular Japanese disdain for North Korea.

Coincidental with the changing patterns in its relations with China and Russia, North Korea has moved to improve its strained relations

with Japan. P'yŏngyang's primary motives appear to be a quest for relief from diplomatic and economic isolation, which has also caused serious shortages of food, energy, and hard currency. Normalization of relations with Japan also raises the possibility of North Korea's gaining monetary compensation for the period of Japan's colonial occupation (1910–45), a precedent set when Japan normalized relations with South Korea.

The first round of diplomatic normalization talks was held in 1991 but quickly broke down over the question of compensation. North Korea demanded compensation for damages incurred during colonial rule as well as for "sufferings and losses" in the period after World War II. Later rounds of normalization talks in the late 1990s and early 2000s were stymied by mutual rigidity: the North Koreans demanded colonial reparations and refused to discuss Tokyo's concerns over P'yŏngyang's deployment of short-range ballistic missiles threatening Japan. Tokyo set as preconditions for progress North Korea's provision of information regarding nationals abducted from Japan by North Korean agents in the 1970s and a satisfactory resolution to the nuclear weapons issue.

With talks stalled, an apparent breakthrough materialized in September 2002 when Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro agreed to visit North Korea for a one-day summit with Kim Jong Il. Building on the momentum created by the inter-Korean June 2000 summit, there were high hopes of a major improvement in relations. Kim Jong Il's admission at this summit that North Korea had indeed kidnapped Japanese nationals, however, resulted in a groundswell of popular anger in Japan. The public backlash at the news that some of these abductees had died without explanation was so severe that Tokyo pressed harder for additional information on the circumstance of their deaths as a precondition for talks. Bilateral relations were further complicated over this issue when Tokyo refused to return the abductees and relatives after they had been granted permission to visit Japan. A second summit between Kim Jong Il and Koizumi in May 2004 did not fully resolve this major impediment to normalizing relations.

Security tensions between P'yŏngyang and Tokyo augmented the political problems over abductees during the same period. In August 1998, the North staged a ballistic missile test over Japan that heightened concerns immeasurably. This event marked the start of a significant augmentation of Japanese security capabilities. In response to the ballistic missile test, Japan launched its first intelligence-gathering satellites. During the period 2000–4, moreover, several incidents at sea involving North Korean ships and Japan's Maritime Self-Defense

Force vessels occurred, with the Japanese shooting at and sinking a North Korean vessel. Also, in response to the North Korean threat, in 2003–4 Japan undertook a set of legislative reforms that enhanced Tokyo's capacity to participate in a multilateral proliferation-security initiative as well as to impose bilateral sanctions against North Korea, even without a United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution. As of 2006, Japan had not exercised these capabilities. A militarily proactive Japan will be perhaps the most long-lasting legacy of North Korea's threat.

The United States

North Korea's relationship with the United States since 1945 has been marked by almost continuous confrontation and mistrust. North Korea views the United States as the strongest imperialist force in the world, the successor to Japanese imperialism, and a malevolent hegemon in a unipolar world in the post–Cold War period. U.S. concerns about North Korea as an international outlaw derive from P'yŏngyang's activities in nuclear proliferation and weapons development, sales of weapons technology, illicit narcotics and counterfeit currency trafficking, human rights violations, and the conventional military threat to Washington's allies in the region.

The uneasy armistice that halted the intense fighting of the Korean War on July 27, 1953, occasionally has been broken. Perpetuating the mutual distrust was North Korea's 1968 seizure of the intelligence-gathering ship USS *Pueblo*, the downing of a U.S. reconnaissance plane in 1969, and the 1976 killing of two U.S. army officers at the P'anmunjŏm Joint Security Area in the middle of the DMZ. North Korea's assassination in 1983 of several South Korean cabinet officials educated in the United States and the terrorist bombing of a Baghdad–Seoul South Korean airliner in midair off the coast of Burma in 1987 likewise have reinforced U.S. perceptions of North Korea as unworthy of having diplomatic or economic ties with the United States.

In 1988 the United States launched its own modest diplomatic initiative to reduce P'yŏngyang's isolation and to encourage its opening to the outside world. Consequently, the U.S. government began facilitating cultural, scholarly, journalistic, athletic, and other exchanges with North Korea. After a hesitant start, by the early 1990s almost monthly exchanges were occurring in these areas between the two nations, a halting but significant movement away from total estrangement.

The United States supported the simultaneous admission of both Koreas into the UN in September 1991. That same month, President George H.W. Bush announced the withdrawal of all U.S. tactical

nuclear weapons worldwide. In January 1992, after North Korea had publicly committed itself to the signing of a nuclear safeguards agreement with the IAEA and to permitting IAEA inspections of its primary nuclear facility at Yŏngbyŏn, about 50 kilometers north of P'yŏngyang, President Bush and South Korean president Roh Tae-woo cancelled the 1992 joint annual "Team Spirit" military exercise.

In February 1992, the U.S. Department of State's undersecretary for political affairs, Arnold Kantor, met with his North Korean counterpart, the director of the KWP Central Committee's International Affairs Department, Kim Yong-sun, in New York City. At this meeting, the United States set forth the steps it wanted North Korea to take prior to normalization of relations. North Korea had to facilitate progress in the North–South dialogue; end its export of missile and related technology; renounce terrorism; cooperate in determining the fate of all U.S. Korean War unaccounted-for military personnel; demonstrate increasing respect for human rights; and conclude a credible and effective North–South nuclear inspection regime designed to complement inspections conducted by the IAEA. Once a credible and effective bilateral North–South inspection regime had been implemented, the U.S. Government would initiate a policy-level dialogue with North Korea to formulate specifics for resolving other outstanding U.S. concerns. The culmination of this diplomacy was the June 1993 North Korea–United States joint statement in which the two sides expressed their hope for relations to be based on the principles of respect for each other's sovereignty and noninterference in each other's internal affairs.

The 1993–94 nuclear crisis with North Korea brought to an end this short-lived thaw in relations. North Korea's refusal to cease and disclose nuclear activities at its facilities in Yŏngbyŏn, in defiance of IAEA directives and agreements, became the center of a crisis very close to war in June 1994. Last-minute diplomacy by former President Jimmy Carter, just as the United States was considering plans to reinforce its military presence in the region, enabled North Korea–United States bilateral negotiations that led to the October 1994 Agreed Framework for the denuclearization of North Korea. Negotiated by North Korea's Kang Sok-ju and U.S. ambassador Robert Gallucci, this agreement required P'yŏngyang to freeze, put under international monitoring, and ultimately dismantle its nuclear activities at Yŏngbyŏn. In exchange for these actions, the United States, Japan, and South Korea were to form the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization consortium to provide two light-water reactors. The United States also agreed to provide interim energy supplies in the form of heavy fuel oil to the North for the duration of the project.

On October 11, 2000, the first vice chairman of the National Defense Commission, Vice Marshal Cho Myŏng-nok, met with President William J. Clinton at the White House, Washington, DC.
Courtesy Audio-Visual Division, William J. Clinton Presidential Library, Little Rock, Arkansas

Given the degree of mutual mistrust, this agreement was iterated in stages such that each side could demonstrate cooperation at each step of the implementation process. Over the longer term, the Agreed Framework held out the hope of further improvements in relations between North Korea and its neighbors across a range of issues including missiles, conventional military threats, political normalization, economic aid, and other key issues.

Concerns about whether the 1994 agreement was being implemented in good faith began almost immediately after its consummation. Because of pressure from the U.S. Congress, Washington fell behind in the delivery of interim fuel-oil shipments, although, until the termination of these shipments in December 2002, the United States fulfilled every shipment. For its part, North Korea went against the spirit of the agreement by engaging in provocative acts against South Korea and Japan, testing ballistic missiles, and pursuing other weapons activities suspected to be in violation of the agreement.

The Agreed Framework appeared on the brink of collapse over suspected nuclear weapons activities at Kumchangri, about 90 kilometers north of P'yŏngyang, in North P'yŏngan Province, in 1998. After a protracted negotiation process, inspections of Kumchangri turned up nothing, but mistrust was very high, and skepticism about

North Korean intentions to comply with the 1994 agreement were palpable in Washington. A policy review conducted by former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry in 1999 laid out two paths along which U.S.–North Korean relations could proceed. The first was continued implementation of the Agreed Framework as a springboard for cooperation on other issues of concern such as ballistic missiles. The other path would involve alternative, more coercive actions. A flurry of diplomatic activity subsequent to the Perry policy review led to the visit of North Korean envoy Cho Myŏng-nok to the United States in October 2000 and a joint statement of no hostile intent. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright reciprocated with an unprecedented October 2000 visit to P'yŏngyang and meetings with Kim Jong Il. Discussions about a visit by President Clinton and a potential agreement on missiles took place but were never concluded.

In October 2002, the George W. Bush administration stated that North Korea was in violation of the 1994 agreement with a clandestine second nuclear weapons program, using highly enriched uranium technology. North Korea asserted that it was entitled to such weapons if the United States maintained its hostile policy and then proceeded in the winter of 2002 to break out of the 1994 agreement, unsealing buildings, disabling monitoring cameras, and expelling IAEA inspectors from the Yŏngbyŏn facility. A new forum for discussion was established—the Six-Party Talks—hosted by China, which sought to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. At these talks, the United States laid out proposals for nuclear disarmament by offering energy assistance from some of the six parties in return for a North Korean commitment to verifiable nuclear dismantlement.

Prospects: The Significance of Reform

The most significant twenty-first-century political development in North Korea relates to the July 2002 market-liberalization reforms, generally associated with four measures. The first was a basic monetization of the economy. The government abolished the coupon-based public distribution system for food rations and relaxed price controls, thereby allowing supply and demand to determine prices. In order to meet the rise in prices, the government also hiked wage levels, which had been almost uniform across sectors. For some sectors, the rise was as much as fortyfold and for other "special" wage sectors (government officials, soldiers, miners, and farmers) as much as sixtyfold. Small-scale markets have sprouted up all over North Korea, and the public ration system has broken down (see Reform of the Public Distribution System, ch. 3).

The second reform measure was adopted in August 2002, when the government abandoned the artificially high value of the North Korean wŏn (for value of the wŏn, see Glossary), adjusting the currency exchange rate from 2.15 wŏn per US$1 to 150 wŏn per US$1. This measure was aimed at inducing foreign investment and providing export incentives for domestic firms. The "unofficial" value of the currency has depreciated much further since the reforms.

A third reform measure was the government's decentralization of economic decisions. Measures entailed cutting government subsidies, allowing farmers' markets to operate, and devolving managerial decisions for industry and agriculture from the central government (via factory party committees) into the hands of local production units. Enterprises now have to cover their own costs. Managers have to meet hard budget constraints. Workers are not evaluated based on the number of days they show up to work, but on productivity and profit. Farmers are now allowed to plant small private plots of land in addition to those plots designated for state production.

The fourth reform measure was the government's pursuit of special administrative districts and industrial zones in order to induce foreign investment. The Sinŭiju Special Administrative Region, in North P'yŏngan Province on the Yellow Sea (or West Sea, as it is called in North Korea) is an open economic zone for foreign businesses designed to exist completely outside North Korea's regular legal strictures. The Kaesŏng Special Industrial Zone is another project designed in particular to attract small and medium-sized South Korean businesses, and the Mount Kŭmgang Tourist Zone operated by Hyundai provides hard currency to the North from tourism. All three projects sought to avoid the mistakes and failures of the Najin–Sŏnbong International Trade Zone, in the northeast near Russia, created by the North in 1991, although these later projects are still hampered by the lack of adequate infrastructure, among other problems (see Special Economic Zones, ch. 3).

The July 2002 reforms were unarguably a significant development. They represented the first attempt in the regime's history at large-scale economic change. In addition, while P'yŏngyang's propaganda continued to maintain anticapitalist rhetoric and spurned market economic principles, unlike the cases of China and Vietnam, the regime admitted flaws in the socialist-style economy. The significance of these reforms, however, does not make them successful. The obstacles to successful reform are numerous.

First, it is unclear whether the July 2002 measures represent the equivalent of North Korea's religious "conversion" to capitalism. Neither the language nor the nature of these initial reforms appears to have the same conviction as those seen in China or Vietnam.

Moreover, many of the reforms arguably may constitute coping mechanisms to deal with immediate problems rather than a wholesale, prescient shift in economic ideology. For example, North Korea authorized monetization of the economy and permitted farmers' markets to buy and sell goods largely because the public distribution system had broken down. Similarly, local managers were given more leeway, not because the central government trusted their entrepreneurial capabilities, but because plunging outputs and high absentee rates for workers who went searching for food rather than reporting to work required some drastic measures.

When the reform package initially was announced in 2002, the government was reluctant to call these measures "reforms," instead referring to an "economic adjustment policy" that would "solidify the nation's socialist principles and planned economic system." Such statements contradict earlier pronouncements by P'yŏngyang about the difficulties of socialism, raising questions about whether an ideological and systemic conversion has yet occurred. Economist Hong Ink-pyo has observed that "market freedom is not the goal" and that the North Korean authorities intend to normalize the planned economy by enhancing efficiency and productivity in industry, and to restore the official economic sector so as to absorb or contract the private economic sector.

The economic reforms will test the government's ability to deal with the triple problems of inflation, economic losers, and the urban poor created by the monetization of the economy. Low supply and low output have led to massive increases in prices and further devaluation of the wŏn. By comparison, in 1979 China's initial price reforms drove up the price of rice by 25 percent; in North Korea, the price has gone up by at least 600 percent, and the wŏn depreciated from 150 wŏn (to US$1) in 2002 to 900 wŏn to the dollar in 2003, with some estimating the black-market values at 3,000 wŏn to the dollar in 2005. The North Korean currency has fallen dramatically against China's renminbi as well, depreciating from 30 wŏn to the renminbi in August 2002 to 120 wŏn in 2003, to more than 130 wŏn in 2004. Despite wage hikes averaging 15 to 20 times the 2002 level, these increased wages, if they are truly paid, still cannot keep pace with the skyrocketing retail prices, estimated at more than 27 times the growth in wage rates.

Although companies in 2006 were allowed greater flexibility in production, the basic absence of any capital inputs allows flexibility in name only. The designated "winners" as a result of these reforms would probably include farmers. They are now allowed to produce food for sale on the open market, after meeting state production quotas.

They benefit from the inflated prices as a result of increased demand. The state also attempted to introduce new seeds and fertilizers to increase crop yields.

Even in a best-case scenario of increased agricultural output stimulated by the reforms, however, the agricultural sector represents a fraction of the economy. The North Korean economy, since the days of the Japanese occupation, has been largely an industrial economy with some 70 percent of the population residing in cities. And there is no internal capacity to increase agricultural output because of the decrepit infrastructure, lack of capital inputs and limited arable land, creating many losers across society. The reforms enabled Kim Jong Il to gain some control of the economy by hurting those black marketers who held large amounts of wŏn before the currency devaluation. Fixed-income workers were badly hit by the combination of price hikes and weakening of the North Korean currency. In addition, many workers were laid off by companies forced to cut costs. Finally, there is fragmentary evidence that even those sectors of the labor force favored by the wage hikes were discontented. Urban factory workers fell into a wage-productivity trap where they initially were given two months' salary of 3,000 wŏn—which was not enough to support a family of four for one month—but nothing beyond that. In order to gain wages, the workers needed to produce, but in 2004 factories in North Korea operated at less than 30 percent capacity. Even among those sectors given the highest wage increases (6,000 wŏn) there was widespread discontent. Refugees crossing the border into China complained that the promise of higher wages had not been kept, with workers receiving only 800 wŏn and then nothing after October 2003. There is the possibility that "money illusion" is wearing off in North Korea, giving way to a new class of urban poor, potentially numbering in the millions, that could be difficult to control.

The ultimate success of the reforms rests on the North's capacity to secure international food supplies until the changes start to increase agricultural output domestically; secure loans to finance shortages in cash-flow for managerial enterprises; and obtain technical training in accounting, fiscal policy, finance and other requisite skills. A report on a U.S. Senate trip to North Korea in 2004 described the basic dilemma: in order for the reforms to succeed, the North must overcome chronic shortages of electricity, food, timber, coal, capital, technology, and trained personnel. Or as a Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) report published in February 2003 explained, the absence of such inputs impedes any chance of sustained economic growth, and without such growth there is no way to produce the needed inputs. The

North's ability to secure this magnitude of assistance depends on a satisfactory resolution of the nuclear crisis. But P'yŏngyang continues to demand these economic inputs from the United States and others as a condition of addressing the world's political concerns about its nuclear programs.

* * *

Sources on North Korea vary considerably in reliability and balance, so they should be used with care, particularly in the case of information emanating from North Korea. Information from South Korea also has a political bias. Major articles in *Nodong Shinmun* (Workers' Daily), *Kulloja* (The Worker), and other Korean-language publications are available in U.S. Open Source Center (formerly the Foreign Broadcast Information Service) translations of North Korean broadcasts via the U.S. National Technical Information Service's World News Connection (http://wnc.fedworld.gov/).

For in-depth coverage of North Korea, one of the most comprehensive sources is *Pukhan Chosŏn* (North Korean Handbook), in Korean, prepared by South Korea's Kuktong Munje Yŏn'guso (Institute for East Asian Studies). *Pukhan* (North Korea), the monthly organ of Pukhan Yŏn'guso, the Research Institute on North Korea in Seoul; and *Kita Chōsen Kenkyo* (Studies on North Korea), a Japanese-language monthly of the Kokusai Kankei Kyodo Kenkyo-jo (Joint Research Institute on International Relations) in Tokyo are also useful. *Vantage Point*, an English-language monthly periodical issued by Naewoe Press in Seoul, and *East Asian Review*, an English-language quarterly published by the Institute for East Asian Studies in Seoul, provide in-depth studies of North Korean social, economic, and political developments.

Other sources include the annual survey articles on North Korea in *Asian Survey* and the *Europa World Year Book*. Various portal sites at the Library of Congress offer access to selected official and nongovernmental Web sites. These include North Korean resources listed in Portals to the World (http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/asian/northkorea/northkorea.html) and on the Law Library's Nations of the World (http://www.loc.gov/law/guide/northkorea.html). North Korean official Web sites include the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (http://www.korea.dpr.com/) and Naenara Korea Computer Center in the DPRKorea (http://www.kcckp.net/en/). (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 5. National Security

Bas-relief on P'yŏngyang's Arch of Triumph showing members of the various branches of the Korean People's Army celebrating the liberation of their country
Courtesy Pulmyŏl ŭi t'ap *(Tower of Immortality), P'yŏngyang: Munye Ch'ulpansa, 1985, 283*

AS THE WORLD'S MOST MILITARIZED STATE in proportion to population, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or North Korea, fields a massive combat force that ranks fourth in the world in size behind the armed forces of China, the United States, and India. North Korea's major forward deployment of armed forces near the demilitarized zone (DMZ—see Glossary) that divides the Korean Peninsula puts it in a confrontational relationship with the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the United States, as one of the final legacies of the Cold War.

The division of Korea originated as a consequence of a territorial partition that was imposed by the United States and the former Soviet Union to facilitate the surrender of Japanese forces at the end of World War II (1939–45; see National Division in the 1940s, ch. 1). Agreeing to divide the Korean Peninsula into dual occupation zones at the thirty-eighth parallel, the former Soviet Union occupied the North and the United States the South in what was intended as a temporary division. Instead, antithetical political systems and opposing armed forces were established in the two areas; all subsequent efforts to reunify the two states have failed.

Military Heritage

The origins of North Korea's modern armed forces, which were founded on February 8, 1948, as the Korean People's Army (KPA or Chosŏn Inmin'gun), can be traced through three forging factors: its Kapsan (see Glossary) partisan lineage (1932–45), Soviet occupation (1945–48), and Chinese communist associations (1932–50). These three factors, perhaps more than any others, have contributed uniquely to the formation of the KPA leadership, force structure, doctrine, and tactics.

During the 1930s and 1940s, many Koreans and Chinese joined guerrilla units to oppose Japan's annexation of Korea (1910) and Manchuria (1931). According to North Korean historiography, Kim Il Sung (1912–94) organized his Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army (or Han il Yugyŏtae) on April 25, 1932; it was later renamed the Korean People's Revolutionary Army (KPRA or Chosŏn Inmin Hyŏngmyŏnggun). In 1936 the KPRA joined with the Chinese Communist Party's newly formed Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, which fought as a coherent unit until its defeat in battle by the Japanese Imperial Army in 1941. Remnants of the defeated northeast army, including Kim Il Sung

and many fellow Koreans, escaped to the Soviet Far East, where they joined the Soviet Eighty-eighth Special Brigade. Many of these Korean exiles (the Kapsan faction) were given leadership positions within the brigade, including Kim Il Sung, who commanded the First Battalion.

At the end of World War II, Koreans repatriated from the Soviet Union were either Kapsan faction members (Kim Il Sung loyalists) or long-term Soviet-Korean residents; the former group would eventually be elevated to positions of government and military authority. There were factional power struggles among the various Korean troops. The pro-Chinese Yan'an faction had its origins in the Korean nationalist movement in China. Kim Mu-chŏng (1904–51), a veteran of the Chinese Communist Party's Long March (1934–35), established the Korean Volunteer Army (KVA or Chosŏn Ŭiyonggun) in Yan'an with Chinese communist backing. Under Chinese communist protection, the Yan'an faction trained several thousand soldiers and political cadres and was a political and military force to be reckoned with when it attempted to return to Korea in 1945.

From August 1945 until December 1948, the Soviet Red Army (later the Soviet Civil Administration) occupied Korea north of the thirty-eighth parallel, where it exercised broad control over administration, including national security. During the Soviet occupation, the North Korean government was fully organized and included the Ministry of Defense and the KPA. In 1948 the KPA had 60,000 personnel assigned to four infantry divisions and a tank battalion that was equipped with Soviet weapons systems and trained and organized according to Soviet doctrine and tactics, which were adapted to accommodate North Korea's infantry-centric force structure. Another 40,000 personnel were organized into a border constabulary that was subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

In the 18 months between the Soviet withdrawal and the Korean War (1950–53), the KPA rapidly grew to 160,000 personnel organized into 10 infantry divisions, a tank division, an air division, and a motorcycle regiment; the extra 40,000 personnel formed the border constabulary. This rapid expansion was not only facilitated by the steady influx of Soviet matériel and the domestic conscription of an additional 40,000 personnel but also greatly augmented by the transfer of perhaps as many as 60,000 ethnic Korean soldiers from Chinese communist forces to the KPA in 1949 and 1950.

National Command Authorities

National command authority in North Korea is consolidated in one person—Kim Jong Il (officially born in 1942). This solidification of absolute authority was a carefully arranged process that was initiated

by Kim's father, the late President Kim Il Sung, and occurred through several successive appointments (or elections) to various positions, including vice chairman of the National Defense Commission in May 1990, supreme commander of the KPA in December 1991, marshal in April 1992, and chairman of the National Defense Commission in April 1993. More than three years after Kim Il Sung's death, in October 1997, the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) elected Kim Jong Il as its general secretary, and both the KWP Central Committee and the Central Military Commission elected him chairman of the party's Central Military Commission.

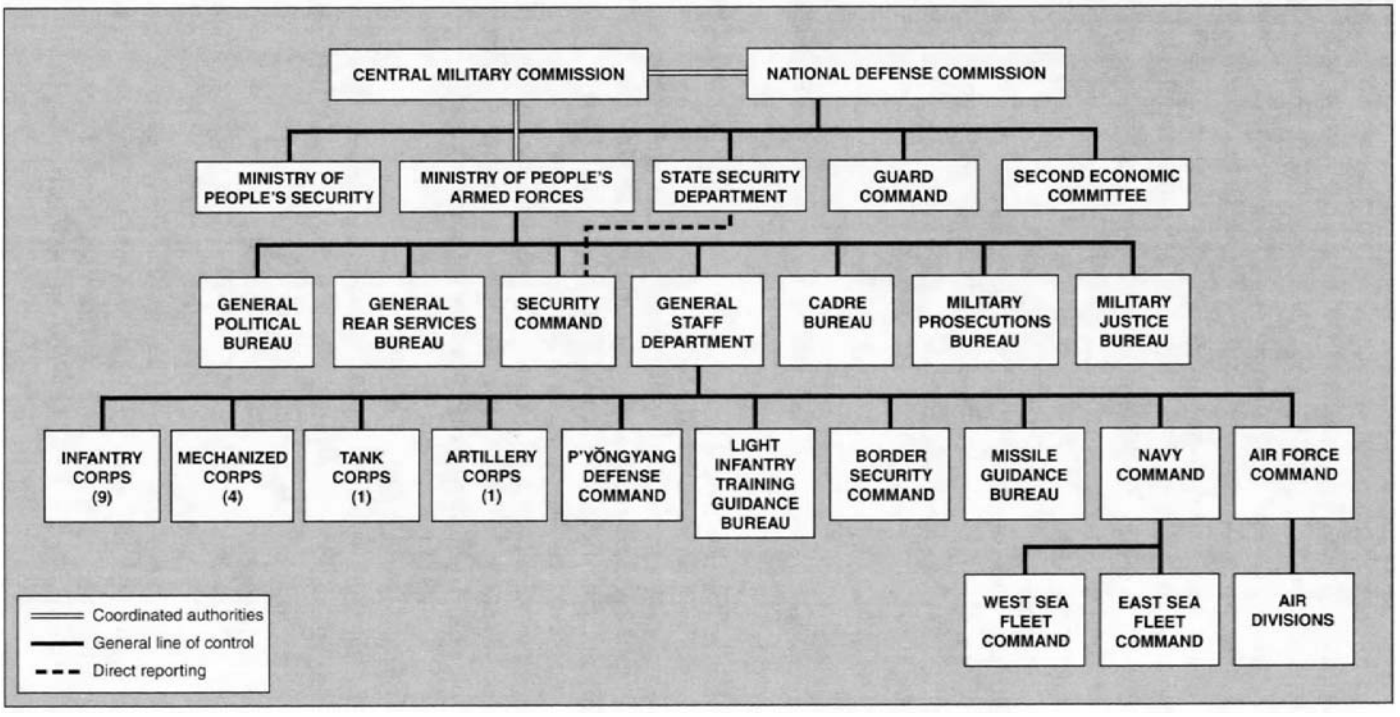
In accordance with the 1998 revised state constitution, the National Defense Commission is the highest military leadership body of state power and the organ of overall administration of national defense. Constitutionally, the National Defense Commission is accountable to the Supreme People's Assembly (see The Legislature, ch. 4). However, in fact, if not in law, the National Defense Commission chairman, Kim Jong Il, holds the highest position responsible for North Korea's political, economic, and military resources (see The Constitutional Framework; Relationships Among the Government, Party, and Military, ch. 4).

National Defense Organizations

The KWP Central Military Commission and the state National Defense Commission, both bodies chaired by Kim Jong Il, hold coordinating authority over the armed forces (see fig. 11). The Central Military Commission of the KWP Central Committee (also headed by General Secretary Kim Jong Il) provides broad political and policy guidance, while the National Defense Commission exercises command and administrative control over the armed forces.

Central Military Commission

The party Central Military Commission is subordinate to the party Central Committee and, as enumerated in article 27 of the KWP constitution, serves as the party's leading body on all military matters, including establishing policies, plans, and defense acquisition priorities (see The Korean Workers' Party, ch. 4). The Central Military Commission, and by extension the party Central Committee, coordinates its work through the party Secretariat's military, munitions industry, operations, civil defense, and organization and guidance departments and the party Political Bureau's chain of command, which extends through the General Political Bureau of level of all military units.



Source: Based on information from Republic of Korea, Ministry of National Defense, *Kukpang Paesŏ, 2006* [Defense White Paper, 2006], Seoul, 2006, 19.

Figure 11. Simplified National Military Command Structure, 2006

The members of the party Central Military Commission concurrently hold key defense and military positions. In 2007 these members and positions included Kim Il-ch'ŏl, minister of people's armed forces; Cho Myŏng-nok, director of the General Political Bureau of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces; Kim Yŏng-chun, chief of the General Staff Department; Yi Ha-il, director of the KWP Military Affairs Department; Kim Ik-hyŏn, director of the party Civil Defense Department; Pak Ki-sŏ, commander of the P'yŏngyang Defense Command; Kim Ch'ŏl-man, former chairman of the Second Economic Committee; Yi Yong-ch'ŏl, first vice director of the KWP Organization and Guidance Department; and others.

National Defense Commission

In the 1998 constitution, clauses related to national defense are arranged in two chapters. Those specifying the roles and missions of the armed forces are in chapter 4, National Defense, articles 58 through 61. Clauses stipulating the powers of the National Defense Commission are located in chapter 6, State Organs, section 2: The National Defense Commission, articles 100 through 105. Section 2 empowers the National Defense Commission chairman to direct and command the armed forces and to guide overall national defense affairs. This section also establishes the National Defense Commission as the highest military leadership body of state power and the organ of overall administration of national defense. It also defines its organization and specifies its duties and authorities.

Article 101 specifies that the National Defense Commission shall consist of a chairman, a first vice chairman, one or more other vice chairmen, and other members. This body is elected by the Supreme People's Assembly and serves a five-year term, which can be extended if an election is not held because of "unavoidable circumstances." The National Defense Commission includes Marshal Kim Jong Il, chairman; Vice Marshal Cho Myŏng-nok, first vice chairman and director of the General Political Bureau; Vice Marshal Yi Yong-mu, vice chairman; Vice Marshal Kim Yŏng-chun, vice chairman and former chief of the General Staff Department; and three members: Vice Marshal Kim Il-ch'ŏl, minister of people's armed forces; Chŏn Pyŏng-ho, secretary of the KWP; General Hyŏn Ch'ŏl-hae, former vice director of the General Political Bureau; and Kim Yang-gŏn, councilor and director of the KWP's International Affairs Department.

Article 103 gives the National Defense Commission the constitutional power to direct the armed forces; establish and abolish state institutions in the defense sector; appoint and dismiss senior military

officers; enact and confer military titles on senior officers; and mobilize for emergencies and declare war. Constitutionally, the Supreme People's Assembly is charged with oversight of the National Defense Commission per articles 105 and 110; however, in practice the National Defense Commission is not accountable to any regulatory body. Subordinate to the National Defense Commission are the Ministry of People's Security, State Security Department, Guard Command, and Ministry of People's Armed Forces (see Internal Security, this ch.).

Ministry of People's Armed Forces

The Ministry of People's Armed Forces coordinates administrative defense activities and represents the military externally. Since September 1998, the ministry has been led by Vice Marshal Kim Il-ch'ŏl. Although a ministry, it is not subordinate to the cabinet but answers directly to Kim Jong Il in his role as chairman of the National Defense Commission. Within the ministry, the General Staff Department, General Political Bureau, and Security Command form a ruling triumvirate that operates in a construct of checks and balances.

The General Staff Department is led by Chief of the General Staff General Kim Kyuk-sik, who exercises unitary command authority—operational responsibility over the KPA ground, air, naval, special operations, and reserve forces. Subordinate to the General Staff Department are more than 20 bureaus and an elaborate organization of military schools, academies, and universities. Akin to other nations' Joint Chiefs of Staff, the General Staff Department is directly responsible for all military strategy, planning, operations, and training. These duties specifically fall under the purview of the General Staff Department Operations Bureau and are carried out by its 10 military departments. The First Department is in charge of administrative affairs, while the Second Department develops operations plans. The Third Department supervises the forward infantry corps (I, II, IV, and V Corps), and the Fourth Department supervises all other infantry corps. The Fifth Department oversees the Light Infantry Training Guidance Bureau, the Sixth Department supervises the Air Force Command, and the Seventh Department supervises the Navy Command. The Eighth Department plans operations for subordinate units of other General Staff Department bureaus, the Ninth Department conducts corps-level training exercises, and the Tenth Department (or Information Department) supervises the North Korean members of the Military Armistice Commission.

The General Political Bureau is the regime's political apparatus for controlling the KPA, and it is led by the eminently powerful

A bemedaled Korean People's Army on parade in P'yŏngyang during the celebration of the ninetieth birthday of Kim Il Sung, also the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the Korean Workers' Party, April 25, 2005
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), June 2002, front cover*

director general Vice Marshal Cho Myŏng-nok (second in the national hierarchy behind Kim Jong Il). As the KPA's political guidance system, it permeates every organization of the KPA down through company levels. Operating under the supervision of the party Central Committee, the General Political Bureau is responsible for propaganda, educational, and cultural activities. Moreover, based on delegation of authority from the National Defense Commission, the bureau also authorizes the movement of military units. Inserting political officers into unit movements is a precautionary measure against unauthorized, possibly regime-threatening movement of units by commanders.

The Security Command is an intramilitary surveillance agency that is responsible for internal affairs and for exposing corrupt and disloyal elements within the KPA. Commanded by a military officer, Colonel General Kim Wŏn-hong, and organized under the Ministry of People's Armed Forces, the command is directly accountable to the State Security Department. Similar to the General Political Bureau, the Security Command also operates a separate but parallel chain of command that extends down to the battalion level. Battalion-level security command officers clandestinely employ six or seven informants per company to report politically disloyal elements. Those who are accused often are apprehended, interrogated (routinely tortured for a confession), tried by military court, and sentenced, as deemed appropriate. The Security Command not only conducts surveillance of the military chain of command but also observes and reports on the actions of the political officers.

Other bureaus of the General Staff Department include the General Rear Services Bureau, which controls KPA logistical support activities, and the Cadre Bureau, which oversees officer personnel matters, including promotions, awards, and records. The Military Justice Bureau establishes military judicial policy and supervises the lower military courts, and the Military Prosecutions Bureau prosecutes cases that appear before the Military Justice Bureau and oversees the activities of subordinate prosecution elements.

National Security Policy Formulation

The KWP Central Military Commission and the state National Defense Commission hold coordinating authority over the armed forces. Together (and both under the chairmanship of Kim Jong Il), they represent North Korea's core national security policy-making component.

North Korea's national security structure has a four-tiered military operational component. In this structure, orders originate from the

national coordinated authorities and are passed through the minister of People's Armed Forces to the chief of the General Political Bureau and then to the chief of the General Staff Department. However, as head of state, party, and defense and in his role as KPA supreme commander, Kim Jong Il can abbreviate this process by issuing operational orders directly to the chief of the General Staff Department, a two-tiered process. During wartime operation, a supreme command headquarters would be activated to prosecute the war, thereby normalizing this two-tiered process.

Kim Jong Il's control of the military is further strengthened by his appointments of loyalists to state, party, and military positions. Among his closest military advisers are Vice Marshal Cho Myŏng-nok, director of the General Political Bureau; Vice Marshal Kim Yŏng-chun, former chief of the General Staff Department; Vice Marshal Kim Il-ch'ŏl, minster of people's armed forces; General Hyŏn Ch'ŏl-hae, former vice director of the General Political Bureau; General Pak Chae-kyŏng, vice director of Propaganda Department of the General Political Bureau; General Kim Myŏng-kuk, director of the Operations Bureau of the General Staff Department; and Colonel General Kim Wŏn-hong, chief of the Security Command.

Elements of the administrative-logistical component of the national security structure include the Second Economic Committee, which is directly subordinate to the National Defense Commission and controls the defense industry under the guidance of the party Munitions Industry Department; in 2007 the chief of the latter was Chŏn Pyŏng-ho (see Defense Industry, this ch.). The General Staff Department and the General Rear Services Bureau of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces prepare military budgets under the guidance of the Political Bureau and Central Military Commission. Proposed budgets are approved by the Central Military Commission and passed into law by the essentially rubber-stamp legislature, the Supreme People's Assembly.

Organization and Equipment of the Armed Forces

General Staff Department

North Korea has enormous armed forces, numbering more than 1.2 million personnel on active duty and an additional 7.7 million personnel in paramilitary and reserve forces (see Reserve Forces, this ch.). The KPA is a unitary or joint force that is led operationally by the General Staff Department.

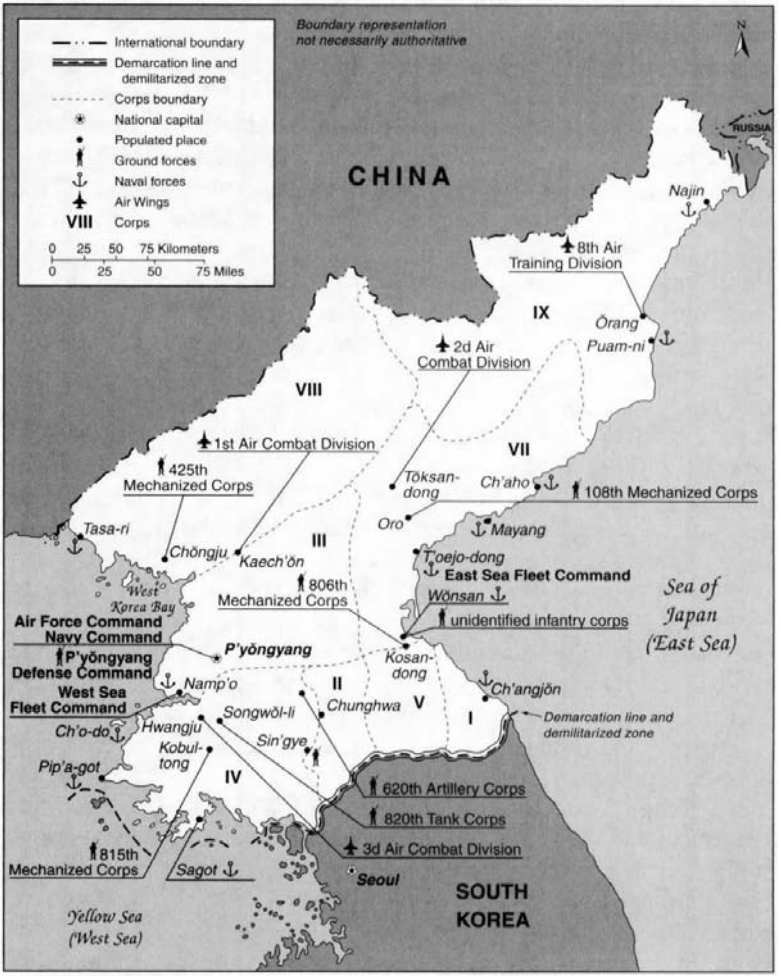


Figure 12. Deployment of Ground and Naval Forces and Air Wings, 2006

In early 2007, General Kim Kyuk-sik became chief of the General Staff Department, replacing Vice Marshal Kim Yŏng-chun, who became vice chairman of the National Defense Commission. The department is staffed with members from all of its components and is responsible for manning, training, equipping, administering, and supporting the KPA and planning, organizing, and employing the KPA to accomplish its missions. Subordinate to the General Staff Department are military commands, bureaus, and institutions that perform command and administrative functions, provide warfighting

capabilities, and coordinate deployment of the armed forces. Broadly defined, the military commands—ground, air, naval, and special operations forces—are collectively termed the KPA.

Army

North Korea has amassed the world's third largest ground forces—with 1 million personnel—and the world's largest artillery force—with 13,500 pieces. Seventy percent of the ground forces are permanently deployed south of P'yŏngyang and Wŏnsan and within about 80 kilometers of the DMZ. The ground forces' size, organization, disposition, and combat readiness provide North Korea with options for either offensive operations to attempt to reunify the peninsula forcibly or defensive operations against perceived threats.

The ground forces are organized into 19 major commands that are deployed in echelon by mission and include nine infantry corps, four mechanized corps, a tank corps, an artillery corps, P'yŏngyang Defense Command, Border Security Command, the Missile Guidance Bureau, and the Light Infantry Training Guidance Bureau. Major combat formations include some 80 infantry divisions (including training divisions), 30 artillery brigades, 25 special warfare brigades, 20 mechanized brigades, 10 tank brigades, and seven tank regiments.

The forward echelon is organized with four infantry corps deployed abreast (from west to east: IV Corps, II Corps, V Corps, and I Corps) along the DMZ (see fig. 12). The 620th Artillery Corps also is deployed forward and operates from hardened artillery sites. Some 250 long-range artillery systems (240-millimeter multiple rocket launchers and 170-millimeter self-propelled howitzers) are within striking range of Seoul from their current positions. Also located south of the P'yŏngyang–Wŏnsan line are, from west to east, the 815th Mechanized Corps within the IV Corps boundary (in the vicinity of Kobul-tong); the 820th Tank Corps also within the IV Corps boundary (near Songwŏl-li); and the 806th Mechanized Corps within the V Corps boundary (in the vicinity of Kosan-dong).

Two geographically postured infantry corps are organized in the central echelon. They are III Corps in the west and VII Corps in the east; in addition, there is an unidentified infantry corps located within the VII Corps boundary, and the P'yŏngyang Defense Command is based at the national capital. Organized in the rear echelon are two strategically postured infantry corps: VIII Corps in the west and IX (formerly VI) Corps in the east; the 425th Mechanized Corps is located in the VIII Corps boundary (in the vicinity of Chŏngju), and the 108th Mechanized Corps is within the VII Corps boundary (near Oro).

Since 2000 the Missile Guidance Bureau (possibly renamed the Artillery Guidance Bureau) was organized or reorganized to unify command and control of North Korean theater missile units, which are deployed operationally to several locations. The Light Infantry Training Guidance Bureau is a special operations forces (SOF) command that directly controls assigned forces and might control other strategic SOF, specifically, the air and naval sniper brigades.

The major army weapons systems and equipment include tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, antiaircraft artillery, and bridging assets. The army has some 3,700 tanks that are categorized as either light or medium armaments. Light tanks include the PT–76, T–62, and T–63 light amphibious tank; medium tanks include T–54, T–55, T–59, and T–62 models. The tanks are organized into medium and light tank companies (10 tanks each), battalions (three tank companies), brigades (four medium and one light tank battalions), and the tank corps (five tank brigades).

The armored vehicle inventory has about 2,100 armored personnel carriers, including the wheeled BTR series, Type M–1973, and a lesser quantity of the track-mounted BMP. Ground forces use armored personnel carriers for multiple roles that include maneuver, reconnaissance, and command and control. Typically, mechanized infantry units organize this equipment into mortar and mechanized infantry companies (often 10 vehicles each), mechanized battalions (three mechanized infantry companies and one mortar company), mechanized brigades (one mechanized infantry battalion and four motorized infantry battalions), and mechanized corps (five mechanized infantry brigades).

With more than 13,500 artillery pieces, the world's largest artillery force includes free-rocket-over-ground (FROG) artillery systems, 107-millimeter to 240-millimeter multiple rocket launchers, and 100-millimeter to 170-millimeter howitzers. Artillery formations are organized by type and assigned to regiments, divisions, and corps: regiment assignments include an 18-gun 122-millimeter howitzer battalion and a nine-launcher 107-millimeter or 140-millimeter multiple rocket launcher battery; division assignments include two 12-gun 152-millimeter howitzer battalions, one 18-gun 122-millimeter howitzer battalion, and one 12-launcher 122-millimeter multiple rocket launcher battalion; and corps assignments include six 18-gun 170-millimeter howitzer battalions and six 18-launcher 240-millimeter multiple rocket launcher battalions. To support maneuver operations, artillery is task-organized into regimental, division, and corps artillery groups, which are routinely augmented with additional artillery units that are attached from higher echelons.

The army has amassed more than 15,600 antiaircraft artillery pieces for theater missile-defense and counterair operations. Strategically employed and integrated to defend critical geopolitical assets, surface-to-air (SA) missile systems include several fixed and semifixed SA–2, SA–3, and SA–5 medium and medium-to-high-altitude missile systems. Short-range air-defense systems are deployed at the corps, division, and regimental levels and include an organized selection of 14.5-millimeter, 37-millimeter, and 57-millimeter antiaircraft artillery pieces. Short-range, man-portable SA–7B launchers also contribute to localized air defense and are employed down to battalion level.

Although the army conducts training exercises at all levels of command, most training occurs at the regimental level or below, and mainly at company and platoon levels. Exercises involving units that consume scarce resources, such as fuel, oil, and lubricants, occur infrequently, inhibiting the readiness of exploitation forces, which may cause integration difficulties during division and corps operations.

On March 7, 2006, the commander of the United Nations Command, Republic of Korea–United States Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea, General Burwell B. Bell, testified before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee concerning North Korea's military posture. General Bell assessed that despite aging equipment and simplistic methods, North Korean conventional military forces pose a continuing threat because of their sheer size and forward positions.

Special Operations Forces

The KPA has a mixture of conventional and unconventional warfare units. North Korea's special operations forces (SOF) are the world's largest and have the highest military funding priority. Estimates of strength range from 87,000 to 92,000 and 100,000 to 120,000 personnel, depending on whether or not both strategic (the lower numbers) and tactical forces (the higher numbers) are counted. The uncertainty over the number of forces is derived mainly from the varying definitions of what actually constitutes KPA special operations forces, which include light infantry, airborne, sniper, and reconnaissance forces. Organized into 25 brigades and nine separate battalions, the special operations forces are believed to be the best trained and to have the highest morale of all North Korean ground forces. SOF operations are categorized by the supported echelon: strategic, operational, and tactical. Strategic SOF are employed in reconnaissance, sniper, and agent operations and support national or Ministry of People's Armed Forces objectives. Operational SOF

support corps operations, and tactical SOF support forward-division operations.

The Ministry of People's Armed Forces controls strategic SOF through four commands, the Reconnaissance Bureau, Light Infantry Training Guidance Bureau, Air Force Command, and Navy Command. The Reconnaissance Bureau is subordinate to the Ministry of People's Armed Forces, is responsible for the collection of strategic and tactical intelligence, and directly controls one sniper brigade and five reconnaissance battalions. The bureau also exercises operational control over agents engaged in collecting military intelligence and in the training and dispatch of unconventional warfare teams. The Light Infantry Training Guidance Bureau is a subordinate command of the General Staff Department and directly controls four light infantry brigades, three airborne brigades, and a sniper brigade.

The Air Force Command has two sniper brigades of 3,500 personnel each and up to 300 An–2 biplanes that are used mainly for infiltrating SOF assets into South Korea's rear areas. Because of the ability of the An–2 to fly at low speeds and at very low altitudes, this otherwise antiquated aircraft provides the KPA with a fairly reliable means of infiltration. The Navy Command has two seaborne sniper brigades with a combined force of about 7,000 personnel that are capable of being infiltrated rapidly along South Korea's coast. Of the navy's 260 landing craft, more than 50 percent are of the landing craft air-cushion variety, well suited to traversing large mud flats, seasonal frozen coastal waters, and areas of great tidal variance.

Operational and tactical SOF units are organized at corps and division levels, respectively. At the operational level, each of the four forward infantry corps has a reconnaissance battalion, light infantry brigade, and sniper brigade; each of the four mechanized corps has a light infantry brigade. (Rear area infantry corps are organized as light infantry brigades, but because of their geographical separation from the front line, these units are not considered as SOF.) At the tactical level, each of the 20 or so forward infantry divisions has an assigned light infantry battalion.

Reconnaissance battalions are employed in rear areas—strategic and operational—to collect intelligence and information on high-value targets. Battalions are organized with a headquarters, signal platoon, recruit-training company, training company, and four reconnaissance companies of fewer than 100 troops each. Reconnaissance companies are organized with four platoons each, including four five-man teams (basic operating units) that are lightly armed with rifles and sidearms.

The KPA in a river-crossing exercise at an undisclosed location
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), July 2003, 17*

Light infantry units are employed at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels; they operate in battalions or companies to conduct raids on command and control centers and artillery positions and to secure choke points along axes of advance. Light infantry brigades are robust organizations with a headquarters, signal company, equipment company, transportation company, and six light infantry battalions. Light infantry battalions have a recruit-training company, signal company, air defense platoon, and six light infantry companies. Light infantry companies have two light infantry platoons, each with a three-tube, 60-millimeter mortar platoon and four light infantry squads.

Sniper brigades generally operate in teams to conduct raids, demolition, and reconnaissance and to collect intelligence. Sniper brigades are organized less robustly than light-infantry sniper brigades and have a headquarters, signal company, and six sniper battalions; each battalion has a signal platoon and five sniper companies, and each company has a three-tube mortar squad and three sniper platoons.

KPA special operations forces were developed to meet three basic requirements: to breach the flankless fixed defense of South Korea; to create a second front in the enemy rear area, disrupting in-depth reinforcements and logistical support during a conflict; and to conduct battlefield and strategic reconnaissance. Missions to counter opposing forces and to conduct internal security were added over time.

Strategic missions require deep insertions either in advance of hostilities or in the initial stages by naval or air platforms. Based on available insertion platforms, North Korea has a strategic lift capability of about 21,000 SOF personnel, which includes about 15,000 personnel by sea and another 6,000 personnel by air. The majority of SOF elements infiltrate over land to execute operational and tactical missions.

Air Force

In 2007 Colonel General O Kŭm-ch'ŏl headed the Korean People's Air Force Command, which has roots dating back to 1946. The Air Force Command has adapted Soviet and Chinese doctrines and tactics to accommodate internal requirements and resources. Its primary mission is air defense; secondary missions include tactical air support to the ground and naval forces, transportation and logistical support, and SOF insertion.

The air force is organized around four air divisions, three air combat divisions, and one air training division, with a total of 110,000 personnel, including 7,000 special operations troops. The First Air Combat Division is headquartered at Kaech'ŏn, South P'yŏngan Province, and operates in the northwest. The Second Air Combat Division is headquartered at Tŏksan-dong, near Hamhŭng, South Hamgyŏng Province, and operates in the east. The Third Air Combat Division is headquartered at Hwangju, North Hwanghae Province, and operates in the south. The Eighth Air Training Division (a unit designation that is speculative) is headquartered at Ŏrang, North Hamgyŏng Province, and operates in the northeast. Additional forces include a helicopter brigade, and support units include the Fifth and Sixth transport brigades. About 40 percent of air force fighters are forward deployed. The Air Force Command itself is headquartered in P'yŏngyang and controls, operates, and maintains all military and civilian aircraft, airfields, and airports throughout North Korea.

Significantly smaller than the ground forces, the air force has about 110,000 airmen and is equipped with an aging fleet of more than 1,600 aircraft that includes about 780 fighters, 80 bombers, 300 helicopters, 300 An–2 biplanes, and more than 100 support craft. About 70 percent of the fixed-wing aircraft are first- and second-generation Soviet-made fighters and bombers, including MiG–15, –17, –19, and –21 fighters and Il–28 fighter-bombers. The air force also has many third- and fourth-generation Soviet-made aircraft such as MiG–23 and MiG–29 fighters and Su–25 ground attack aircraft.

Among its rotor-wing fleet are a significant number of Mi–2s, Mi–4s, Mi–8s, Mi–17s, and Hughes–500 multirole helicopters.

The air force operates 20 strategic air bases and about another 70 operational bases and reserve and emergency runways nationwide. The majority of tactical aircraft are concentrated at air bases around P'yŏngyang and in the southern provinces. P'yŏngyang can place almost all its military aircraft in hardened—mostly underground—shelters. In the early 1990s, North Korea activated four forward air bases near the DMZ, which increased its initial southward reach and conversely decreased warning and reaction times for Seoul.

The air force operates two main flight schools, Kim Ch'aek Air Force Academy in Ch'ŏngjin and Kyŏngsŏng Flight Officer School in Kyŏngsŏng, both of which are located in North Hamgyŏng Province. Both institutions are four-year commissioning programs that provide students with about 70 hours of flight training on propeller-driven Yak–18 or CJ–6 aircraft. Graduating second lieutenants attend 22 months of advanced flight training, where they receive about 100 hours of flight instruction on either MiG–15 or MiG–17 fighters. After flight school, new pilots are assigned to an operational unit, where they receive another two years of training before they are rated as combat pilots. As with other types of military training, fuel shortages have required the air force to increase flight-simulator training time while sharply curtailing actual flying time to little more than 10 hours a year per pilot, a factor contributing to decreasing operational readiness.

Navy

In 2007 Admiral Kim Yun-sim commanded the Korean People's Navy Command. Headquartered since 1946 in P'yŏngyang, the navy is subordinate to the Ministry of People's Armed Forces. With fewer personnel than a single forward-infantry corps, the 60,000-person "brown-water" navy is primarily a coastal defense force. The North Korean navy does not have naval air or marine components.

The navy has 12 squadrons of around 1,000 vessels organized into two fleets, the West (or Yellow) Sea Fleet and the East Sea Fleet, and 19 naval bases. The fleets do not exchange vessels, and their areas of operations and missions determine their organizational structure; mutual support is difficult at best. The West Sea Fleet is headquartered at Namp'o and has major bases at Pip'a-got and Sagot and smaller bases at Tasa-ri and Ch'o-do. The East Sea Fleet has its headquarters at T'oejo-dong, with major bases at Najin and Wŏnsan and lesser bases at Puam-ni, Ch'aho, Mayang Island, and Ch'angjŏn

near the DMZ. Additionally, there are many smaller bases along both coasts.

The smallest of the three services, the navy is equipped with a mismatched fleet of more than 430 surface combatants, nearly 90 submarines, 230 support vessels, and 260 landing craft. About 150 of these vessels are not under navy control but instead are assigned to the Ministry of People's Armed Forces Coastal Security Bureau. Equipped with corvettes, guided-missile patrol boats, torpedo boats, and fire-support boats, the navy maintains about 60 percent of the surface combatants forward of the P'yŏngyang–Wŏnsan line. Of these relatively small ships, the guided-missile patrol boats, which are equipped with either two or four tubes of Styx antiship missiles each, pose a credible threat against ships of much larger size.

North Korea's submarine force is the world's largest, including about 60 submarines of the 1,800-ton Romeo and 300-ton Sango classes and as many as 10 Yugo-class submersibles. The Romeo- and Sango-class submarines are capable of blocking sea-lanes, attacking surface vessels, emplacing mines, and infiltrating SOF. The Yugo-class submersibles are intended for clandestine SOF insertion. Submarines are stationed at Ch'aho, Mayang Island, Namp'o, and Pip'a-got naval bases.

North Korea also has a formidable coastal defense system that includes more than 250 soft and hardened coastal-defense artillery positions and one coastal-defense missile regiment per naval fleet. Coastal-defense artillery systems are equipped mainly with 122-millimeter or 152-millimeter guns; coastal-defense missile regiments are equipped with Silkworm and Seersucker antiship cruise missiles that are either truck- or transporter-erector-launcher-mounted. These coastal-defense positions are located on both coasts and on several islands.

The navy is capable of conducting inshore defensive operations, submarine operations against merchant shipping and unsophisticated naval combatants, offensive and defensive mining operations, and conventional raids. Because of the general imbalance of ship types, the navy has a limited capability to carry out such missions as sea control-or-denial and antisubmarine operations. The primary offensive mission of the navy is to support SOF unit insertions. It also has a limited capability to engage ships and to attack coastal targets.

Reserve Forces

As part of its military policy, North Korea has succeeded in arming much of its population (see Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics, this ch.). Some 9 million people, or more than one-third of the population,

Women of the Korean People's Navy on parade in Kim Il Sung Square, P'yŏngyang
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), October 2003, 11*

KPA solider in training
Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang),*
April 2004, 11

serve with either the active or reserve forces. As many as 7.7 million people between the ages of 14 and 60 are required to serve as reserve forces organized into four broad categories: Red Youth Guard, Reserve Military Training Unit (RMTU), Workers and Peasants Red Guard, and paramilitary units.

For many North Koreans, military service begins by joining the Red Youth Guard, a militia organization that generally resembles a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program, during their last years of senior middle school (see A Thought-Controlled Society, ch. 2; Mass Organizations, ch. 4). Membership is available to male and female students who are between 14 and 17 years of age. The Red Youth Guard, with some 940,000 members, is supervised by local military affairs departments, which report up through their respective provincial military affairs departments to the party Central Military Commission. During the school year, the Red Youth Guard receives 450 hours of classroom training and seven days each semester of unit training. The training focus is on pre-induction military familiarization and includes physical training, drill and ceremony, first aid, and weapons familiarization.

The RMTU is North Korea's ready reserve and accounts for approximately 620,000 soldiers assigned to some 37 RMTU infantry divisions. Typically, 17-year-old students who are graduating from senior middle school but not joining the active-duty forces are assigned to a local RMTU. Additionally, service members who complete their active-duty obligation are assigned to an RMTU. Accordingly, males between the ages of 17 and 45 and single females between the ages of 17 and 30 are eligible for RMTU service. Unlike the other reserve forces, the Ministry of People's Armed Forces controls the RMTU, from the General Staff Department through the corps headquarters to their assigned RMTU divisions. Mobilization of RMTUs is controlled by the Logistics Mobilization Bureau of the General Staff Department. These RMTU divisions annually conduct 30 days of mobilization training and 10 days of self-defense training, which prepares them to round out the order of battle of their assigned corps when they serve alongside regular army divisions. Lengthy reserve service obligations mitigate reduced training opportunities while enhancing unit cohesion, producing an adequately capable force that in general is as well equipped as active-duty forces, but with earlier-model equipment.

The Workers and Peasants Red Guard resembles a civil-defense force, and, with as many as 5.7 million personnel, it is North Korea's largest reserve component. Typically, at age 46 men are transferred from their RMTU divisions to a Workers and Peasants Red Guard unit

where they continue to serve until discharged at age 60, ending a lifetime of military service that began at age 14 and continued uninterrupted for 46 years. The Workers and Peasants Red Guard is controlled directly by local military affairs departments, which report to their provincial military affairs departments and on up the chain of command to the party Central Military Commission. Operationally organized at the company level by factories, farms, mines, and villages, the Workers and Peasants Red Guard has as its principal mission to provide civil defense in the form of local homeland defense, air defense, and logistic support. As a secondary mission, the Workers and Peasants Red Guard could be mobilized by the party Civil Defense Department to provide troop replacements for RMTU and active-duty forces. The Workers and Peasants Red Guard annually conducts 15 days of mobilization training and 15 days of self-defense training. This force is armed with individual (AK–47 rifles) and crew-served weapons, such as machine guns, mortars, and antiaircraft artillery pieces.

Paramilitary units, which number about 420,000 personnel, maintain a quasimilitary status and wear a military-type uniform. Such organizations include the Ministry of People's Security, Guard Command, College Training Units, and Speed Battle Youth Shock Brigades. The Ministry of People's Security functions as a national police force (see Ministry of People's Security, this ch.). The Guard Command is an independent, corps-sized organization that is responsible for the protection of Kim Jong Il and other senior-level officials (see Guard Command, this ch.). College students are organized into College Training Units and trained for individual replacements, a system by which during combat officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are replaced at the unit level on a one-for-one basis. Speed Battle Youth Shock Brigades, organized in 1975 to "more vigorously prepare the youth to become the reliable successors of the revolution," are youth-level militaristic work-group organizations.

Strategic Weapons

Since the 1970s, North Korea has invested significant resources to increase its indigenous acquisition of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction, which include chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. These weapons, the development of which has caused considerable international reaction, include ballistic missiles, chemical and biological weapons, and, possibly, nuclear warheads.

Ballistic Missiles

In 1976 North Korea, which had been unable to procure surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) from China or the Soviet Union, contracted

with Egypt for the transfer of several SCUD–B short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs). These SRBMs were reverse-engineered and facilitated the inauguration of North Korea's indigenous missile-production program. Successfully test-launched in 1984, the reverse-engineered SCUD–B missile was named the Hwasŏng–5 and shortly thereafter placed into full production. Seeking an extended-range capability beyond the Hwasŏng–5's 300-kilometer limit, North Korea further modified this missile to produce the Hwasŏng–6 (or SCUD–C)—a 500-kilometer extended-range SRBM—that in 1990 was test-fired successfully from Musudan-ni launch facility in North Hamgyŏng Province.

Having achieved the ability to strike targets anywhere in South Korea with Hwasŏng missiles, North Korea continued pursuing the ability to target Japan, which culminated on May 23, 1993, in a successful launch of what commonly has been referred to as the Nodong medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM). Whereas the 1993 Nodong missile test flight yielded a range of only 500 kilometers, in April 1998 Pakistan successfully tested a Nodong missile (known in Pakistan as the Ghauri) to a reported distance of 1,500 kilometers; then, in July 1998, Iran conducted a test launch of a Nodong missile (known as Shahab–3) to a distance of 1,000 kilometers. By May 23, 2006, Iran had conducted its tenth test launch of the Shahab–3, an MRBM that has been designed (or modified) to reach ranges up to 2,000 kilometers.

Concurrent with its Nodong missile development, since the 1990s North Korea has been developing an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), the Taepodong–1, and a long-range, intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), the Taepodong–2. The Taepodong–1 has two variants: the shorter range, two-stage system that is purported to be able to deliver a 700- to 1,000-kilogram warhead up to 2,000 kilometers; and the longer range, three-stage, space-launch vehicle (SLV) model which, if configured as a missile, presumably could deliver a light payload up to 5,000 kilometers. In August 1998, North Korea conducted a test launch of a Taepodong–1 SLV, reportedly in an attempt to place its first satellite into orbit. The first two stages apparently separated properly along the flight trajectory, but the third stage malfunctioned, failing to project the satellite into orbit.

In September 1999, only 13 months after the Taepodong–1 test launch, North Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced a self-imposed ballistic missile moratorium that was reaffirmed in 2001 with a commitment to extend the moratorium until 2003. With the exception of short-range missile launches, including the March 2006 KN–02 (an upgraded Soviet SS–1 (SCUD) SSM with a firing range of 120 kilometers) test launch, the missile launch moratorium remained in force until July 5, 2006, when North Korea shocked much of the world with its first

This Chinese-manufactured MiG–19 fighter was flown by a defector from the Korean People's Air Force to South Korea in 1983. It is now an exhibit at the War Memorial of Korea in Seoul.
Courtesy Robert L. Worden

test launch of a Taepodong–2 missile, which is thought to be based on the Soviet SS submarine-launched ballistic missile. The missile apparently malfunctioned along its trajectory. However, when commander of U.S. Forces Korea General B.B. Bell testified before the U.S. Senate in March 2006, he said that North Korea's continued development of a three-stage variant of the Taepodong missile could be operational within the next decade, providing P'yŏngyang with the capability to target the continental United States directly. Experts have surmised that a two-stage Taepodong–2 could deliver a 700- to 1,000-kilogram warhead to a distance of 10,000 kilometers, and that a three-stage Taepodong–2 could deliver a similar warhead about 15,000 kilometers.

North Korea's ballistic missile inventory includes more than 600 short-range Hwasŏng–5 and Hwasŏng–6 (SCUD) ballistic missiles that can deliver conventional or chemical munitions (and possibly a nuclear warhead) across the Korean Peninsula. North Korea possesses as many as 200 Nodong MRBMs that are capable of targeting Japan with these same payloads. And once made operational, North Korea's two-stage Taepodong–1 MRBM could easily reach Japan, including the island of Okinawa; the two-stage Taepodong–2 IRBM could reach U.S. military forces stationed in Guam, Hawaii, and Alaska; and the three-stage Taepodong–2 ICBM would be unrestrained in its ability to

reach targets anywhere in the continental United States. Subordinate to the Missile Guidance Bureau, the KPA ballistic missile forces (either division- or corps-sized) are assumed to be organized as a FROG–7 brigade, a Hwasŏng–5/6 brigade (or regiment), a Nodong brigade (or regiment), and possibly a Taepodong–1/2 battalion.

Chemical and Biological Weapons

The U.S. military assesses that North Korea has a significant inventory of chemicals that could be weaponized on conventional weapons systems (mortars, artillery, rockets, and bombs), missiles, and unconventional delivery platforms. In 2004 South Korea estimated that this chemical stockpile was as large as 2,500 to 5,000 tons of toxicants and included nerve, blister, blood, and vomiting agents. According to the South Korean assessment, North Korea also had the independent ability to cultivate and produce biological weapons, including anthrax, smallpox, and cholera. American military analyst Joseph S. Bermudez Jr. posits that North Korea has 12 chemical agent factories and two chemical weapons factories, at Sakchu and Kanggye, which are responsible for filling, packaging, and shipping chemical munitions to operational units.

Nuclear Weapons

North Korean nuclear-related activities began in 1955, when representatives of the Academy of Sciences participated in an East European conference on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In 1956 North Korea signed two agreements with the Soviet Union covering joint nuclear research. Then, in 1959 North Korea signed an intergovernmental atomic energy cooperation agreement—Series 9559 contract—with the Soviet Union, which included Soviet technical assistance and funding to conduct a geological site survey to determine a suitable location for a nuclear reactor; construct a nuclear research facility near Yŏngbyŏn; and train North Korean scientists and specialists and establish a nuclear-related curriculum at Kim Il Sung University (see Education, ch. 2). Chinese and Soviet assistance with training of nuclear scientists and technicians historically has been North Korea's principal source of nuclear expertise, although in 2004 it was revealed that Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, the "father of the Islamic bomb," had sold nuclear secrets to North Korea for more than 15 years.

The Yŏngbyŏn Nuclear Scientific Research Center, established in 1962, has more than 100 buildings. From 1965 to 1967, Soviet specialists built a two-megawatt thermal research reactor IRT–2000 (IRT is the Russian acronym for *issledovatel'skiy reaktor teplovyy*, or thermal

research reactor) for nuclear research—known as Yŏngbyŏn–1—that was later upgraded by North Korean scientists, first to a capacity of five megawatts and then to its current capacity of eight megawatts. Yŏngbyŏn–1 was brought under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA—see Glossary) controls in 1974.

During the 1970s and 1980s, North Korea began expanding its nuclear infrastructure. In 1980 the country began construction on an indigenously designed, graphite-moderated, gas-cooled five-megawatt electric reactor, known as Yŏngbyŏn–2, which became operational in 1986. Four years into this project, North Korea attempted a more ambitious endeavor by initiating construction of a 50-megawatt nuclear reactor, called Yŏngbyŏn–3, followed shortly thereafter by construction of a 200-megawatt reactor at T'aech'ŏn; neither of these projects has been completed. In 2006 there reportedly were as many as 22 nuclear-related facilities in North Korea, including nuclear reactors, reprocessing facilities, nuclear fuel plants, research facilities, and uranium mines.

In December 1985, North Korea signed the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) but delayed signing the IAEA Full-scope Safeguards Agreement until January 30, 1992. Ten days earlier, North Korea and South Korea had signed the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which pledged that neither country would "test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons" or "possess nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities." Moreover, they agreed to reciprocal verification inspections by a Joint Nuclear Control Commission.

During the 1992 inspections at Yŏngbyŏn Nuclear Scientific Research Center, the IAEA discovered that North Korea had diverted reprocessed weapons-grade plutonium from its five-megawatt nuclear reactor. Surprised by this exposure, North Korea expelled the IAEA inspectors and submitted a 90-day resignation from the NPT, which eventually was held in abeyance one day before the resignation took effect. In the months that followed, a potential war between the United States and North Korea was averted when the DPRK signed the October 1994 Agreed Framework, wherein North Korea agreed to freeze and eventually dismantle its plutonium-based nuclear weapons program in exchange for a series of quid pro quo concessions that included normalization of diplomatic and economic relations between the two parties, the transfer to North Korea of two one-gigawatt electric light-water nuclear reactors, and the interim provision to North Korea of 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil annually.

In October 2002, the United States informed North Korea that it was suspected of operating a clandestine highly enriched uranium (HEU)–based nuclear weapons program. What followed was a series of P'yŏngyang-implemented Agreed Framework reversals that included evicting IAEA inspectors, removing IAEA monitoring equipment, abrogating the NPT, restarting its five-megawatt nuclear reactor, and reprocessing 8,000 nuclear fuel rods. In an effort to denuclearize North Korea, six regional players—the United States, North Korea, China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia—agreed to meet in a series of negotiations termed Six-Party Talks. As of mid-2007, there had been six sessions of Six-Party Talks.

On February 10, 2005, North Korea announced that it was one of the world's nuclear-armed states by issuing a Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement declaring possession of nuclear weapons. Then, within a week of another Foreign Ministry announcement that the state would prove its nuclear capabilities, North Korea conducted what appears to have been a nuclear test, on October 3, 2006. By all indications, this test was a low-yield detonation. Although the veracity of its purported nuclear capacity remains unproven, some experts have surmised that North Korea could have as many as eight to 10 plutonium bombs. These could include one or two weapons from plutonium produced before 1992; four or five weapons from plutonium produced from the 8,000 reprocessed nuclear fuel rods; and three weapons from plutonium that could be produced annually by operating the five-megawatt nuclear reactor that was restarted in January 2003. Additionally, in November 2002 the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency postulated that by mid-decade North Korea could produce at least two HEU bombs annually.

Officer Corps Professional Education and Training

The commissioned officers' military education and training system in North Korea is elaborate and includes numerous schools, academies, colleges, and universities. Among these institutions are officer-candidate schools for each armed service; basic and advanced branch schools for armor, artillery, aviation, rear services, and other branches; mid-career staff colleges; senior war colleges; and specialty schools, such as medical and veterinary service schools.

The majority of officer candidates are selected from noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who display exemplary military qualities and political reliability. Once selected, candidates receive initial branch training and commissioning from service academies and schools. Ground force officer candidates train at branch-specific schools, such as the Combined Artillery Officer School, Armor Officer

An officers' military theory class at the Man'gyŏngdae Revolutionary Institute, P'yŏngyang, 1997
Courtesy Korea Today *(P'yŏngyang), October 1997, 30*

School, and Kang Kŏn General Military Academy (which was established in July 1946 as the Central Security Cadre School, renamed in December 1948 as the First Officer Candidate School, and acquired its current name in October 1950). Air force officer candidates train at either the Kim Ch'aek Air Force Academy or the Kyŏngsŏng Flight Officer School; navy officer candidates train at the Kim Ch'ŏng-suk Naval Academy. Mid-career command and staff training is offered at all the service academies, various branch schools, and the Kim Il Sung Military University. Courses taught at the service academies last six to 12 months, whereas courses that are taught at branch schools tend to be limited to six months.

Two schools are of particular importance: Kim Il Sung Military University and Man'gyŏngdae Revolutionary Institute. Kim Il Sung Military University is the most prestigious military school and offers advanced training to officers of all services. Various degree programs are offered: company and junior field-grade officers can attend a three- to four-year program; senior field-grade and political officers are eligible to attend a one-year program. Founded in October 1948, Man'gyŏngdae Revolutionary Institute is an 11-year military boarding school for children of the party elite. Many graduates of this prestigious institution go on to serve as party members.

Generally, political officer candidates are selected according to merit, party loyalty, and political reliability among KPA General Political Bureau service members. Candidates receive two years of training at the Political Officers School before commissioning and service in the General Political Bureau or as unit-level political officers. Training focuses on politics, economics, party history, *chuch'e* (see Glossary) philosophy, and party loyalty. Advanced training is offered at other institutions, such as Kŭmsŏng Political College and Kim Il Sung Political University (which was established in November 1945 as the P'yŏngyang Institute, renamed in January 1949 as the Second Officer Candidate School, and assumed its current name in February 1972).

Political officers for field-grade positions are routinely selected by the political department at the corps level from party members in the corps headquarters. Supplemental training may include a six-month course at a political college. Candidates for positions at the division or higher level are identified by the Organization Department of the KPA General Political Bureau. They then are screened by the party committee and approved by the party Central Committee's Secretariat before appointment as head of a political department at division or higher level.

Colleges and universities provide most of the training for reserve officers; information available about the training does not differentiate between the officer-selection process and other reserve military training. There may be two separate tracks or a selection process at the end of training.

Enlisted Conscription and Training

North Korea enforces universal conscription for males and selective conscription for females with significant pre-induction and post-service requirements. In April 1993, North Korea enacted the Ten-year Service System, which lengthened universal conscription from an eight- to a 10-year obligation. In October 1996, the Army Service Decree was amended, lengthening (by as much as three years) conscript service obligations to age 30.

Initial draft registration is conducted at age 14, pre-induction physicals are administered at age 16, and graduating senior middle school students typically are drafted at age 17. Eligibility for the draft is based on economic and political factors as well as physical condition. Some young people are able to postpone military service through temporary deferments that are offered for continuing education at high school or college. Technicians, skilled workers, members of special government organizations, and children of the

politically influential often are excluded from the draft. Most service personnel are single, as marriage is prohibited in the military until age 30, even for commissioned officers. Women are conscripted selectively at a ratio of about one female to nine males and serve in all three services and branches.

The coordinating national command authorities of the Central Military Commission and National Defense Commission establish annual conscription quotas that are enforced by the provincial, municipal, and county military-mobilization departments. The county departments, in turn, levy conscription requirements on local schools for implementation, and the schools select the most qualified students. After receiving official notification, inductees are assigned to the army, air force, or navy; given a military occupational specialty, such as infantry, communications, or medical; and assigned to a duty unit. The young men or women then go to a service- and branch-specific military training center or training company at regimental or divisional level for basic and occupational specialty training. Initial training varies by type and lasts approximately two months for ground forces and between two and three months for naval and air forces. Additional training is provided on the job at squad, platoon, and company levels.

Training, conducted under constant supervision, essentially emphasizes memorization and repetition but also includes a heavy emphasis on technical skills and vocational training. Lack of a technical base is another reason for the emphasis on repetitive training drills. Nighttime training is extensive, and physical and mental conditioning is stressed. Remedial training for initially substandard performances is not uncommon. Such training methods produce soldiers well versed in the basics even under adverse conditions. The degree to which they are prepared to respond rapidly to changing circumstances is less certain. NCO candidates are selected by merit for advanced military training at NCO schools, which are located at both the corps and the Military Training Bureau of the General Staff Department.

The quality of life of the enlisted soldier is difficult to evaluate. Conditions are harsh; rations are no more than 700 to 850 grams per day, depending on branch and service. Leave and passes are limited and strictly controlled. A two-week leave is allowed, although rarely granted, only once or twice during an entire enlistment. Passes for enlisted personnel are even more rare; neither day nor overnight passes are granted. During tours of duty, day passes are granted for public affairs duties or KWP-related activities. There is conflicting information about the frequency of corporal punishment and the harshness of military justice.

NORTH KOREAN RANK	SOWI	CHUNGWI	SANGWI	TAEWI	SOJWA	CHUNGJWA	SANGJWA	TAEJWA	SOJANG	CHUNG-JANG	SANG-JANG	TAEJANG	CH'ASU	WŎNSU[2]	TAEWŎNSU[2]
ARMY[1]															
U.S. RANK TITLES	2D LIEUTENANT	1ST LIEUTENANT	CAPTAIN	NO RANK	MAJOR	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL	NO RANK	BRIGADIER GENERAL	MAJOR GENERAL	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	GENERAL	NO RANK	GENERAL OF THE ARMY	NO RANK
NORTH KOREAN RANK	SOWI	CHUNGWI	SANGWI	TAEWI	SOJWA	CHUNGJWA	SANGJWA	TAEJWA	SOJANG	CHUNG-JANG	SANG-JANG	TAEJANG	CH'ASU	NO RANK	NO RANK
AIR FORCE[1]															
U.S. RANK TITLES	2D LIEUTENANT	1ST LIEUTENANT	CAPTAIN	NO RANK	MAJOR	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL	NO RANK	BRIGADIER GENERAL	MAJOR GENERAL	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	GENERAL	GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE	NO RANK	NO RANK
NORTH KOREAN RANK	SOWI	CHUNGWI	SANGWI	TAEWI	SOJWA	CHUNGJWA	SANGJWA	TAEJWA	SOJANG	CHUNG-JANG	SANG-JANG	TAEJANG	CH'ASU	NO RANK	NO RANK
NAVY[1]															
U.S. RANK TITLES	ENSIGN	LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE	LIEUTENANT	NO RANK	LIEUTENANT COMMANDER	COMMANDER	CAPTAIN	NO RANK	REAR ADMIRAL LOWER HALF	REAR ADMIRAL UPPER HALF	VICE ADMIRAL	ADMIRAL	FLEET ADMIRAL	NO RANK	NO RANK

[1] All officer insignia have a gold background, but the color of stripes and borders varies by service: army, red; air force, blue; navy, black. Stars are silver.

[2] Korean ranks translate as marshal and grand marshal, or generalissimo, respectively.

Figure 13. Officer Ranks and Insignia, 2007

A typical daily routine can last from 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM, with at least 10 hours devoted to training and only three hours of unscheduled or rest time, excluding meals. In addition, soldiers perform many duties not related to their basic mission; for example, units are expected to grow crops and to raise livestock or fish to supplement their rations.

Military Ranks

The KPA officer rank structure has 15 grades divided into three categories: commissioned officer (junior and senior), general officer, and marshal. Across services—army, air force, and navy—the KPA title for each rank is the same; however, it translates differently when broadly associated with the U.S. military rank structure (see fig. 13). The North Korean rank names used in this chapter are direct translations from the Korean titles and in some cases differ from the U.S. military rank equivalents in figures 13 and 14. Junior commissioned officer ranks are four-tiered: *sowi* (army and air force junior lieutenant and navy ensign), *chungwi* (army and air force lieutenant and navy junior lieutenant), *sangwi* (army and air force senior lieutenant and navy lieutenant), and *taewi* (army and air force captain and navy senior lieutenant). Senior commissioned officer ranks also are four-tiered: *sojwa* (major/lieutenant commander), *chungjwa* (lieutenant colonel/commander), *sangjwa* (colonel/captain), and *taejwa* (senior colonel/senior captain). General officer ranks are four-tiered: *sojang* (major general/rear admiral), *chungjang* (lieutenant general/vice admiral), *sangjang* (colonel general/admiral), and *taejang* (general/senior admiral). Marshal ranks are three-tiered: *ch'asu* (vice marshal), *wŏnsu* (marshal), and *taewŏnsu* (grand marshal).

Until December 1991, Kim Il Sung alone held the rank of marshal in his position as supreme commander of the KPA. In December 1991, Kim Jong Il was named supreme commander of the KPA; on April 20, 1992, Kim Il Sung was given the title grand marshal and Kim Jong Il and Minister of People's Armed Forces O Chin-u (1917–95) were named marshal. In an effort to solidify his hold on the military, Kim Jong Il has in turn bestowed the title of marshal and vice marshal on a select group of loyalists. North Korea has two marshals: Kim Jong Il and Yi Ŭl-sŏl, the former commander of the Guard Command who retired in September 2003. Beyond these advancements to marshal and vice marshal, since 1992 Kim Jong Il also has promoted more than 1,200 general officers.

Enlisted promotion historically has been a slow process. In 1998 the junior enlisted rank structure expanded from two categories—*chŏnsa* (private) and *sangdŭngbyŏng* (corporal)—to four (see fig. 14). The

NORTH KOREAN RANK	CHŎNSA	HAGŬP	CHUNGGŬP	SANGGŬP	HASA	CHUNGSA	SANGSA	T'ŬKMUSANGSA
ARMY[1]								
U.S. RANK TITLE	PRIVATE	PRIVATE 1ST CLASS	CORPORAL/ SPECIALIST	SERGEANT	STAFF SERGEANT	SERGEANT 1ST CLASS	MASTER SERGEANT	SERGEANT MAJOR
NORTH KOREAN RANK	CHŎNSA	HAGŬP	CHUNGGŬP	SANGGŬP	HASA	CHUNGSA	SANGSA	T'ŬKMUSANGSA
AIR FORCE[2]								
U.S. RANK TITLE	AIRMAN	AIRMAN 1ST CLASS	SENIOR AIRMAN / SERGEANT	STAFF SERGEANT	TECHNICAL SERGEANT	MASTER SERGEANT	SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT	CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT
NORTH KOREAN RANK	CHŎNSA	HAGŬP	CHUNGGŬP	SANGGŬP	HASA	CHUNGSA	SANGSA	T'ŬKMUSANGSA
NAVY[3]								
U.S. RANK TITLE	SEAMAN APPRENTICE	SEAMAN	PETTY OFFICER 3D CLASS	PETTY OFFICER 2D CLASS	PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS	CHIEF PETTY OFFICER	SENIOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER	MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER

[1]Army enlisted insignia are gold on a red background. [2]Air Force enlisted insignia are gold on a blue background. [3]Navy enlisted insignia are gold on a black background.

Figure 14. Enlisted Ranks and Insignia, 2007

rank structure in 2007 was *chŏnsa* (private), *hagŭp pyŏngsa* (junior serviceman), *chunggŭp pyŏngsa* (middle serviceman), and *sanggŭp pyŏngsa* (senior serviceman). Eligible senior servicemen compete for admission to the corps-level NCO training school; upon graduation they are promoted to the grade of staff sergeant, the first of four senior enlisted or NCO ranks. The NCO ranks are *hasa* (staff sergeant), *chungsa* (sergeant first class), *sangsa* (master sergeant), and *t'ŭkmusangsa* (sergeant major).

Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics

Notwithstanding the inter-Korean engagement policies of the current and former South Korean administrations, North Korea continues to embrace its national objective of communizing the Korean Peninsula, as articulated in the state constitution and the party charter. Specifically, the constitution declares "national reunification as the nation's supreme task," and the KWP constitution states that the "ultimate goal of the party is to spread *chuch'e* ideology and construct a Communist society throughout the world."

To develop the capabilities to realize its national objective, in December 1962 the Fifth Plenum of the Fourth KWP Central Committee adopted the Four-Point Military Guidelines: to arm the people; fortify the nation; create a cadre-based military; and modernize the force. These four military guidelines or defense policy principles are codified in article 60 of the 1998 state constitution.

The KPA has a three-part military strategy: surprise attack; quick, decisive war; and mixed tactics to carry out the national defense policy. Employing these three strategies, the KPA envisions reunifying the Korean Peninsula by initiating hostilities with large-scale asymmetric operations including massive conventional and chemical artillery, missile attacks, and simultaneous insertion of SOF throughout the depths of the battlespace (surprise-attack strategy). Thereafter, first-echelon operational forces (forward corps) would attack through the DMZ, or under it using invasion tunnels, to annihilate opposing forward forces, establish gaps and maneuver corridors to facilitate the rapid passage of second- and third-echelon operational forces (mechanized and armored forces), and complete the annihilation of opposing forces and secure the Korean Peninsula within 30 days (quick, decisive war strategy). To facilitate these aims of surprise attack and quick, decisive war, North Korea plans to fight a closely coordinated two-front war (mixed-tactics strategy). The first front would be fought by conventional forces and the second front by SOF to maximize disruption and destruction of command, control,

communications, and intelligence facilities; air and sea ports; logistical bases; and lines of communications.

North Korean military strategy defines KPA doctrine, force structure (manpower and equipment) requirements, and tactics. KPA military doctrine is based on a synthesis of Soviet operational practice and Chinese People's Liberation Army military doctrine adapted to conform to the Korean Peninsula's mountainous terrain and the KPA's emphasis on light infantry as the key force structure. The result of this amalgamation is the KPA's five fundamental principles of war: mass and dispersion, surprise attack, increased maneuverability, cunning and personified tactics (such as initiative, leadership, and deception), and secure secrets (including reconnaissance, counterintelligence, and terrain utilization).

Defense Industry

The defense industry is controlled by the interrelated efforts of the National Defense Commission, the KWP, and the cabinet through a hierarchical association. Annually, the Ministry of People's Armed Forces determines defense requirements and submits them for approval to the National Defense Commission. Thereafter, the National Defense Commission, working with the party Central Military Commission, establishes defense priorities and issues directives, which are disseminated by the cabinet and the Central Military Commission. The cabinet forwards these defense requirements to appropriate agencies for action: as an example, the State Planning Commission uses defense requirements to help inform budget appropriations, which are approved by the Supreme People's Assembly and administered by the Ministry of Finance; other agencies are directed to supply energy and material resources. The Central Military Commission, working through the KWP's Munitions Industry Department, establishes defense industry policies, which are tasked to the Second Economic Committee for implementation.

A subordinate organ of the National Defense Commission, the Second Economic Committee, directs the defense industry with oversight and guidance provided by the party Munitions Industry Department. In 1989 Kim Ch'ŏl-man succeeded Chŏn Pyŏng-ho as chairman of the Second Economic Committee; and then in September 2003, the 85-year-old Kim Ch'ŏl-man was replaced by Paek Se-bong (suspected alias for Kim Jong Chul, second son and possible heir to Kim Jong Il). In his dual capacity as party secretary for munitions and party director for the Munitions Industry Department, Chŏn Pyŏng-ho oversees and guides the work of the Second Economic Committee and thereby the defense industry. Organized into

nine bureaus, the Second Economic Committee exercises responsibility for defense industry plans, finances, production, distribution, and foreign military sales.

At the head of the Second Economic Committee is the General Bureau, which is responsible for defense industry plans, budget compilation, and resource procurement and distribution. Defense industry procurement, development, and production are directed by seven machine industry bureaus. The First Machine Industry Bureau oversees small arms, munitions, and general-purpose equipment. The Second Machine Industry Bureau commissions tanks, armored personnel carriers, and trucks. The Third Machine Industry Bureau is responsible for artillery and antiaircraft artillery systems. Missile systems are produced by the Fourth Machine Industry Bureau while the Fifth Machine Industry Bureau is responsible for nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. The Sixth Machine Industry Bureau manufactures naval vessels, and the Seventh Machine Industry Bureau produces communications equipment and aircraft. The machine industry bureaus supervise defense factories and coordinate internally with the Second Natural Science Institute (formerly the Academy of Defense Sciences) and with corresponding Ministry of People's Armed Forces bureaus and commands. Organized into divisions by specialty, the Second Natural Science Institute directs all defense-industry research and development.

The External Economic Affairs Bureau (also known as Yongaksan Company) is the ninth bureau of the Second Economic Committee and has primary responsibility for foreign military sales and shared responsibility with the machine industry bureaus for defense article procurement. It is suspected that foreign military sales either fund the defense industry or supplement its spending. North Korea's announced defense spending for 2003 was nearly US$1.8 billion or 15.7 percent of the state budget, an increase of US$320 million, from 2002. However, when coupled with profit estimates from the Second Economic Committee's foreign military sales, it is possible that actual 2003 military spending could have reached as much as US$5 billion, or 44.4 percent of the total budget.

North Korea's extensive defense production capability reflects its commitment to self-reliance and its military-first, or *sŏngun,* policy (see Relationships Among the Government, Party, and Military, ch. 4). As it relates to the defense industry, emphasis on the military-first policy has two foci: preferential development of defense articles and accomplishment of announced economic priorities executed in the revolutionary military spirit.

North Korea has an impressive, although technologically dated, military production capacity. From an aggregate of some 180 arms factories, North Korea operates approximately 40 gun factories of varying calibers, 10 armored vehicle factories, 10 naval shipyards, and 50 munitions factories. Many of these factories are constructed underground in strategic rear areas. Additionally, more than 115 nonmilitary factories have a dedicated wartime matériel production mission.

Most of the equipment is of Soviet or Chinese design, but North Korea has modified the original designs to produce both derivatives and indigenously designed versions of armored personnel carriers, self-propelled artillery, tanks, and high-speed landing craft. Ground systems production includes a complete line of crew- and individual-served weapons, tanks, armored vehicles, howitzers, rocket launchers, and missiles. Naval construction includes surface combatants, submarines, landing craft air-cushion vehicles, and a wide range of specialized infiltration craft. Aircraft production includes Mi–2 helicopters, Yak–18 trainers, spare parts, and perhaps coproduction of jet fighters.

Internal Security

Control System

Since its founding in 1948, North Korea has meticulously erected a pervasive system of totalitarian control unique even when compared to the communist systems in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The North Korean population is rigidly controlled, as individual rights are systematically subordinated to state and party designs. The regime uses education, mass mobilization, persuasion, isolation, coercion, fear, intimidation, and oppression to guarantee political and social conformity. Invasive propaganda and political indoctrination are reinforced by an elaborate internal security apparatus.

The regime's control mechanisms are quite extensive. Security ratings or loyalty groups are established for individuals and influence access to employment, schools, medical facilities, stores, admission to the KWP, and other walks of life. The system in its most elaborate form consists of three loyalty groups: core class (*haeksim kyech'ŭng*), wavering class (*tongyo kyech'ŭng*), and hostile class (*chŏktae kyech'ŭng*), which historically were further divided into 51 categories. Over time, however, the use of subcategories has diminished.

The core class accounts for about 10 to 15 percent of the population and includes KWP members and those with a revolutionary

A North Korean guard post overlooking the Joint Security Area at P'anmunjŏm in the Demilitarized Zone
Courtesy Robert L. Worden

(anti-Japanese) lineage. The wavering class or the basic masses of workers and peasants make up about 40 to 50 percent of the population. The remaining 40 percent of the population includes members of the hostile class—descendants of pro-Japanese collaborators, landowners, relatives of defectors, and prisoners.

There are five main means of social control: residence, travel, employment, clothing and food, and family life. Change of residence is possible only with party approval. Those who move without a permit are not eligible for food rations or housing allotments and are subject to criminal prosecution. Travel is controlled by the Ministry of People's Security, and a travel pass is necessary. Travel on other than official business is limited strictly to attending family functions, and obtaining approval normally is a long and complicated process. The ration system does not apply to individuals while they are traveling, which further curtails movement. Employment is governed by the party; assignments are made on the basis of political reliability and family background. A change in employment is made at the party's convenience.

Punishment and the Penal System

The 1998 state constitution stipulates judicial independence; requires court proceedings to be carried out in accordance with the law; directs court trials to be open to the public (unless otherwise

stipulated by law); and guarantees the accused the right of defense (articles 158–60). North Korea's penal code was enacted in 1950 and has since been revised or amended six times, including the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium's most recent revision on April 29, 2004. Despite significant revisions that include replacing strong political and ideological sections with those presenting a more neutral tone, the penal code remains a political tool for safeguarding national sovereignty and the socialist system. The amended 2004 penal code contains an additional 14 areas that elaborate and clarify constituted crimes, which are divisible into two groups of crime: ordinary and political. Of significant note, with this amendment the state adopted the principle of *nullum crimen sine lege* (no crime without a law), which in principle removed power from authorities to criminalize acts not covered by the penal code. The penal code also addresses a wide range of issues from labor laws and workplace safety to torture and capital punishment.

The penal code classifies punishment into four main categories: capital punishment; lifetime confinement to hard labor; termed confinement to hard labor (one to 15 years); correctional labor or "labor-training" (six to 24 months); and a number of less severe punishments, including suspension of electoral rights and confiscation of property. The 2004 penal code reduced the number of antistate crimes punishable by death from five to four: plots to overthrow the state; acts of terrorism; treason, including defection and espionage; and suppression of the people's movement for national liberation. Although the penal code prohibits torture and inhumane treatment, according to reports by South Korea's National Intelligence Service in 2005, and the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea in 2006, torture is both routine and severe.

On May 6, 2004, the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium also amended the state's criminal procedure law, which was adopted originally in 1950 and amended eight times thereafter. Punishment for criminal behavior is determined by both the type of crime—criminal or political—and the status of the individual. Party influence is pervasive in both criminal and political cases. In criminal cases, the government assigns lawyers for the defense. In political cases, trials often are dispensed with, and the Ministry of People's Security refers such cases directly to the State Security Department for the imposition of punishment.

As specified in the penal code, criminal proceedings are accomplished in six stages: investigation, preliminary examination, indictment, trial, decision, and enforcement. The proceedings begin with an investigation, during which the accused is identified and detained

(as necessary), and basic evidence is preserved. Preliminary examination lasts for two months and is the stage where the case against the accused is built. If the prosecutor assesses that there is sufficient evidence to try the accused, then an indictment is submitted before the court holding jurisdiction: people's courts for ordinary crimes not belonging to provincial courts; provincial-level courts for ordinary cases that could result in a death sentence or lifetime imprisonment; military courts for crimes by military members; railroad courts for crimes by railroad employees or rail-related crimes; and the Central Court for appeals (articles 126 and 133 of the criminal procedure law). Lower court trials are divided into two phases: preparation and deliberation phases. Court decisions are determined by a majority ruling of the judge and two people's assessors; enforcement of sentencing immediately follows guilty verdicts.

Whereas the aforementioned criminal proceedings are the prescribed process, practice is another matter, according to the U.S. Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006*. Although North Korea refuses outside observation of its legal system, it is clear that the limited guarantees legally in place often are not well followed. North Korean law limits incarceration during investigation and interrogation to a period of up to two months. The period of incarceration, however, can be extended indefinitely with the approval of the Central Procurators' Office. The approval apparently is given quite freely. It is not uncommon for individuals to be detained for six months or much longer without trial. There has been strong evidence that prisoners are routinely tortured or ill treated during interrogation. Habeas corpus or its equivalent is not recognized in theory or practice. In addition, information about detainees is restricted, and it is often very difficult, if not impossible, for concerned family members to obtain any information about someone being detained.

Criminal procedures are entrusted to four state agencies. The courts, procurators' offices, and the Ministry of People's Security are responsible for public order, and the State Security Department imposes political order (see The Judiciary, ch. 4).

Judicial and Prosecutorial Systems

In accordance with the 1998 constitution, North Korea's judicial and prosecutorial systems are composed of tiered courts and procurators' offices (see The Judiciary, ch. 4). Judicial bodies include the Central Court, military courts, railroad courts, provincial and special-city courts, and county-level people's courts. Appointed prosecutorial officials investigate and prosecute those accused of breaking the law,

and such officials serve in the Central Procurators' Office, the Special Procurators' Offices, and lower-level procurators' offices (article 147).

The highest judicial organ, the Central Court, supervises all lower courts and is accountable to the Supreme People's Assembly or to the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium when the former is in recess (articles 161 and 162). The Supreme People's Assembly has the power to appoint or remove the procurator general of the Central Procurators' Office (article 91). The Central Court appoints and recalls judges of the special courts; people's jury assessors are elected by a general meeting of concerned soldiers or employees (article 155). Below the Central Court are the lower courts, whose judges and civilian assessors are elected and recalled by their local people's assemblies (article 134). The constitution does not require legal education as a qualification for being elected as a judge or people's assessor. Over time, however, legal training has received more emphasis, although political reliability remains the prime criterion for holding office.

The Central Procurators' Office parallels the court system and performs three principal duties. The first is to ensure observance of laws by institutions, enterprises, organizations, and citizens. The second is to ensure that decisions and directives of state organs conform to the state constitution, Supreme People's Assembly laws and decisions, National Defense Commission decisions and orders, Supreme People's Assembly Presidium decrees, decisions, and directives, and cabinet decisions. The third is to protect state sovereignty, the social system, and state and social cooperative organizations' property, and to safeguard life, property, and personal rights by instituting and prosecuting legal proceedings against offenders (article 150).

In September 2003, the Supreme People's Assembly reelected Kim Pyŏng-ryul as president of the Central Court. At the same time, Yi Kil-song was appointed as procurator general.

Ministry of People's Security

The Ministry of People's Security (formerly the Ministry of Public Security) is headquartered in P'yŏngyang and since July 2004 General Chu Sang-sŏng, former IV Corps commander, has been the minister. One of the most powerful organizations in North Korea, the ministry has about 130,000 employees and is responsible for overseeing a national police force responsible for maintaining law and order; investigating common criminal cases; conducting preliminary examinations; and managing correctional facilities (excluding political prison camps). The police force also conducts background inves-

tigations, the census, and civil registrations; manages government classified documents; protects government and party officials; and patrols government buildings and some government and party construction activities.

Vice ministers direct the affairs of the ministry's 12 bureaus. These are the Security Bureau for law enforcement; the Investigation Bureau for criminal investigation; and the Public Safety Bureau for fire protection, traffic control, public health, and customs. The Registration Bureau issues and maintains citizen identification cards and public records on births, deaths, marriages, residence registration, and passports. The Penal Affairs Bureau is in charge of prisons. The Civil Defense Bureau oversees preparedness for air raids and nuclear, biological, or chemical attacks. The Railroad Security Bureau is responsible for railroad security. There are several engineer bureaus, which are responsible for design and construction: the Sixth Engineer Bureau for subway systems and underground facilities, the Twenty-sixth Engineer Bureau for large-scale public projects, and the Twenty-seventh Engineer Bureau for nuclear-related facilities. The Twenty-eighth Engineer Bureau has responsibility for coal mining, and the Twenty-ninth Engineer Bureau for roads, railroads, and bridges.

Below the ministry level, there are public security offices for each province, special city, municipality, and county. Although dependent on population density, a typical municipality or county with a population of about 120,000 people has a public security office that is staffed with about 350 functionaries, organized into directorates and sections. A public security office of this level generally includes directorates for politics, security, and resident registration. Representative sections are responsible for accounting, communications, firefighting, inspections, investigations, law enforcement, ordnance, and preliminary examinations.

Interior regions of the country have public security suboffices dispersed among a grouping of between two and three villages; however, border and coastal regions maintain suboffices in each village. Typical suboffices have a head of station and a number of security and resident registration officers. Border and coastal suboffices also have security officers from the armed forces' Border Security Command.

State Security Department

In 1973 political security responsibilities were transferred from the Ministry of People's Security to the State Security Department, a subordinate agency of the National Defense Commission that employs more than 30,000 elite agents who ultimately are responsible to Kim Jong Il in his role as director of the State Security Department. Head-

quartered in P'yŏngyang, the State Security Department carries out a wide range of counterintelligence and internal security functions that normally are associated with secret police, such as the former Soviet KGB. The department has several charges. One is searching for anti-state criminals, a general category that includes those accused of anti-government and dissident activities, economic crimes, and slander of the political leadership. Another charge is conducting foreign and domestic intelligence and counterintelligence operations. Furthermore, the department operates political prison camps and maintains surveillance of overseas North Korean embassy personnel and trade and joint-venture employees.

The State Security Department is organized into 17 bureaus, with functions including communications interception, data analysis, and intelligence. There are bureaus for research, surveillance, preliminary examinations, investigations, interrogations, and political prison camps. The State Security Department's responsibility also includes inter-Korean dialogue and entry and exit management. Moreover, the department covers military industrial security, operational security, and protection. There are bureaus for equipment, finance, supply, and logistics.

Among North Korea's many societal control systems are the political prison camps (euphemistically referred to by the state as *kwallisodŭl* or management centers) that are controlled and operated by the Political Prison Camps Bureau. According to South Korea's National Intelligence Service and the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, the bureau operates six widely dispersed political prison camps that confine a total of between 150,000 and 200,000 inmates, which may include an individual's family members up to three generations as well as the accused. Some of the political prisons are subdivided into two sections: a maximum control zone for lifetime detentions and a reeducation zone for limited-term detentions. Often operating extrajudicially, the State Security Department apprehends, interrogates, and imprisons the accused (and family members) without the advantage of legal counsel or due process.

The Surveillance Bureau operates a pervasive network of agents and informants from national to village levels. Using a pyramid organizational structure, the State Security Department surveillance agents permeate organizations and communities as each agent surreptitiously employs some 50 quasi-agents who, in turn, each retain about 20 base-level informants. This surveillance process has spawned a national culture of deceit and distrust that intentionally pits one against another for the purpose of subduing the politically ambitious and the general population alike.

KPA troops celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of victory in the Korean War. Courtesy Chosŏn *(P'yŏngyang), July 2003, 16*

Guard Command

Subordinate to the National Defense Commission, the Guard Command is an independent corps-size organization equipped with artillery, aircraft, tanks, and engineers. Loosely analogous to the U.S. Secret Service, it has primary responsibility for the protection of Kim Jong Il and other senior-level officials. In September 2003, Marshal Yi Ŭl-sŏl, owing to declining health, retired as commander of this elite organization of between 100,000 and 120,000 special agents; the name of his replacement had not been made public in 2007.

Border Security Command and Coastal Security Bureau

Collectively responsible for restricting unauthorized cross-border (land and sea) entries and exits, in the early 1990s the bureaus responsible for border security and coastal security were transferred from the State Security Department to the Ministry of People's Armed Forces. Sometime thereafter, the Border Security Bureau was enlarged to corps level and renamed the Border Security Command. Previously headquartered in Chagang Province, the Border Security Command was relocated to P'yŏngyang in 2002.

Deployed along the northern borders with China and Russia, the Border Security Command is organized as four infantry-type units.

The Tenth Border Security Division (which may be a brigade) is based in North P'yŏngan Province. The Thirty-seventh Border Security Brigade is in Chagang Province, the Forty-fourth Border Security Brigade in Yanggang Province, and the Thirty-second Border Security Brigade in North Hamgyŏng Province. These brigades are deployed west to east from the Yellow Sea to the Sea of Japan (or, as Koreans prefer, the West Sea and East Sea, respectively). Responsible for staffing checkpoints, guarding border crossing points, and conducting patrols, these border security units are estimated to have as many as 40,000 assigned personnel. The command also employs an operational-level reserve force that is organized around an enlarged mechanized brigade and tank brigade, which has a combined force structure of about 20,000 personnel.

The Coastal Security Bureau apparently was disaggregated and its coastal security brigades reassigned to various infantry corps. Collectively, the coastal security forces are equipped with about 150 patrol craft and organized into six coastal border brigades, which are deployed with three brigades on each coast. Deployed on the west coast from north to south are the Eleventh Coastal Security Brigade (North P'yŏngan Province), the Thirteenth Coastal Security Brigade (South P'yŏngan Province), and the Fifteenth Coastal Security Brigade (South Hwanghae Province). On the east coast from south to north are the Twenty-second Coastal Security Brigade (Kangwŏn Province), Seventeenth Coastal Security Brigade (South Hamgyŏng Province), and Nineteenth Coastal Security Brigade (North Hamgyŏng Province). The Coastal Security Bureau is responsible for patrolling the coastlines to prevent illegal entries and exits, maintaining harbor and port security, and policing and protecting the nation's coastal waterways and fishing areas.

National Security Prospects

North Korea's national security is threatened predominantly by issues of internal instability resulting from environmental disasters, famine, poor governance, failed economic policies, and social oppression. The failure or inability of the regime to initiate adequate environmental, political, economic, and social reforms exacerbates an already precarious milieu that perpetuates the continued suffering of North Korea's populace and burdens the international community.

Despite such national security challenges, the regime seems to possess the ability to control internal order and maintains adequate means of self-defense. The massive network of citizen surveillance suppresses overt deviation from acceptable behavior, although there are growing signs that ordinary North Koreans are not putting much

effort or commitment into their work. Additionally, beyond retaining an adequate self-defense capability, North Korea's massive armed forces present a credible conventional threat, and its growing strategic weapons arsenal frequently has been used as a tool to influence international politics.

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For a survey of North Korea, see Yonhap News Agency's *North Korea Handbook*. The origins of North Korea's armed forces and current military tactics are presented in James M. Minnich's *The North Korean People's Army: Origins and Current Tactics*. The organization of North Korea's armed forces is covered in Joseph S. Bermudez Jr.'s *Shield of the Great Leader: The Armed Forces of North Korea*. North Korea's modern-day origins are reviewed in Dae-Sook Suh's *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* and in Charles K. Armstrong's *The North Korean Revolution: 1945–1950*. For information on North Korea's judicial system, Kim Soo-Am's *The North Korean Penal Code, Criminal Procedures, and their Actual Application* is useful. For information on North Korea's nuclear-weapons program, the best sources are James Clay Moltz and Alexandre Y. Mansourov's *The North Korea Nuclear Program. Security, Strategy, and New Perspectives from Russia* and James M. Minnich's *The Denuclearization of North Korea: The Agreed Framework and Alternative Options Analyzed*.

The Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense's annual *Defense White Paper* (published in both Korean and English) is particularly noteworthy. *Asian Survey*, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Korea and World Affairs*, and *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* are generally useful and relatively free of bias. South Korean investigative journalism, particularly monthlies such as *Wŏlgan Chosŏn* (Monthly Chosun), produces valuable insights of defectors and travelers to North Korea.

The North Korean media monitoring service of the U.S. Open Source Center (formerly the Foreign Broadcast Information Service) is an excellent source of English-language translations and other materials on many North Korean issues. The service is available from the U.S. National Technical Information Service and accessed through Dialog's *World News Connection* (http://wnc.dialog.com/). (For complete citations and further information, see Bibliography.)

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Glossary

Agreed Framework—Signed in Geneva, Switzerland, between the United States and North Korea on October 21, 1994, following talks held between September 23 and October 21, 1994, during which the two sides negotiated an overall resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula. Both sides agreed to four points: to cooperate to replace North Korea's graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities with light-water nuclear-reactor power plants; to move toward full normalization of political and economic relations; to work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula; and to work together to strengthen the international nuclear nonproliferation regime.

cadre(s), or *kanbu*—Term for responsible party, government, and economic functionaries; also used for key officials in the educational, cultural, and scientific fields.

Choch'ongryŏn—Abbreviation for Chae Ilbon Chosŏnin Ch'ongyonhaphoe, literally General Association of Korean Residents in Japan. Members of this Japan-based association tend to be supportive of North Korea's foreign policy and have kinship and financial ties to North Korea. Known as Zainichi Chōsenjin Sōrengokai, or Chōsen Sōren, in Japanese.

Ch'ŏllima, or Ch'ŏllima Work Team Movement—Intensive mass campaign to increase economic production inaugurated in 1958; began as Ch'ŏllima Movement (Ch'ŏllima Undong), named after a legendary flying horse said to have galloped 1,000 *li* in a single day; a symbolic term for great speed. Farm and factory workers were exhorted to excel in the manner of Ch'ŏllima riders, and exemplary individuals and work teams were awarded special Ch'ŏllima titles. The labor force was organized into work teams and brigades and competed at increasing production. Superseded in the early 1960s by the Ch'ŏngsan-ni Method (*q.v.*) and the Taean Work System (*q.v.*), and then in 1973 by the Three Revolutions Team Movement (*q.v.*).

Ch'ŏndogyo—Teachings of the Heavenly Way. This indigenous monotheistic religion was founded in the nineteenth century as a counter to Western influence and Christianity. Its Christian-

influenced dogma stresses the equality and unity of man with the universe. Formerly Tonghak (Eastern Learning) Movement (*q.v.*).

Ch'ŏngsan-ni Method—A personalized, "on-the -spot" management method or spirit reputedly developed by Kim Il Sung in February 1960 during a visit to the Ch'ŏngsan-ni Cooperative Farm in South P'yŏngan Province. In addition to important material incentives, the method had three main components: party and government functionaries must eschew their bureaucratic tendency of only issuing orders and directives; they must mingle with farmers and uncover and solve their problems through comradely guidance; and they should give solid technological guidance to spur efficient and productive achievement. The method was largely abandoned in the early twenty-first century.

chuch'e, or *juch'e*—Political ideology promulgated by Kim Il Sung. The application of Marxism–Leninism to the North Korean experience based on autonomy and self-reliance popularized since 1955 as an official guideline for independence in politics, economics, national defense, and foreign policy.

Comintern—Short form for Communist International or the Third International, which was founded in Moscow in 1919 to coordinate the world communist movement. Officially disbanded in 1943, the Comintern was revived as the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) from 1947 to 1956.

Demarcation Line—Established at the thirty-eighth parallel under the Korean War armistice agreement of 1953; marks the actual cease-fire line between North Korea and South Korea.

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)—The 4,000-meter-wide buffer zone that runs east and west across the waist of the Korean Peninsula for 238 kilometers over land and three kilometers over the sea, dividing it into North Korea and South Korea. The DMZ was created by the armistice in 1953.

exclusionism—Chosŏn Dynasty (1392–1910) foreign policy of isolation adopted after the Japanese invasions in the 1590s.

fiscal year—January 1 through December 31.

gross domestic product (GDP)—A value measure of the flow of domestic goods and services produced by an economy over a period of time, such as a year. Only output values of goods for final consumption and intermediate production are assumed to be included in the final prices. GDP is sometimes aggregated and shown at market prices, meaning that indirect taxes and subsidies

are included; when these indirect taxes and subsidies have been eliminated, the result is GDP at factor cost. The word *gross* indicates that deductions for depreciation of physical assets have not been made. Income arising from investments and possessions owned abroad is not included, only domestic production—hence the use of the word *domestic* to distinguish GDP from gross national product (*q.v.*).

gross national product (GNP)—The gross domestic product (*q.v.*) plus net income or loss stemming from transactions with foreign countries, including income received from abroad by residents and subtracting payments remitted abroad to nonresidents. GNP is the broadest measurement of the output of goods and services by an economy. It can be calculated at market prices, which include indirect taxes and subsidies. Because indirect taxes and subsidies are only transfer payments, GNP often is calculated at factor cost by removing indirect taxes and subsidies.

hangul—The Korean phonetic alphabet developed in fifteenth-century Chosŏn Korea by scholars in the court of King Sejong (r. 1418–50). This alphabet is used in both North Korea and South Korea; in North Korea, it is called *chosŏn'gul* and is used exclusively, whereas in South Korea a mixture of the alphabet and Chinese characters is used.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—Specialized agency of the United Nations established in 1956, which became effective in 1957, to assist member nations with the development and application of atomic energy for peaceful uses and to foster and monitor a universal standard of nuclear safeguards. Through on-site inspections and monitoring, the IAEA ensures that fissile and related nuclear material, equipment, information, and services are not used to produce nuclear weapons as provided for in bilateral nuclear safeguard agreements between the IAEA and individual member nations of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), formally the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In 2007 there were 144 members of the IAEA, not including North Korea.

Kapsan—Name of a political faction that takes its name from a town in Yanggang Province in the Changbai mountain range on the border of Korea and Northeast China (then called Manchuria), where Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army conducted some of its militant activities against the Japanese in the 1930s. Having

joined up with the Manchurian-based Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, surviving partisans from this group fled to the Soviet maritime provinces in 1941. In 1945 this group of Soviet exiles, Kim Il Sung loyalists—the Kapsan faction or Kapsanists—returned to North Korea, where many eventually were elevated to prominence in the national political-military hierarchy.

Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League—A branch of the Korean Workers' Party. It was originally known as Korea Democratic Youth from 1946 to 1953. At the end of the Korean War (1950–53), it was renamed the Socialist Working Youth League, sometimes given as the Socialist Labor Youth League. In 1994, after the death of Kim Il Sung, the group was given its current name.

national solipsism—Term indicating North Korea's isolationism and its sense that it is the center of the world's attentions.

Nordpolitik, or *pukbang chŏngch'aek*—The name given to the foreign policy pursued in various forms by South Korea since 1988 aimed at improving its diplomatic and economic ties with the former communist nations of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)—Established in 1960, the OECD took effect in 1961 to promote economic cooperation and development among member countries (in 2008, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States; one member with special status is the European Union—EU) by assisting member governments in the formulation and coordination of policy; and to encourage member-nation support of developing nations.

sŏngbun—Term for a person's socioeconomic or class background, which determines his or her standing with the state.

suryŏng—Ancient Koguryŏ term for "leader," which Kim Il Sung took in 1949 as his highest, and usual, title.

Taean Work System—An industrial management system that grew out of the Ch'ŏngsan-ni Method (*q.v.*). Introduced in December 1961 by Kim Il Sung while on a visit to the Taean Electrical

Appliance Plant, the Taean Work System applied and refined agricultural management techniques to industry. Higher-level functionaries assisted lower-level functionaries and workers in a spirit of close consultation and comradery. Party committees controlled the general management of factories and enterprises and stressed political or ideological work as well as technological expertise. The system allowed for material incentives to production. The system was abandoned in 2002.

Three Revolutions Team Movement—Inaugurated in February 1973 as "a powerful revolutionary method of guidance" for the Three Revolutions—ideological, technical, and cultural—stressed since the early 1960s. Under this method, the Three Revolutions teams were sent to factories, enterprises, and rural and fishing villages for on-the-spot guidance and problem solving in close consultation with local personnel through the 1970s and 1980s.

Tonghak (Eastern Learning) Movement—Refers to an indigenous religious movement founded by Ch'oe Che-u in the early 1860s that brought together elements of traditional Korean and Christian religious beliefs and was the antecedent of Ch'ŏndogyo (*q.v.*).

wŏn—North Korean unit of currency. The North Korean wŏn is divided into 100 chon and has several exchange rates—some for official transactions and others for commercial rates in foreign trade. As of late October 2008, officially US$1=140 wŏn but 2,500–3,000 wŏn or more to US$1 on black market.

yangban—The traditional Korean term for the scholar-official gentry (literally, the two orders or classes) who virtually monopolized all official civil and military positions in the bureaucracy of the late Koryŏ Dynasty (918–1392) and the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392–1910) by competing in a system of civil and military service examinations.

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GPO U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 2008—347-424