

2012

Understanding North Korea



**Ministry of Unification
Institute for Unification Education**

The Institute for Unification Education, which constitutes the Ministry of Unification of the Republic of Korea, has published annual editions of *Understanding North Korea* since 1972, as an endeavor to promote greater understanding of North Korea for South Korean readers.

Understanding North Korea depicts the reality faced by the Northern regime in areas of politics, diplomacy, military, economy, society, culture, and many more. The May 2012 publication has been translated into English, with the aim to help the international community better understand the northern half of the Korean peninsula. English translations of the referred editions will be published on an biennial basis.

We hope that this book enables readers around the world to better grasp the reality of North Korea.

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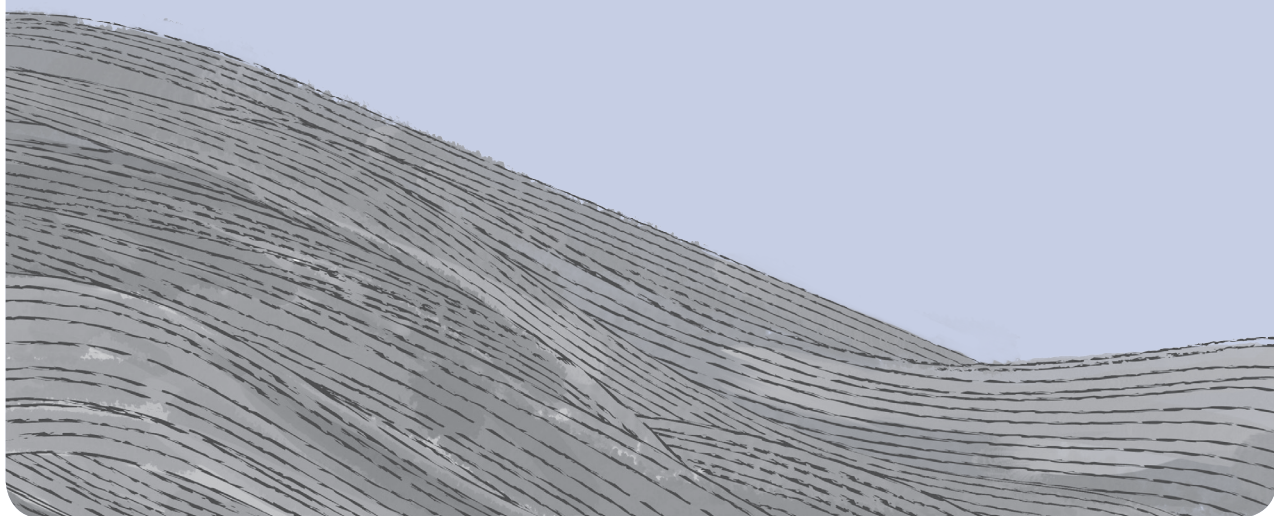
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1

How should we view North Korea?

Section 1. Nature of the Northern Regime

Section 2. North Korea's Dilemma



Key Point

01

North Korea, a totalitarian dictatorship, is governed by the sole leadership of the *suryŏng* or 'leader,' who stands above the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and the state. The regime has adopted a centrally planned economy, which entails the advocacy of self-reliance and the collective monopoly of all means of production.

02

With the onset of the new millennium, North Korea initiated a set of measures, including the 'July 1 Economic Management Improvement Measures' of 2002, which were aimed at resuscitating the faltering economy by introducing some elements of a free market. In the face of unwanted side effects, however, the authorities decided to reinforce their rule over the populace by cracking down on illicit markets and conducting a currency redenomination.

03

As it had to do under Kim Jong-il, North Korea under Kim Jong-un must engage in some degree of reform and opening to improve its economy and ensure regime survival. Such a path, however, also brings with it the risk of regime collapse. The regime thus faces the difficult task of maintaining stability while at the same time reforming and opening up.

Section 1

Nature of the Northern Regime

The regime in Pyongyang exhibits two sets of traits: those common to socialist states and those specific to North Korea. The state-run planned economy and the concept of party supremacy belong to the former category, whereas its system centered on the *suryŏng* (or leader) and the dynastic succession of power from Kim Il-sung to his son Kim Jong-il and grandson Kim Jong-un are unique to North Korea.

For a general understanding of North Korea, one must grasp political, economic and social factors.

First of all, the regime is a one-party dictatorship under the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK). Based on the governing principles of the so-called *juče* (or self-reliance) ideology, the *suryŏng* takes the helm. North Korea was first established as a Marxist-Leninist state, but in November 1970, the 5th Party Congress was held to establish *juče* as the WPK's guiding philosophy. The revised socialist constitution of North Korea issued in December 1972 also declared that it “adopts

juche, a creative application of Marxism-Leninism, as the guideline for state activities.” In October 1980, the 6th Party Congress introduced rules stipulating that “Kim Il-sung’s *juche* ideology is the official guiding philosophy of the WPK.”

Amendments made to the constitution in April 1992 also stated that “every individual shall uphold the revolutionary philosophy of *juche*, which is a man-centered outlook on the world that seeks to achieve independence for the masses.” Further constitutional revisions in April 2009 introduced the *songun* (or military-first) policy.

In North Korea, the concept of the *suryŏng* is the core essence of *juche*, and the WPK is the political institution that rallies around the supreme leader. Given this, North Korea is a totalitarian dictatorship governed by the *suryŏng*’s monolithic leadership. According to Kim Jong-il’s thesis, published in 1982, the theory of a *suryŏng*-centered system is underlined as follows:

“Without the *suryŏng*’s philosophy and leadership, we could hardly think of the WPK as a guiding political institution, and unless we work together with the masses, we won’t be able to achieve the victory of the revolution and the building of a socialist state. When the *suryŏng*, WPK, and popular masses work together with the *suryŏng* at the center, it would become the most stable and powerful agent of revolution, and the greatest impetus for revolution and the establishment of a socialist state. Therefore, the party of the working class must become that of the *suryŏng*, serving as a political institution that realizes his philosophy and leadership, in addition to working with the masses. ... the WPK’s sole ideology is the ideology and leadership of the *suryŏng* ... establishing a single governing ideology is the basic means to build the WPK as a party of the *suryŏng* ... The party of the working class must be whole and complete, ideologically pure, completely colored with the *suryŏng*’s ideology, and must act in unison under his single leadership.”¹

As mentioned above, the *suryŏng* is defined as the center of national

1_Kim Jong-il, ‘On the *Juche* Ideology,’ *Collection of Dear Leader Comrade Kim Jong-il’s Writings*, (Pyongyang: WPK Publishing Co., 1992), pp. 43–45. Yet, in a *Rodong Sinmun* editorial on October 10, 1997, North Korea stated that the WPK is “Kim Jong-il’s party,” instead of “Kim Il-sung’s party” as it had used to be called.

unity and leadership, the WPK's 'supreme leader,' as well as the 'supreme brain of the socio-political body,' who plays a pivotal role in shaping the destiny of the masses. North Korea argues that a "socio-political body is an organism that achieves everlasting life when the masses, in order to serve as an independent main force of the revolution, unite as one ideology and institution, under the leadership of the WPK with the *suryŏng* at its center." Society in North Korea perceives the *suryŏng* as the 'manifestation of organized will' and the 'supreme leader' of the WPK, and so grants him the absolute role that "structures and guides in unity all activities of the socio-political body."

In North Korea, the title *suryŏng* was exclusively reserved for Kim Il-sung. After his death in 1994 and subsequent to the launch of the Kim Jong-il regime in 1998, North Koreans have referred to Kim Il-sung as the 'eternal *suryŏng*.' He holds this title to this day, even after the death of his son Kim Jong-il and power transfer to grandson Kim Jong-un in 2011. When Kim Il-sung passed away, Kim Jong-il invoked his father's last wishes in establishing his own authority as the supreme leader. Likewise, by upholding the last instructions of Kim Jong-il, work is underway to establish the supreme leadership of Kim Jong-un by emphasizing the need for unfaltering loyalty over generations.

Secondly, North Korea has for decades practiced the socialist system of public ownership, whereby means of production are owned by the state and cooperative organizations. It has also pursued a planned economy in which the state controls the distribution of resources. The regime has defined the concept of socialist ownership as a system in which "the product and the means of production, which are the basis for socialist production relations, are owned collectively by the society and state."² In other words, the core essence of socialist ownership has been based on the ownership of the means of production, which are, in principle, to be possessed by the state or cooperative bodies.

Nonetheless, North Korea has long recognized private ownership

² *Encyclopedia* (Vol. 3), (Pyongyang: Science Encyclopedia Publishing Co., 1983), p.530

in a restricted sense.³ This is referred to as 'private ownership within socialism,' for private ownership is founded on the principle of social ownership of the means of production. This is applied to such things as workers' wages (living expenses), rations (based on quality and quantity of labor), and purchased consumer goods. It also includes earned income and savings, household items, and daily necessities. Personal possessions can be freely disposed by owners, and passed on to their heirs. Various procurement agencies and general markets serve as institutional mechanisms enabling individuals to dispose of such personal belongings.

North Korea has traditionally been a highly centralized economy driven by a single line of command, also known as a centralized command economy. In accordance, the central authority has dominated the flow of information and determined the direction of planning and other economic activities. Subordinate authorities have been subject to absolute command.

To elaborate, North Korea's centralized command economy has been a system in which economic plans are devised by the State Planning Committee (SPC). These plans have been implemented and supervised according to uniform standards throughout individual plants and enterprises at provincial, municipal and county levels. The SPC has been responsible for planning and enforcing WPK policies in every sector of the national economy. The principles of 'unitary and specific plans' began to be emphasized in 1964. Accordingly, the Regional Planning Commission and planning divisions of plants and enterprises were placed under the direct control of the SPC, thus reinforcing the centralized planning system.

No state planning agencies or supervisory/control agencies in North Korea were allowed to arbitrarily alter state plans or deviate even slightly from activities of the planned economy. WPK instructions were to be strictly followed on every project, ranging from planning to

³ *Economic Dictionary* (Vol. 2), (Pyongyang: Science Encyclopedia Publishing Co., 1970), p.118

implementation. The economic crisis and food shortage of the 1990s, however, caused the collapse of the North's planned economy, leaving the population with no other choice but to rely on self-sustained markets (i.e. *jangmadang* and black markets) for their survival.

Against this backdrop, North Korea introduced the July 1 Economic Management Improvement Measures in 2002 while moving to cut state rations, which had been a key component of its planned economy. From this point on, people in North Korea were given instructions to rely on markets and shops to purchase their daily necessities; this introduced some elements of a market system into the centrally planned economy. In March 2003, more than 300 general markets opened in cities and counties nationwide. In 2004, the *pojeondamdangje* or **Team-based Management System** was introduced in some local districts, permitting families to cultivate their own lots.

The Team-based Management System was a pilot program in North Korea introduced in 2004. The system reduced the size of minimum working units in collective farms from 7-8 people to 3-4 people, thus enabling households to cultivate their own lots of farmland. However, the system was abolished in 2006 as the regime reinforced its centrally planned economy.

In October 2005, subsequent to the introduction of a food monopoly system, North Korea made repeated efforts to reverse the spread of market elements, including crackdowns on private farming and market activities, the announcement that general markets would be closed, and a currency reform. This disposition became more evident after 2007. Such measures reinforced the regressive state of the centrally planned economy.

Another drastic measure aimed at containing the expansion of market activities was North Korea's currency reform of November 2009. In the following months, the authorities continued trying to reassert market control and reinforce the planned economy, but these efforts backfired, resulting in greater poverty and protests. Starting in February 2010, the regime once again eased restrictions, resulting in a revival of markets, but immediately after Kim Jong-il's funeral in December 2011, it reverted to heightening controls on the use of

foreign currency.

Third, the social nature of North Korea is set in the collectivist principle of a totalitarian society in which the ‘grand socialist family’ regards the *suryŏng* as the father.

The rights and responsibilities of North Koreans are based on the “one for all, all for one” principle of communal life. An ideal person in North Korea is someone who champions communal values, aligns his individual fate with that of the group and puts collective goals before personal gain.

In North Korea, two concepts of family are recognized. The first is of the ordinary kind comprised of parents and siblings, and the second is the so-called ‘grand socialist family’ with the *suryŏng* at the head. Members of the latter family learn to trust, love, respect, and serve their father figure, the *suryŏng*, as they would their parents. As Confucian norms and traditions are relatively strong in North Korean society to this day, the concept of this grand socialist family is the most definite link uniting the WPK and the masses with the supreme leader.

In order to instill such values into people’s minds, the regime carries out political and ideological education, including political training and routine self-criticism sessions. The populace, however, doesn’t necessarily derive its values from such norms; it is only on the surface that society in North Korea regards itself as a grand family made up of the *suryŏng*, WPK and masses. In reality, strong discrimination in terms of social treatment, public ration, income, etc, exists between Party members and non-members, and between senior officials and rank-and-file members.

The socialist convictions that had once helped sustain North Korea’s society are gradually waning. The economic crisis and starvation of the 1990s have especially affected the North’s caste system, which used to

confer privilege based on birth and social class. Now there are growing signs that the social system revolves more around the exchange of money and information. Moreover, authorities increasingly collude with entrepreneurs for personal gain, so that bribery has become endemic.

Section 2

North Korea's Dilemma

So far, the specifics that pertain to North Korea have been reviewed. These particular aspects have made it the world's most exclusive and rigid regime since the mid-20th century, and induced utter crisis for the nation and its dire economy. North Korea has been almost completely isolated since the collapse and transformation of socialist states in the late 1980s. Since the 1990s, it has suffered from a widespread food shortage due to chronic economic crisis.

North Korea has continued to face comparable external and internal circumstances in the new century, which have heightened pressure for change and reform. In particular, while the regime deals with the isolation resulting from the collapse and dissolution of the Soviet Union and East Bloc, it must also watch anxiously as other socialist countries such as China and Vietnam align with the international order by reforming and opening their respective systems.

Ironically, North Korea remains steadfastly opposed to any reform or

opening despite its chronic crisis. Rather, the regime seeks to overcome economic hurdles and assure its survival by consolidating the existing system under the banner of the ‘strong and prosperous nation’ campaign. In this manner North Korea is struggling to emerge from international isolation and regain its economic stride, but it is well aware of how desperate conditions are, and knows that failure could mean losing everything.

In 2000, Kim Jong-il put forward a so-called ‘New Way of Thinking,’ which aimed to “explore new perspectives and angles for every problem.” During a visit to Shanghai, he exclaimed that China’s transformation constituted “cataclysmic change.” Such remarks indirectly reflect a sense of the crisis facing North Korea, but it would be hard to conclude from them that reform and opening are imminent or planned. In other words, although North Korea may come to the realization that it cannot overcome multiple crises of economy, food shortage, scarcity of energy and foreign exchanges by means of its socialist planned economy and self-reliance policies alone, this does not necessarily mean that the regime will open up or pursue reform. The same may apply to the Kim Jong-un regime. In the New Year’s joint editorial published in 2012, it clearly displayed its determination to “follow the path of independence, military-first policy and socialism all the way.”

North Korea may realize that in order to maintain its regime and achieve economic recovery, it must receive assistance from the Republic of Korea and western countries. It may also realize that to this end, it has no choice but to comply with the changes underway in the surrounding environment. So far, however, North Korea has kept its closed and rigid system intact, thus evincing a contradictory stance towards overcoming these challenges.

Therefore, the quickest way to understand North Korea is to recognize the fundamental dilemma it faces. Although the regime is

faced with the necessity of conducting fundamental changes in its socialist system in order to reverse the deterioration of the economy and assure regime survival, the implementation of such a reform could bring about results that endanger the survival of the regime itself.

It can be inferred that despite the wide-spread crisis, North Korea has not attempted to introduce policies of active reform or opening. Instead, it has remained complacent, sticking to the strategies that have hitherto insulated it from changes in external environment. In dealing with external and internal pressure for change, North Korea can be seen to have muddled through by simply shifting its policy priorities, all the while sticking to the basic framework of its socialist system. North Korea's dire situation, however, shows that there are limitations in the strategy of maintaining the status quo.

To secure assistance from outside, the regime in Pyongyang has occasionally applied pressure to neighboring states, and at other times offered signs of reconciliation. With this two-pronged strategy, the North has so far been able to obtain a certain amount of economic assistance. However, it would be impossible for it to overcome the ongoing crisis in such a manner, and as time passes, the situation can only get worse.

Why, then, is North Korea hesitant to take the path towards policies of active reform and opening?

First, the regime rejects any alternative measure or policy that may weaken its hold on power or increase even slightly the risk of collapse. It also believes that reinforcing the existing system may be sufficient to resolve pending problems.

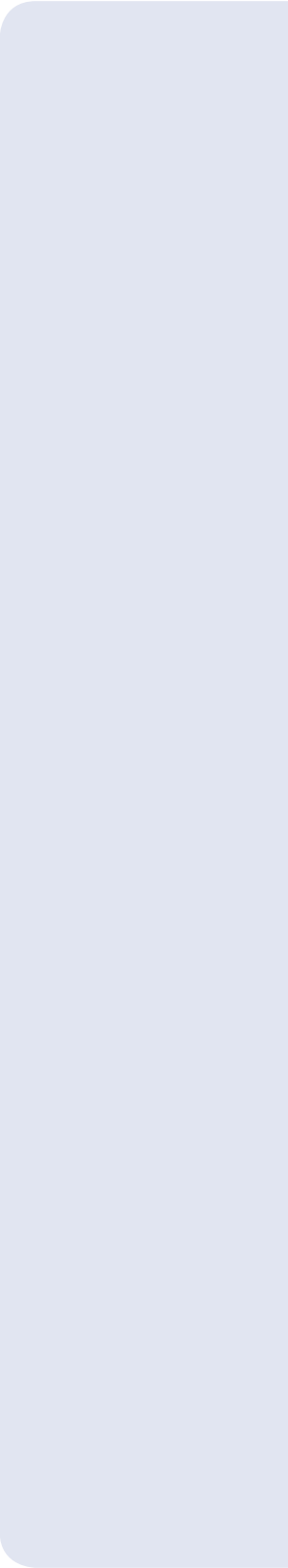
Second, the North greatly fears the uncertainty and instability that may arise from a policy of reform and opening, even if external and internal environments were to allow easy implementation of such measures. The regime has taken every opportunity to express its

negative stance toward a new direction. Kim Jong-il, for example, is known to have stated: “Do not expect any changes”; “We must never toy with the idea of reform”; “As long as I live, no reform and open-door policy shall be allowed.”

Kim Jong-un, who abruptly succeeded to the throne after Kim Jong-il’s sudden death, must place top priority on securing a stable transition of power and sustaining the regime. This, therefore, could leave him with no choice but to shy away from reform and opening policies that might result in the regime’s collapse.

Third, North Korea displays a strong conviction that it can overcome the current crisis by playing the nuclear card. This puts it in a dilemma. On one hand, the regime appears to have believed that merely by engaging in negotiations over its nuclear weapons, it could receive food and fuel aid from the outside world, thus enabling it to achieve national objectives without having to reform or open up. Nuclear tests conducted in October 2006 and May 2009, however, moved the United Nations and the international community to pass resolutions calling for practical and effective sanctions against North Korea. By reaping sanctions instead of aid, the regime has seen the economic situation worsen.

As discussed above, a fundamental solution to overcoming North Korea’s serious economic challenges lies in the introduction of reform policies like those implemented by other socialist states in the post-Cold War era. China’s Xinhua News Agency reported that during the China-North Korea summit in August 2010, President Hu Jintao emphasized that policies of reform and opening accord with the stream of the times, and thus constitute the path a country must take if it is to develop. Nonetheless, North Korea has heightened its control over society due to its fear that reform policies may lead to the collapse of the regime. This has forced North Korea to choose between regime survival and reform policies. Time will tell which direction the regime



will ultimately choose. In the meantime, it is necessary to observe how this dilemma would affect the regime in the near future, considering that as of 2012, it has declared its resolve to open the door to a strong and prosperous nation, while the power transition to Kim Jong-un is underway.

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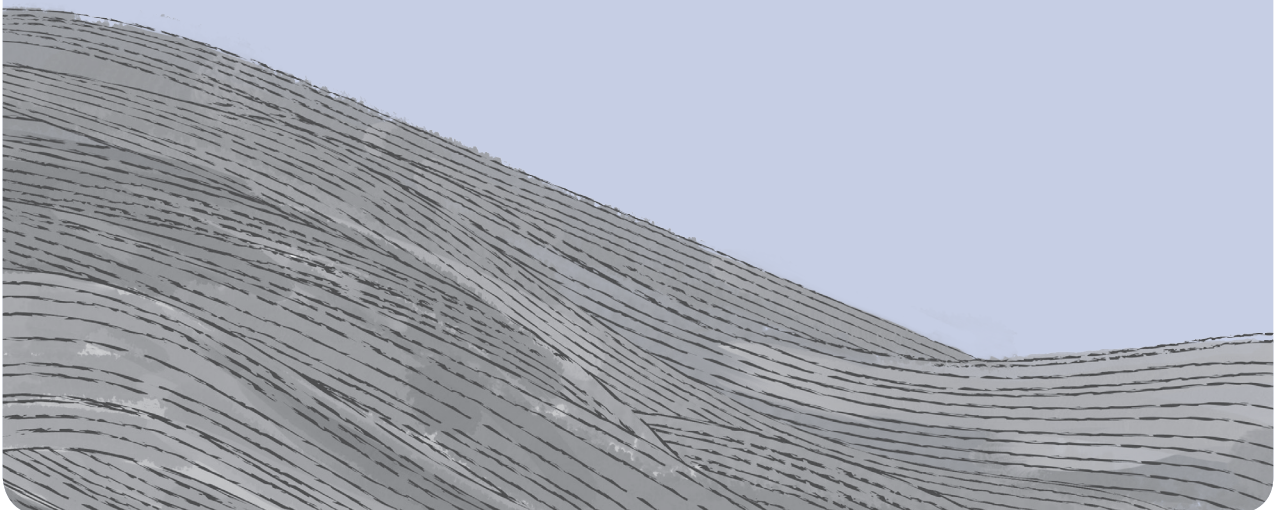
Governing Principles and Political System

Section 1. Establishment of North Korea's Political System

Section 2. *Juche* Ideology as Means of Governance

Section 3. Power Structure and Form of Government

Section 4. Ruling Structure and Hereditary Succession of Power



Key Point

01

Immediately after Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, different political factions vied for power in the northern half of the peninsula. Eventually, Soviet-backed Kim Il-sung and his followers prevailed over other factions to emerge as the dominant political force in North Korea.

02

Juche ideology has long had a significant impact on every aspect of North Korea including politics, economy, society and culture. However, its cohesive force is growing weaker in the face of worsening economic hardships and the increasing importance of the military-first policy. *Juche* ideology has been used as a political tool to reinforce the personality cult and one-man dictatorship attained by monopolizing power and authority.

03

North Korea is governed by a ruling system in which the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and military take the lead in every aspect of society. According to the constitution, the president of the Supreme People's Assembly represents the state, and the premier takes charge of administrative enforcement and management. However, it is known that actual power is vested in Kim Jong-un, who controls the WPK and the National Defense Commission (NDC). A constitutional revision in 2009 stipulates the status of NDC Chairman as 'supreme leader' and 'supreme commander,' and further revisions in 2012 newly created the post of First Chairman within the NDC in order for him to assume all the authority held by the NDC Chairman in the past.

04

Amid the critical economic downturn, the Kim Jong-il regime was able to maintain a relatively stable power base by unleashing a reign of terror. In the meantime, North Korea focused on formalizing the dynastic transfer of power over three generations of the Kim family, firmly establishing Kim Jong-un's succession by the time of Kim Jong-il's death. This power transition was completed in 2012 with Kim Jong-un's election to posts once held by his father: First Secretary of the WPK, Chairman of the Central Military Commission, and First Chairman of the NDC.

Section 1

Establishment of North Korea's Political System

When Korea was liberated in 1945, various political factions in the Northern region took the initiative in establishing a new state, with Pyongyang at its center. Headed by Cho Man-sik, the South Pyongan Province Chapter of the National Establishment Preparatory Committee (NEPC) was the first of its kind, and other similar provincial and city chapters or self-governing committees followed. They were, however, under the control and supervision of the Soviet Union, which as part of the victorious alliance had stationed troops in the northern half of the Korean peninsula. In compliance with Stalin's orders to establish an independent government in the Northern region (Sept. 20, 1945), the Soviet Union helped create a People's Committee representing the five provinces of the Northern region and the North Korean branch office of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), thereby laying groundwork for a central administrative body to govern the Northern half of the peninsula and a party apparatus to render support.

In February 1946, the Soviet Union organized an Interim People's Committee for North Korea, which preceded North Korea's central administrative agency, entrusting it with the role of a *de facto* government. In February 1947, the North Korean People's Assembly was formed as a legislative organ, whereupon it executed various preparations for regime establishment, including measures to create the North Korean People's Committee, draft the constitution, establish the Korean People's Army, etc. In August 1948, 212 delegates were elected to the first Supreme People's Assembly (SPA). In the same year, the newly elected SPA members adopted North Korea's constitution, and announced the inception of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) with Kim Il-sung as Premier. As described, North Korea had already completed all necessary preparations to establish its communist regime, but the official launch was postponed until after the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK), the better to hold the South accountable for national division.

On November 14, 1947, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution enabling the establishment of a Temporary Commission on Korea to supervise general elections in North and South, thereby paving the way for the creation of a single government on the peninsula. This, however, was rejected by the North as it moved to set up its own regime. Consequently, hopes for a single Korean government integrating North and South were disappointed.

Immediately following liberation, Northern Korea had become an arena for intense competition among various political factions. Domestic factions, including right-wing nationalists led by Cho Man-sik and left-wing communists headed by Pak Hon-yong, expanded their influence, while overseas factions, including the pro-Soviet Union clique centered around Alexei Ivanovich Hegay and the pro-China Yunan faction led by Kim Tu-bong and Mu Chong, struggled to take center stage. Kim Il-sung and his so-called anti-Japanese partisan or

guerilla fighters also joined the struggle for dominance. This fierce competition to establish a political regime north of the 38th parallel was eventually won by Kim Il-sung, as his faction, backed by the Soviet Union, defeated all other factions to emerge as a leading force.

In 1950, the North's invasion sparked the Korean War. Three long years of fierce fighting left the entire peninsula in ruins. After the war, factional conflicts broke out within North Korea's political elite over issues of reconstruction and national development strategies. These conflicts led to the so-called **August Factional Strife** in 1956, through which Kim Il-sung was able to purge his political rivals and achieve the strategies he supported for socialist national development, which placed top priority on the development of heavy industries. Throughout the Sino-Soviet split that followed Khrushchev's de-Stalinization of the USSR, Kim Il-sung advocated building an independent socialist nation, and took this time to purge both pro-Soviet and pro-China factions on charges of relying on external forces. Having vanquished all his rivals, Kim Il-sung was able to consolidate power, and his emphasis on independence paved the road to establishing the *juche* ideology.

August Factional Strife

refers to an incident in North Korea, where a group of political leaders led by Yun Gong-hum, a member of the Yunan faction, conspired to expel Kim Il-sung from the WPK on the occasion of a central committee meeting, but were arrested when their plot was discovered. Taking advantage of this incident, Kim Il-sung conducted a massive purge of pro-China and pro-Soviet factions, thereby gaining complete control of the WPK to consolidate his rule.

From the mid to late 1950s, North Korea underwent a period where post-war reconstructions of the devastated economy were conducted, and foundations were laid to ensure the North's transition into a socialist economic system. The Korean War had a far-reaching impact on North Korea, and the need to streamline economic and social conditions provided a favorable environment in which to develop a socialist system. Collectivization was identified as the basis for such a system, and thus implemented in areas of agriculture, commerce and industry. By the end of the 1950s, North Korea had nationalized all means of production.

In the meantime, the North adopted a policy of mass mobilization as a way to overcome labor shortages and support post-war reconstruction. Mass mobilization tries to encourage voluntary participation of the general public with the rationale that they are masters of socialism. This not only reflects socialist values, which condemn selfish motivations for labor, but also manifests the dismal reality of North Korea's post-war economy, which had no other way to motivate the public to engage in this kind of labor. Typical examples of mass mobilization campaigns during this period include the *Chollima* Movement, which started in 1956, and the *Chongsanri* Spirit and *Chongsanri* Method, both proclaimed in 1960.

The 1960s in North Korea was a period when foundations for heavy and chemical industries were built. During this time, Kim Il-sung strengthened his one-man control through a series of political purges and reinforced the *juche* ideology to put his god-like absolute power above all challenges. Though this system of excessive one-man rule brought stability to North Korea, it also resulted in the regime's isolation and rigidity, two key factors behind North Korea's inability to cope with the changing times and environment. Meanwhile, the regime enacted provisions in the socialist constitution in December 1972 to introduce a new power structure placing the President at the center of authority.

As prescribed in the socialist constitution of 1972, distinctive features of this power structure included political reinforcements of Kim Il-sung's sole leadership and the introduction of a centralized planned economy. The socialist dictatorship also enhanced its exhaustive surveillance and control over its subjects.

From the time Kim Jong-il was crowned as successor during the 8th plenary meeting of the 5th WPK Central Committee convened on February 11-13, 1974, Kim Il-sung's transfer of power to him took twenty years to complete. Upon Kim Il-sung's death in 1994, Kim

Jong-il formally took over, ending his father's half-century-long reign. In 2010, propaganda began making clear that a second hereditary succession was in the offing. With Kim Jong-il's death on December 17, 2011 and the ensuing proclamation of Kim Jong-un's rule, North Korea's ruling dynasty entered a new era.

Section 2

Juche Ideology as Means of Governance

1. Establishment and Evolution of *Juche* Ideology

In North Korea, the *juche* ideology pervades politics, economy, society, culture, values and daily life. The WPK rules and North Korea's constitution have long defined *juche* ideology as the sole doctrine and guideline for the country. Constitutional revisions in 2009 prescribe that along with the military-first policy, North Korea “shall uphold the *juche* ideology as its guideline for activities.” The preamble of the 2010 WPK rules states that “the Workers Party of Korea (WPK) is a revolutionary party which upholds the revolutionary philosophy and *juche* ideology of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung as its sole guiding doctrine.”

Lively debates on *juche* began in the mid-1950s and attempts followed suit to make theoretical foundations for this ideology. ‘Independence in ideology’ was announced in 1955, ‘independence in economy’ in 1956, ‘independence in politics (internal affairs)’ in 1957, ‘independence in

national defense' in 1962, and 'independence in diplomacy' in 1966. By 1967, the 5th WPK convention adopted *juche* as its official ideology in 1970, enabling it to stand shoulder to shoulder with Marxism-Leninism. Ten years later, at the 6th WPK convention in 1980, *juche* ideology superseded Marxism-Leninism as an independent governing principle.

Research into the formation of *juche* reveals that in its early days, the ideology strongly reflected a nationalistic response to the infiltration of imperialistic or cultural elements. The focus was on enhancing the people's awareness of the need to secure independence from outside forces. As Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign encouraged revisionists in China and the Soviet Union to denounce one-man dictatorship, Kim Il-sung and his followers sought to defend their dictatorial system by blocking such criticism from entering North Korea. During this time, Moscow and Beijing were locked in a fierce ideological debate between dogmatism and revisionism. *juche* ideology was thus also a political manifestation of North Korea's diplomatic strategy to assure its independent survival by maintaining a neutral stance between the two communist giants.

Table 2-1 Development of *Juche* Ideology

Development	Occasions	Background
Self-reliance in ideology	WPK conference for agitprop agents (December 28, 1955)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death of Stalin • Purge of the South Korean faction in the WPK
Independence in economy	Plenary meeting of the WPK Central Committee (December 11, 1956)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in foreign aid (A setback in 5-year economic plan) • Rise of anti-Kim Il-sung movement within the WPK
Autonomy in politics	Extended meeting of the WPK Central Committee (December 5, 1957)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of movement against personality cult in the socialist bloc • Overthrowing of pro-China and pro-Soviet factions from the WPK
Self-reliance in national defense	The 5th plenary meeting of the 4th WPK Central Committee (December 10, 1962)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensification of Sino-Soviet conflict • Drive for US-Soviet co-existence • May 16 military coup in South Korea (1961)
Autonomy in foreign affairs	The 2nd WPK Conference (October 5, 1966)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of Sino-Soviet conflict • Growth of non-aligned movement
Establishment of monolithic ideology	The 15th plenary meeting of the 4th WPK Central Committee (May 28, 1967) The 8th plenary meeting of the 5th WPK Central Committee (February 12, 1974)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of one-man rule by Kim Il-sung • Promotion of Kim Il-sung's personality cult
Reinforcement of <i>juche</i> ideology in overall society	The 6th WPK Convention (October 10, 1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of hereditary succession of power from father to son

Source : KINU, *North Korea Overview 2009*, p.31

Since the 1960s, North Korea directed efforts to reinforce a personality cult of Kim Il-sung, attempting to transform *juche* into *Kimilsungism*. The regime presented Kim Il-sung's childhood as an exemplar for self-reliant communists, and introduced justification for this idolization by claiming that the *suryōng* or Kim Il-sung is the entity that enables socio-political life, which is more important than mere physical existence. The so-called '*suryōng* theory' is clearly the centerpiece of the personality cult, as it posits the *suryōng*, the key driver that leads revolutions and nation-building, as the intellectual leader at the head of the masses. The theory reasons that because the masses have limits in overcoming conflicts of interests, they are in need of the *suryōng*'s proper guidance.

Moving into the 1980s, *juche* ideology evolved to emphasize

unflinching loyalty to the hereditary succession of the *suryŏng*, which came about as Kim Jong-il emerged as the official heir to supremacy, and in need of a personality cult of his own. The regime argues that the *juche* legacy could never be achieved overnight, only over generations. This shows that North Korea even changed its critical attitude toward hereditary monarchy in order to justify a dynastic succession of power that has no precedence in socialist systems.

From the late 1980s, the Soviet Union and East European socialist states collapsed one after another. Regarding these events as threats to its regime, North Korea endeavored to emphasize the superiority of ‘North Korean socialism,’ by reinforcing the logic behind *juche* ideology. Henceforth, the North came up with an alternative rationale to protect the regime, which was to reinterpret *juche* as ‘our socialism.’ With this, the regime stepped up efforts to explain how North Korean-style socialism differs from the East European socialism that had fallen apart, thereby hoping to vanquish fears of a regime collapse.

However, North Korea also called for an expansion of pragmatic thinking in the wake of Kim Il-sung’s death in 1994 and the serious economic crises that followed. This has undermined the ideological power of *juche*.

At the onset of the 2000s, the cohesive power of *juche* in North Korean society further weakened as the regime raised the banner of the military-first policy in frontline politics. And after Kim Jong-il’s death and Kim Jong-un’s takeover of power in 2011, the preamble of the WPK was revised in April 2012 to set forth *Kimilsungism* and *Kimjongilism* instead of *juche* ideology as North Korea’s guiding principles.

2. Limitations of *Juche* Ideology

North Korea, through means of education and edification, requires its people to comply with *juche* ideology in their daily lives. The regime asserts that *juche* is what forms the foundation of a revolutionary society, and that applying this ideology in daily life will overcome challenges, which will eventually lay the groundwork for the ultimate victory of ‘North Korean-style socialism.’ Moreover, *juche* is stressed to be “a theory of communist revolution that has fully systemized and perfected the premises of liberation (nation, class and man) and transformation (society, nature and man). As such, North Korea notes that *juche* is a flawless ideology that can be applied in reality.

This acclaimed ideology, however, was affected by North Korea’s dire economic performance since the mid-1990s, and is being mentioned less and less as its practical use diminishes. After Kim Jong-il succeeded his father, North Korea introduced a set of political slogans that resemble codes of conduct to revive the economy and stabilize the system. These include the ‘red flag ideology,’ ‘strong and prosperous nation,’ and ‘military-first policy.’ This implies that *juche*, apart from constituting the regime’s sole guiding principle, has become less practical as a policy guideline, and less important an influence on society.

As this acute economic situation in North Korea drags on, confidence in *juche* has begun to falter. Occasionally, there are occurrences when those excluded from the public distribution rely on the concept of *juche* to justify their new sought ways of securing daily necessities for survival. However, the public slogan of *juche* continues to ring hollow, and therefore distrust and criticism of the ideology are bound to surface.

The most realistic critique of *juche* is that North Korea has abused its socialist ideology as a political tactic to monopolize power and build a personality cult around one man. Amid political, economic, military,

and diplomatic crisis in North Korea, *juče* ideology strayed from its original goal of helping the masses realize that they are main agents of revolution whose thoughts and actions can overcome predicaments. Instead it was manipulated to reinforce one-man dictatorship and idolization. The theory of the *suryōng*, therefore, has caused the masses to fail to attain to the status of true masters that *juče* was meant to represent, and degraded them into a passive entity that relies on and obeys the absolute authority of the *suryōng*.

3. Emergence of the Military-first Policy

While *juče* was the governing principle during the reign of Kim Il-sung, the Kim Jong-il regime moved to add its military-first policy, which, along with *juče* ideology, was prescribed in the revised constitution of 2009 as a guiding principle of the WPK. Subsequent revisions were enacted in 2010, which established the military-first policy as the basic political mode of socialism in North Korea. As “a unique style of politics that applies maximum force to reinforcing the KPA and propels overall undertakings of revolution and construction based on the KPA’s strength (*Rodong Sinmun*, Oct. 9, 1998),” the top priority of the policy is to build military capacity to underpin all national affairs.

The military-first policy was first introduced for internal discussions when the Kim Jong-il regime geared up for full operation following Kim Il-sung’s death. By 1998, it was established as North Korea’s core governing principle, according to which the military assumed the role of leading the revolution and all social progress. It is meant to influence not only politics and the economy but also education, culture, arts and all other areas of North Korean society. Therefore, under the banner of the military-first policy, the armed forces have been mobilized to function as the central institution that defends the socialist regime and leader.

The most direct cause leading to the introduction of the military-first policy was the need to assure regime survival amid the economic turmoil after Kim Il-sung's death, which forced Kim Jong-il to depend on the military, not the WPK, as his power base. North Korea's severe economic conditions brought down the socialist patronage system, under which the WPK used to ensure the basic livelihood of the population in return for public support and regime legitimacy. The military-first policy, therefore, was instigated as an attempt to resuscitate the economy by bringing the resources and capacity of the military into play, as well as an attempt to supplement the weakening WPK's control of North Korean society with military institutions. In other words, the North, faced with the attenuation of WPK functions underlying the internal legitimacy of socialism, strove to overcome the crisis and restore its legitimacy by enhancing the military's status and role.

This expanded role of the military creates a direct link between the military and people's daily activities, resulting in more dependence on military institutions. Nonetheless, the military, which works differently from civilian institutions, has not completely replaced WPK functions, which exercise social control based on the party's wide range of links to society. Despite efforts to promote unity between the military and the people, the military-first policy invites the intervention of the armed forces, a colossal institution existing outside society, between the leader and people.

Another cause for the military-first policy is anxiety resulting from the diplomatic isolation in which North Korea was left after the collapse of the Soviet Union and East European socialist states. The regime also took steps to reinforce its 'self-defensive' military forces amid sharpening confrontations with the new George W. Bush administration in Washington. The enormous military expanded further, underpinning the military-first policy. Moreover, North Korea's

pride and fixation on its military, perhaps the only area in which it retains competitiveness with South Korea, is another reason for the continuation of this policy.

For Kim Jong-il, the military-first policy helped sustain his regime at a time when economic troubles undermined its legitimacy, and diplomatic isolation threatened its very existence. Therefore, this policy can be regarded as the North's last resort to achieve stabilization amid mounting internal and external challenges. This also implies that if the Kim Jong-un regime fails to stabilize due to economic hardship and international isolation, it would not be able to abandon its military-first policy.

In the meantime, North Korea deleted all references to communism when revising its constitution in 2009 and the WPK rules in 2010. The regime stipulated *juche* as the sole guiding principle, and made the military-first policy the official governing ideology of the Kim Jong-il era. It is assumed that such changes were made to justify the totalitarian rule of Kim Jong-il and his successors.

In the same context, the Kim Jong-un regime revised the preamble of North Korea's constitution in April 2012, naming Kim Il-sung as Eternal President and Kim Jong-il as Eternal Chairman of the National Defense Commission. The WPK rules were also revised to replace *juche* with *Kimilsungism* and *Kimjongilism* as guiding principles.

Section 3

Power Structure and Form of Government

A general trait of socialist nations is that state power is centered in the ruling party, enabling a party-dominant system. North Korea is no exception in this regard. The WPK is the source of all power, accorded the highest status and authority to stand above all other institutions and organizations. All state policies are implemented under its guidance and control.

While the WPK oversees all policy decisions, the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) performs legislative functions, the National Defense Commission (NDC) and Cabinet assumes executive functions, and the Supreme Court administers judicial functions; the three organs are thus responsible for the making, enforcement, and interpretation of laws respectively. Despite this three-way division of power, fundamental principles of democratic politics such as separation of power and checks and balances have hardly any meaning in North Korea, a regime characterized by one-party dictatorship. This owes to

the fact that principles of plural democracy, which presumes conflicts among factions that reflect partial interests in society, are hard to square with a totalitarian state in which society is seen as one organic body.

Constitutional revision in 1998, conducted along with the formal launch of Kim Jong-il's regime, abolished the post of President, which had symbolized one-man rule during the Kim Il-sung era. Instead, the revision divided power among three leaders including the NDC Chairman, the President of the SPA Presidium, and the Cabinet's Prime Minister. In theory, this formal separation of powers split state and government representation between the President of the SPA Presidium and Prime Minister of the Cabinet respectively, while the NDC Chairman assumed the management of national defense. Furthermore, revisions to the constitution in 2009 elevated the NDC Chairman's status with two new clauses, one stating, "The NDC Chairman is the supreme leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" and the other, "[He] supervises all state affairs." Subsequent to Kim Jong-il's death, the post of NDC Chairman was left vacant. The constitution was again revised in 2012 to create a new post of First Chairman of the NDC, which assumed all powers that once had been vested in the Chairman. Kim Jong-un was then elected as First Chairman.

In short, North Korea is governed by three leviathans of state bureaucracy. Constituting the basis of the regime are the WPK, the Korean People's Army (KPA) and government bodies, including the executive, legislative and judiciary branches.

1. The Workers' Party of Korea (WPK)

(1) Status and Nature

In the WPK rules revised at the 3rd Party Conference on September 28, 2010, North Korea redefined the WPK as “the party of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il-sung,” replacing the former definition of “a spearhead and organized unit for the laboring class and working masses.” From this change, the nature of WPK was converted from a party of the working class to that of Kim Il-sung. Meanwhile, the status of the WPK was elevated to that of a governing institution of the state. By identifying specific WPK functions, the party became the supreme political institution and personnel directorate for revolution, expanding its control over every sector of North Korea including the military, the economy, society and culture.

In addition, the revised party rules changed the objectives of the WPK to reflect North Korea's domestic circumstances. Immediate goals were revised from “achieving complete victory of socialism in the northern half of the Republic” to “establishing a strong and prosperous socialist nation in the northern half of the Republic.” Meanwhile, ultimate objectives changed from “placing the entire society under *juche* ideology and creating a communist society” to “realizing the complete independence of the masses by placing the entire society under the banner of *juche*.” The new rules also institutionalized the succession of power at party level, by prescribing the basic principles of uniqueness and inheritance of ideology and leadership for the WPK.

At the 4th Party Conference on April 11, 2012, the party preamble was further revised to proclaim that the WPK is Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's party, and that instead of *juche*, the WPK's sole guiding doctrine is *Kimilsungism* and *Kimjongilism*. The rules also state that monumental feats of the *juche* revolution will be achieved under Kim Jong-un's leadership.

The North Korean constitution clearly states, “the DPRK will carry out all its activities under the WPK’s leadership.’ This clause makes clear that the WPK is the cradle of all power in North Korea, and reaffirms the party’s stance above all other institutions. Accordingly, the WPK is “the highest form of revolutionary body among all institutions of the working masses” and “the primary agent that leads the three branches of government and all other organs.”

In the meantime, the party’s role as a proletariat vanguard advocated by Marxism-Leninism is in fact restricted by the *suryǒng*’s sole leadership. As mentioned above, theories of the *suryǒng* and socio-political living body, both of which are introduced by *juche*, are based on the idea of organic society and assign overly extended roles to the leadership of the father-like *suryǒng*. This places the *suryǒng* at the center of leadership, where he exercises political power to raise the consciousness of the masses, and organize and unite them into a single entity, as well as to lead to the victory of the revolutionary struggle. As the *suryǒng*’s leadership expands, however, the party’s autonomy becomes restricted, and the WPK’s dictatorship of the majority which represents the working class is replaced by the *suryǒng*’s one-man dictatorship.

In short, the WPK is in a general sense, a higher institution that oversees the masses, but in reality, it is simply a subordinate institution under the *suryǒng*’s guidance. This *suryǒng*-centered system therefore entitles the WPK to represent the people of North Korea, but at the same time, being a private party that supports one-man rule, demands submission to the *suryǒng*. The North emphasizes that the WPK is “organized to stand at the frontline to realize the revolutionary ideas of the *suryǒng*, and, under his sole leadership and principles of revolutionary ideas, to promote revolution and construction.” In other words, the party exists as a link between the *suryǒng*, the brain of North Korea’s organic society, and the masses, and its key task is

to organize and mobilize the public to accomplish the policies and political directions proposed by the *suryŏng*.

The decision-making structure and enforcement system of the WPK are based on the principles of democratic centralism suggested by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. As described in the North's *Grand Korean Dictionary*, "democratic centralism embodies an important aspect of compliance, which requires submission from individuals to organizations, the minority to the majority, lower authorities to higher authorities, and all institutions and members to the central party."

Democratic centralism gained notoriety when Lenin used it to purge his opponents by branding them as 'enemies of the people,' strengthening his dictatorial status. North Korea continues in much the same tradition, as democratic centralism has established an extremely hierarchical decision-making structure in the WPK to promote perfect conformity. This serves as an institutional framework to sustain the *suryŏng*'s one-man leadership. As a result, democratic principles of bottom-up decision-making no longer exist in democratic centralism, and only a top-down system prevails to underpin the one-man dictatorship of the socialist state.

Moreover, the regime displays a rather regressive form of democratic centralism in its ruling system. Until his death, Kim Jong-il had exercised full control over both the WPK and KPA. Aided by *juche* ideology and its sub-theories of the 'revolutionary *suryŏng*,' 'socio-political organic society,' and 'grand socialist family,' he demanded unconditional allegiance and obedience to himself and his family, in addition to justifying his one-man rule.

(2) Organization and Functions

The official supreme body for the WPK's decision-making is the Party Congress. As defined by the WPK rules, it makes basic decisions on party lines, policies, strategies and tactics. In truth, however, the

Party Congress plays only a perfunctory role of rubber-stamping the decisions made by the Central Committee or Political Bureau. Until the party rules were revised at the 3rd Conference of Party Representatives, the Central Committee was required to convoke a Party Congress once every five years, but this was rarely enforced. The 1st Party Congress was convened in 1946 and six more were held until 1980, followed by a hiatus for 30 years. The 3rd Conference of Party Representatives was held on September 28, 2010, the first of its kind in 44 years. At this time, North Korea scrapped the clause regarding five-year intervals, thereby enabling the Central Committee to convoke a Party Congress at its own discretion, on the condition that it announce the date at least six months in advance.

During the interval period, the Central Committee assumes the role of North Korea's supreme governing body to supervise all party activities, and all of its members are required to convene at least once a year. When the plenum of the Central Committee is out of session, however, the supreme governing role is transferred to the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee. The Central Committee is comprised of members and alternate members elected at the Party Congress, and they participate in plenary sessions to discuss and make decisions on the internal and external issues of the WPK. These plenary sessions also conduct elections for members of the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee, Secretaries of the Central Committee, and Central Inspection Committee, in addition to having the authority to organize the Secretariat and Central Military Commission. Nonetheless, such plenary sessions were also suspended from the 21st session of the 6th Central Committee in 1993 up until September 2010. While the Party Congress and Central Committee plenum remained closed, the most powerful apparatus in the WPK's decision-making structure were the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee. Accordingly, the 3rd Conference of Party Representatives on September 28, 2010 was held upon the decision of the Political Bureau.

The Conference of Party Representatives is a platform held between Party Congresses to discuss and decide important issues, including party lines, policies, strategies and tactics. At this time, members of central organs are summoned, and by-elections held to fill vacancies.

At the 3rd Conference of Party Representatives in 2010, key issues such as the re-election of Kim Jong-il as Party General Secretary, the revision of WPK rules, and the election of central organ members were discussed. As a result, the hereditary transfer of power to Kim Jong-un became official and leadership positions of the Central Committee, Political Bureau, Secretariat, and Central Military Commission underwent a reshuffle. Meanwhile, the WPK rules were revised to mandate rights to the Conference of Party Representations, regarding the election of members of supreme guiding organs and the authority to revise and supplement the party rules. This revision also stipulated the status of General Secretary, which simultaneously serves as Chairman of the Central Military Commission, and expanded the WPK's authority, for example, by reinforcing its control over the armed forces.

As cited above, the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee made all the decisions within the WPK throughout the prolonged intervals between the Party Congress and Conference of Party Representatives. After the deaths of Kim Il-sung and O Jin-u, however, the Standing Committee virtually ceased to function, since it became a one-man system with only Kim Jong-il remaining. This gave rise to the Secretariat, which had *de facto* control over the Central Committee in lieu of the Standing Committee. As of April 2012, the Secretariat has become a key WPK institution that discusses, decides and supervises the implementation of internal and other working-level issues, and it is comprised of nine Secretaries including General Secretary Kim Jong-il, who passed away in December 2011, Kim Kyong-hui, Kim Ki-nam, Choe Thae-bok, Kim Yang-gon, and Man Kyong-dok.

To make the hereditary transfer of power official and to underpin this with an institutional foundation, North Korea decided to fill the long vacant seats of the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee, as well as organize the Secretariat and Central Military Commission at the 3rd Conference of Representatives in September 2010 and at the 22nd plenary session of the 6th Central Committee. Before this decision, the Central Committee had consisted of 60 some members, but a total of 124 members were newly elected at the 3rd Conference of Party Representatives. In addition, the Central Committee plenum reorganized the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau with five new members, namely Kim Jong-il (deceased), Kim Yong-nam, Choe Yong-rim, Jo Myong-rok (deceased), and Ri Yong-ho. In particular, the plenary session moved to create a new Vice Chairman position, and elected Kim Jong-un to assume this responsibility.

Prior to the centennial anniversary of the birth of Kim Il-sung, the 4th Conference of Party Representatives convened on April 11, 2012, and elected Kim Jong-un as First Secretary of the WPK, Chairman of the Central Military Commission, and member of both the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee. The preamble of the WPK rules was revised at this time to include clauses that *Kimilsungism* and *Kimjongilism* are to be established as sole guiding doctrines, and promoted in every aspect of society, and that the party work towards achieving feats of the *juche* revolution under Kim Jong-un's leadership. Other notable points in the recent personnel reshuffle include appointments of Choe Ryong-hae (former Director of KPA's General Political Bureau) as member of the Political Bureau's Standing Committee and Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, Jang Song-thaek as a member of the Political Bureau, and Kim Kyong-hui as member of the Secretariat.

Also established across North Korea are regional organizations, which provide a multi-layer governing apparatus, structured by

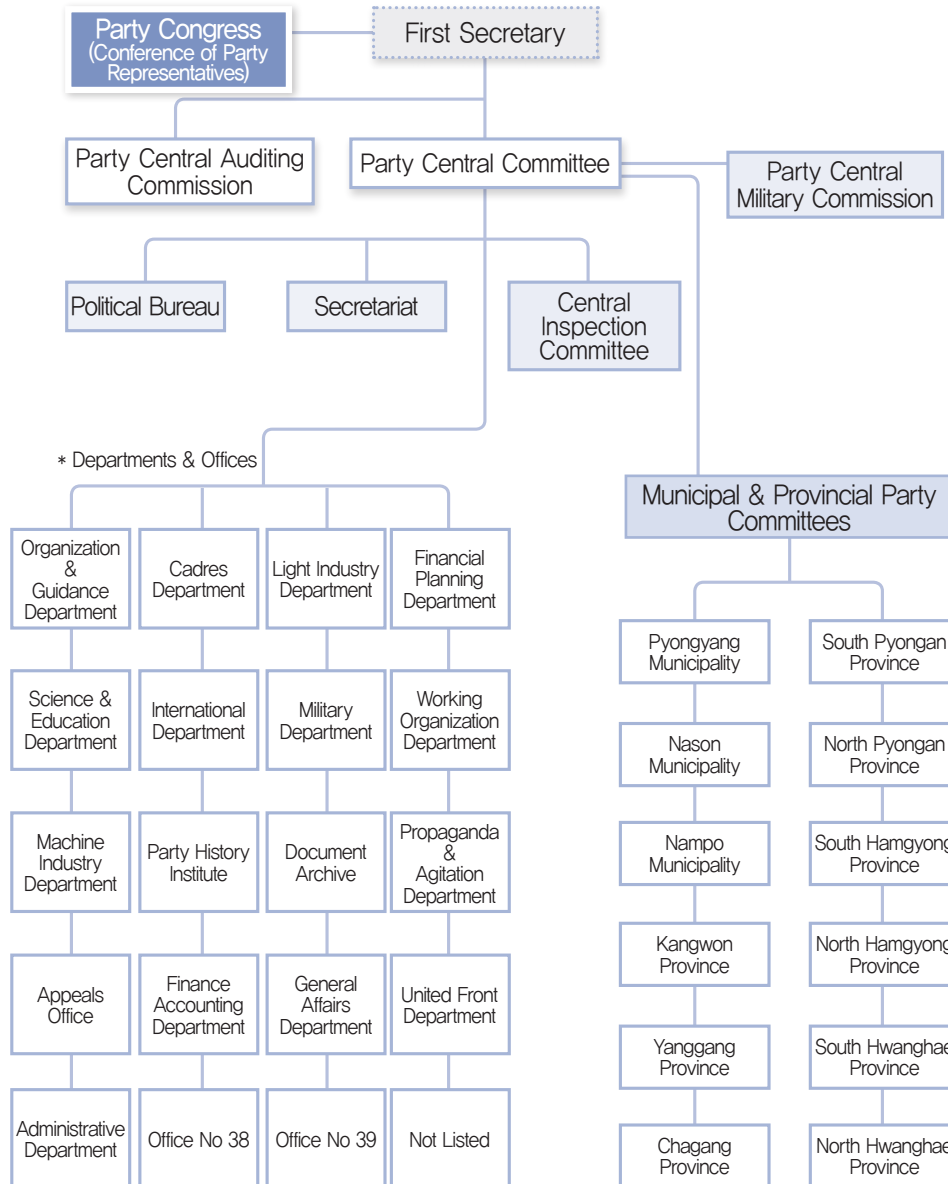
a combination of horizontal and vertical dominant-subordinate relations. In other words, party committees at different levels abide by a strictly hierarchal structure vis-à-vis committees of higher and lower levels, and exercise absolute control over other agencies and civil organizations of equal status. This hierarchy gives efficiency to reinforcing party organizations, but at the same time creates inflexibility.

Under the Central Committee are provincial, city, and county committees, while further down the ladder are primary and sub-primary committees, sector committees, and party cells, which are the lowest substratum of the hierarchy. These party committees at each level are microscopic structures of the Central Committee, in which organizational management and absolute power are conducted. In general, the line of authority for each region is concentrated in the hands of the Chief Secretary of the local party committee.

Therefore, in consideration of the WPK rules underscoring the importance of a single governing ideology, the superiority of the Party General Secretary, and control over party activities via the Organization and Guidance Department, it can be argued that the nature of WPK is that of a private party under the mandate of a supreme leader's absolute authority.

Figure 2-1 Organization of the WPK

* Party Congress		* Conference of Party Representatives	
1st : Aug. 28-30, 1946	2nd : Mar. 27-30, 1948	1st : Mar. 3-6, 1958	2nd : Oct. 5-12, 1966
3rd : Apr. 23-28, 1956	4th : Sept. 11-18, 1961	3rd : Sept. 28, 2010	4th : Apr. 11, 2012
5th : Nov. 2-13, 1970	6th : Oct. 10-14, 1980		



Source : Ministry of Unification

Table 2-2 History of the Conference of Party Representatives

	Dates	Main Agendas
1st Party Conference	Mar. 3-6, 1958	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-year plans for people's economy • Reinforcement of party unity • Party organization and others
2nd Party Conference	Oct. 5-12, 1966	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current situation and tasks for the party • Urgent tasks in building a socialist economy • Party organization and others
3rd Party Conference	Sep. 28, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-election of Kim Jong-il to General Secretary • Revision of party rules Election of central guidance organs ※ Appointment of Kim Jong-un as the Vice Chairman of the CMC
4th Party Conference	Apr. 11, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Kim Jong-il as the Eternal General Secretary • Appointment of Kim Jong-un to WPK First Secretary and CMC Chairman • Revision of WPK rules ※ Stipulation of monolithic guidance ideology of <i>Kimilsungism and Kimjongilism</i>

(3) Relations with Administration, Military and Other Organizations

With North Korea's power structure built around the concentrated authority of the WPK, government organs simply take charge of the enactment, implementation and assessment of party-decided policies. In general, the WPK is able to maintain control of the administration by systems that give party officials concurrent administrative posts and establish parallel organs in the WPK to monitor and keep the government in check. North Korea emphasizes that reinforcing the WPK's administrative guidance underpins the continuation and development of socialism. To this end, concurring party organs direct and implement policies that are in close association with party activities.

The WPK also exerts control over the military based on its party rules. In September 2010, the WPK rules were revised to enable the Central Military Commission to organize and guide all military programs, as well as direct all defense programs at party level during the interim period between Party Congresses. Moreover, the rules state that "the General Political Bureau is recognized as an executive organ

of the KPA Party Committee, and therefore is entitled to the same authority as that of the Central Military Committee in conducting its activities.” In order to control the armed forces, the WPK established a party apparatus for every military unit and assigned political officers for active duty. The General Political Bureau oversees the various party committees and organs within the KPA, assuming the role of command and management of their political activities. Meanwhile, the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League further reinforces the WPK’s control over the armed forces, as it lies within the KPA but is under the effective jurisdiction of party leadership.

Such changes in party-military relations took place with the official launch of the Kim Jong-il regime. North Korea’s constitutional revisions in 1998 and 2009 reinforced the status of the National Defense Commission (NDC), which was led by Kim Jong-il himself, and military influence accrued as Kim Jong-il continued propagating the military-first policy. There have been claims that the party’s hold over the military weakened when the Ministry of People’s Armed Forces was placed under the National Defense Commission. This, however, is refuted based on accounts of WPK rules on the Central Military Commission. Key officers of the military are heads of the Central Military Commission and Secretariat, etc.

In the meantime, the WPK also exercises guidance and control over other social institutions and organizations. According to North Korea’s constitution, “the state guarantees freedom of activity for democratic political parties and social institutions,” but in reality, most of these entities exist in name only, or are essentially quasi-state bodies under the WPK’s direct guidance and control. So-called minority political parties, such as the Korean Social Democratic Party and Cheondoist Chongu Party, are also nothing more than titular, and are thus considered to be satellite parties at best.

North Korea also has several organizations that represent the



The Mansudae Assembly Hall in North Korea |

working masses, including the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League, the General Federation of Korean Trade Unions, the Korean Agricultural Workers Union, and the Korean Democratic Women's Union. They, too, as external organs of the WPK, bind the populace to the party by means of leading education in ideology and striving to become faithful vanguards of the WPK. Other *de facto* quasi-state

organizations under the WPK's command include the Committee for Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland, the Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, the Democratic Front for Reunification of the Fatherland, and the National Council for Reconciliation. They too carry out activities within the limited scope of party guidance.

2. Central Institutions

(1) National Defense Commission

In 1992, North Korea's constitution was revised to establish and expand the role of the National Defense Commission (NDC) as a separate entity from the Central People's Committee. Subsequent revisions in 1998 elevated the NDC status to a 'supreme military guiding organ of national sovereignty and general management organ of national defense,' and further amendments in 2009 resulted in the NDC's rise as 'the supreme defense guidance organ of national sovereignty.'

Membership in the NDC, with Chairman Kim Jong-il presiding, used to include one First Vice Chairman (vacant), four Vice Chairmen, and five regular members, all of whom were to serve a five-year term. This layout, however, underwent changes when the 5th session of the 12th People's Assembly convened on April 13, 2012 at the Mansudae

Assembly Hall. With Kim Jong-un attending, this session moved to elect his late father as Eternal NDC Chairman and created a post of First Chairman, which assumed all authorities of the former Chairman position. Moreover, the station of First Vice Chairman was abolished, while Choe Ryong-hae, Kim Won-hong (Director of Ministry of State Security), and Ri Myong-su (Director of Ministry of People's Security) were newly elected as NDC members. This personnel reshuffle enabled the NDC to focus on reinforcing Kim Jong-un's direct rule in the interest of regime stability.

The NDC tasks and mandate include the establishment of key state policies, command of the armed forces and defense constructions, execution of the First Chairman's orders, monitor of decisions, instructions, enforcement of the NDC, and creation and removal of central organs in national defense. And the First Chairman, as the supreme leader of North Korea, commands and reigns over the all armed forces, directs all national undertakings, decides the ratification or abolition of key treaties with foreign nations, and exercises the prerogative of mercy.

(2) Supreme People's Assembly

The Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) is the official supreme institution of state sovereignty that retains legislative power. SPA members serve a term of five years and regular SPA meetings are held once or twice a year.

The SPA assumes the authority to enact, amend, and supplement constitutions and laws, establish basic principles for internal and external policies, elect and summon the NDC Chairman and members, the President of the SPA Presidium, the Premier and key Cabinet members, the President of the Supreme Court, etc. The SPA is also vested with the jurisdiction to ratify or abrogate treaties.

For the SPA to convene, two-thirds of its delegates must be in

attendance, and a majority vote by a show of hands is required to adopt the agenda for discussion and decide on the issue at hand. Revisions to North Korea's constitution also need a two-thirds' majority of SPA delegates.

On the date of April 13, 2012, SPA delegates convened at the 5th session of the 12th Supreme People's Assembly to amend and supplement North Korea's socialist constitution and elect Kim Jong-un to North Korea's supreme post. In result, the preamble of the revised constitution depicts the achievements of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, enshrining the former as Eternal President and the latter, Eternal Chairman. Rules applying to the position of the NDC First Chairman were also adopted at this time, enabling the new post to assume all state powers of the former NDC Chairman.

When the SPA is in recess, the SPA Presidium becomes the highest sovereign institution in North Korea. It retains the authority to ratify and abrogate treaties signed with foreign states, to appoint, summon, decide on and announce diplomats, and to oversee external activities such as projects with foreign parliaments and international parliamentary organizations.

(3) Cabinet

North Korea's Cabinet is a supreme sovereign institution that executes administrative work and state management. It consists of the Premier, Vice Premiers, Chairmen, Ministers and other members, who generally serve for a period of five years. As of April 2012, the Cabinet is composed of 7 committees and commissions, 31 ministries, 1 board, 1 bank, 2 bureaus, and a total of 42 departments and offices, all of which are accountable to the SPA.

To elaborate, the Cabinet directs and oversees most undertakings of the administration and economy, with the exception of national defense. The Premier is at the head of Cabinet, a position elected and

sworn in by the SPA to organize and administer Cabinet businesses on behalf of the regime.

Every committee, commission and ministry within the Cabinet is an executive and managerial organ that takes charge of respective branches of North Korea, and they govern, command, manage, and promote relevant programs and projects in compliance with Cabinet instructions.

(4) Judicial Institutions

A. Institutions of Prosecution

North Korea's constitution stipulates the specific rules and regulations of institutions of prosecution, including the structure, responsibility, and internal relations. Such details are enshrined in the constitution due to the special functions they have in socialist states. In the North, these prosecutorial bodies are key pillars of the governing apparatus that serves to protect the regime and conduct judicial surveillance for law-abiding socialism.

At the top level of North Korea's prosecution system is the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office (SPO), and below that are provincial, city, county and special prosecutor's offices. The SPO, which supervises public prosecution, places emphasis on a 'unitary prosecution system' that requires absolute obedience of lower to upper ranks. The system is used to assure consistency and promptness in prosecution tasks, while also reinforcing the WPK leadership and establishing conformity in judicial policies and the interpretation of law.

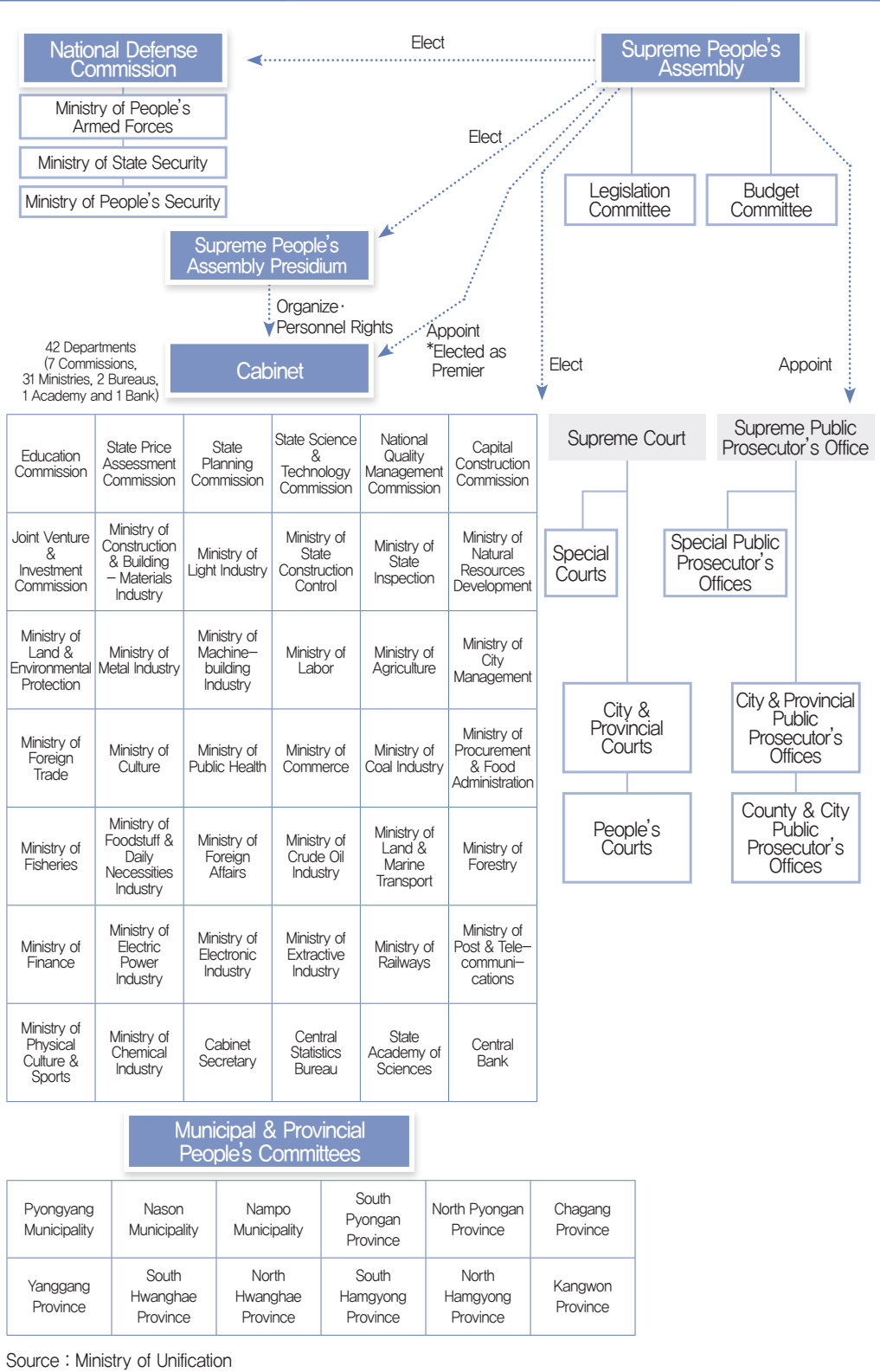
The appointment and dismissal of SPO heads are decided by the SPA, and in turn, the SPO has the jurisdiction to appoint and dismiss public prosecutors at other various levels. Moreover, the SPO directly answers to the SPA.

B. Court Institutions

Court institutions in the North are responsible for enforcing the WPK's judicial policies. As these courts are fully under the control of the party, it is hard to expect them to issue independent and neutral judgments. The Supreme Court, as in the case of public prosecutor's offices, is placed at the top to oversee various special, provincial, city, and local people's courts. Trials often take place comprised of 1 presiding judge and 2 people's assessors, but at times, special cases can require up to 3 judges to make a decision.

The Supreme Court is comprised of a President, who is elected by the Supreme People's Assembly, and judges and people's assessors appointed by the SPA Presidium. It is the highest court in North Korea, presiding over all judicial and administrative activities of lower courts. It reviews emergency appeals of lower court decisions and verdicts as well as appeals from provincial, military, and railway tribunals. In addition, the Supreme Court is also accountable to the SPA.

Figure 2-2 Power Institutions



Source : Ministry of Unification

Section 4

Ruling Structure and Hereditary Succession of Power

1. Establishment of the Kim Jong-il Regime

Having established a single monopolistic regime, Kim Il-sung chose his eldest son Kim Jong-il as his successor. After graduating from college, the young man started his career in the Organization and Guidance Department of the WPK Secretariat, gaining working experience in the Cabinet before being appointed as the department head at the age of 31. Along with spearheading the '**Three-Revolution Team Movement**,' he was also elected to assume greater authority at the 6th Party Congress in 1980, assuming powers over both the WPK and the military by attaining full membership of the Central Committee and acquiring roles in the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee, Secretariat, and Military Committee. In due course, Kim Jong-il exercised substantial leadership in most areas of the

The Three-Revolution Team Movement, first initiated in 1972 when Kim Jong-il had just emerged as the putative successor, was organized to promote revolution in areas of ideology, technology and culture. College graduates were required to join the movement for 2-3 years, and members deployed to various levels of local institutions and production sites to provide local executives and engineers with technical consultations. In addition, they assumed the role of faithful vanguards who paved the road to a successive Kim Jong-il regime.

regime except for key issues of foreign policy.

Kim Jong-il also led various campaigns that steered the North Korean society throughout the 1980s, including the 'Speed Creation Campaign,' 'Promotion of *Juche* Ideology in the WPK,' 'Enhancement of Law-abiding Ethos,' and 'Production of People's Consumer Goods.' He is also known to have been the mastermind behind theories of 'Socio-political Organic Body' of 1986 and 'North Korean-style Socialism' of 1991.

In the 1990s, Kim Jong-il directed efforts to consolidate his status in military leadership. Subsequent to being elected as First Vice Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC) at the Supreme People's Assembly in May 1990, Kim Jong-il became the Supreme Commander of the KPA at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee in December 1990. He was also given the title of Marshal in April 1992 and was promoted to NDC Chairman, thus taking full command over North Korea's armed forces.

Upon Kim Il-sung's death in July 1994, Kim Jong-il delegated his authority as the Supreme Commander of the KPA to reorganize the North's ruling structure. Such efforts for regime restructuring took three years, and at the end of 1997, Kim Jong-il was elected General Secretary of the WPK. In the following September, his post of NDC Chairman was further reinforced to mark the launch of the Kim Jong-il regime.

From the mid-1990s, Kim Jong-il maintained a relatively stable power base in running his regime, in spite of severe economic troubles and conflicts with the international community regarding nuclear development. Until his death, Kim Jong-il focused his endeavors on laying the groundwork for a stable succession of power for his son Kim Jong-un.

2. Nature of the Kim Jong-il Regime

North Korea under Kim Jong-il's reign was distinguished by characteristics that were unlike any other socialist nations.

The first distinguishing characteristic was Kim Jong-il's one-man rule. As General Secretary of the WPK and NDC Chairman, he commanded the twin pillars of socialism, the ruling party and military. The main tool used to justify his sole grip on power was *juche* ideology, which demands that all the populace, political organizations and institutions move in perfect order under the *suryŏng's* instruction and command.

Another particular aspect of North Korea is its military-first policy, according to which "the regime places its top priority on military affairs and devotes all its energy to reinforcing military power, among all other state affairs." As reflected in the claim that "the military is the party, state, and people," North Korea perceives the military-first policy as the main force in revolution and nation-building efforts. The message is further conveyed by political slogans such as 'military first, workers second' and 'our family is our gun barrel.'

The military-first policy also encourages society to learn from military forces. The movements of 'our sentry post, our school' and the 'winning model army award for civil-military unity' are examples of public campaigns that promote unity between society and the military. Other slogans in line with the military-first policy include 'civil-military unity,' which demands the two to be at one in mind and mission, 'officer-soldier unity,' which calls officers and soldiers to band together and share their joys and sorrows, and 'government-military merge,' which requires the military and administration to jointly lead state projects under the leadership of the supreme commander.

By placing the military-first policy at the forefront, North Korea has

enabled the armed forces to expand their activities into various civil areas and exert greater influence over society. Military troops have thus been employed to take the initiative in major construction projects such as the Chongryu Bridge, Gumrung Cave No. 2, the Taechon Electric Power Plant, the Kaechon-Lake Taesong waterway, and the Pyongyang-Hyangsan tourist roads. The military-first policy can also be recognized as the leadership's attempt to use the well-trained and reliable military workforce to revive the depressed economy. Under circumstances in which the prolonged economic destitute resulted in undermining the people's will to work, it was up to the military to set examples that would mobilize the public for industrial development.

Pyongyang's military-first rhetoric is growing stronger at home and abroad following the nuclear crisis that escalated tension with the United States. Kim Jong-il had many times stressed the importance of the military, as in his statement, "More important than rebuilding the economy is reinforcing the military. Strong guns barrels make a strong nation." The banner of the military-first policy is thus effectively empowering the military to wield ever more influence.

A third characteristic of North Korea is its propagation of a campaign to build a 'strong and prosperous nation.' The introduction of this objective was to implant new hope in the minds of the North Korean people, upon the launch of the Kim Jong-il regime which sought to overcome the deepening crisis of the 'Arduous March' in the mid-1990s.

North Korea's pledge to build a strong and prosperous nation functions as a political message calling for unity and reconciliation of the populace. The regime claims that attainment of this goal "begins with establishing a strong nation based on ideology, then by consolidating the military as integral pillars of revolution, and is finally attained when such military strength is harnessed to make great strides in economic growth." This, in other words, means that

North Korea aspires to build a nation fortified with ideological and political strength, military prowess and economic vigor. At present, North Korea professes that main targets in ideology, politics, and military have already been met, and by 2012, endeavors in economic development will add the final touch to this ambition.⁴

Haunted by the fear that reform and open-door policies could threaten regime stability, North Korea further stresses the importance of the principle of ‘our-style socialism.’ This unique phrase corresponds to *juche*, but it can also be recognized as a reactionary slogan reflecting the leadership’s fear of change. By saying that “the new century demands innovative insight, original ideas and progressive business practices,” but then at the same time advocating the ‘seed theory’ that requires all policies to be rooted in the proper ideological soil of ‘our-style socialism,’ North Korea is expressing ambivalence in regard to reform and opening.

In order to find a solution for regime survival, North Korea strives to unite the regime and shore up internal capabilities based on the military-first policy, while also seeking to explore ways to improve external relations, including with the United States and Republic of Korea. Nonetheless, it would be difficult for North Korea to overcome the current economic hurdles on its own, and to this end, a wide range of support from the outside would be needed. The regime is thus faced with the urgent task of improving its diplomatic environment. The question of how it would make its way through diplomatic isolation and economic troubles is becoming a burning one for the international community.

3. Power Reshuffle and Hereditary Succession

North Korea’s power base, which complies with the distinct features of the party-led power structure, is concentrated in various WPK

⁴ The theory of a strong and prosperous nation appeared in earnest with the inauguration of the Kim Jong-il regime in 1998. North Korea boasted that it would open the door to a strong and prosperous nation by 2012 when it celebrated the 100th anniversary of Kim Il-sung’s birthday. Nonetheless, as the fulfillment of this goal became ever less likely, the term “a strong and prosperous great power” was changed to “a strong and prosperous state” in 2011. In the New Year’s joint editorial in 2012, the term “powerful reconstruction” appeared for the first time.

organs including the Central Committee, Political Bureau, Secretariat, Central Military Commission, and National Defense Commission. In general, this bedrock of authority can be categorized with different generations of power elites: anti-Japanese partisans (1st generation of revolution), Korean War veterans (2nd generation of revolution or guidance officers of Three-Revolutions Teams), and college students of Three-Revolution Teams (3rd generation of revolution born between 1940 and 1950). At present, members of the 1st generation in their eighties are retiring from their top posts, while the 3rd generation of revolution, those in their fifties and sixties with higher education backgrounds, has emerged as a new group of core elites that will lead the Kim Jong-un era.

The key figures in the newly reshuffled power base are Kim Jong-il's close associates equipped with expertise. Most of them are now in their fifties and sixties, and include Kim Jong-il's college peers, work colleagues from the Organization and Guidance Department, and those who helped secure his power succession. These associates have been alongside Kim Jong-il since the 1960s, and now hold key posts in the Political Bureau, Secretariat and National Defense Commission.

The indicators that help to assess North Korea's power elites are the order of appearance on the leader's platform, position and title, frequency of having accompanied Kim Jong-il on his on-the-spot guidance tours, relationship to Kim Jong-il and son Kim Jong-un, etc. Among these, the most indicative is the order of appearance on the podium. Ever since North Korea promoted the military-first policy, surveys of the leader's podium at major public events clearly showed that military leaders have made remarkable ascensions in the leadership hierarchy.

In the meantime, the WPK elites seem to have undergone a comparative decline in the pecking order. The Central Committee did not convene to hold plenary meetings until the 3rd Conference of

Party Representatives in 2010, so the delay in personnel shifts in the Political Bureau since 1993 may have resulted in this weakening status of Politburo members. However, it is perceived that the key cause is the military's rise in accordance with the military-first policy, which came upon the initiation of the Kim Jong-il regime. The 3rd Conference of Party Representatives, however, undertook to reshuffle the Political Bureau as well as the Central Committee, Secretariat, and Central Military Commission. This restored the status of WPK elites to a level once enjoyed back when the 6th Party Congress was held in 1980. Accordingly, North Korea is considered to have finally normalized its leadership structure.

The WPK's return to power can be observed on the leader's platform, as most members and alternate members of the Political Bureau are seen standing within the 20th rank. In particular, citing that Kim Jong-un was made a four-star general and Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, along with membership granted to crucial WPK and military members, it can be understood that the Central Military Commission has assumed key authority.

These earnest efforts are being made by North Korea to consolidate Kim Jong-un's regime and build a personality cult around him. Since early 2010, the regime has publicly circulated the song 'Footsteps,' which is known to praise Kim Jong-un, and at the centennial celebration of Kim Il-sung's birth on April 14, 2010, a slogan that had fallen into disuse, 'Defend the Central Committee to the death,' was reintroduced.

Kim Jong-un was promoted to four-star general on September 27, 2010, and the following day, he was appointed to Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission at the Conference of Party Representatives. These steps were necessary to lay the institutional foundation that would enable the young leader to assume roles in both the WPK and military. As Vice Chairman, Kim Jong-un presented

himself at a military parade on October 10, 2010 to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the WPK, and this image as a competent figurehead of North Korea's armed forces thus served to enhance the military's allegiance.

Kim Jong-un made his first public appearance at the Conference of Party Representatives on September 28, 2010. Throughout the rest of that year, he made a total of 38 public appearances, such as visiting soldiers in joint exercises on October 5, 2010, thus taking further action to secure his successive line to power. Meanwhile, North Korea presented the 'spirit of the Party Conference' upon the 1st anniversary of the 3rd Conference of Party Representatives, and called for the spirit of solidarity, relentless march, and ongoing revolution. Through such motivation, the regime directed efforts to achieve various political goals, including those that would consolidate Kim Jong-il's leadership and his control over the WPK while securing Kim Jong-un's hereditary succession. The death of Kim Jong-il on December 17, 2011, however, caused a change in situation for the regime that had just embarked on an internal reshuffle.

For the North, maintaining regime stability is the top priority of the post-Kim Jong-il era, so all efforts and resources are being directed to establish a solid leadership for Kim Jong-un based on his father's last wishes. Accordingly, the North has upheld Kim Jong-il's dying wishes by declaring Kim Jong-un as "supreme leader of the WPK, military and people," at the memorial mass on December 29, 2011, as well as electing him supreme commander of the KPA at the Political Bureau meeting on the following day. Moreover, the regime adopted a 'resolution to achieve great success throughout the construction of a strong and prosperous nation in honor of Kim Jong-il's last wishes,' in addition to announcing the 'Central Committee-Central Military Commission joint slogan,' which emphasizes rule in accordance with Kim Jong-il's testament, leadership of Kim Jong-un, military and

security organs' protection of Kim Jong-un's military-first sovereignty, economic resuscitation and enhanced public livelihood, importance of light industry, four preceding sectors and external trade, realizing independence and national unification, removal of anti-unification forces, etc.

In order to maintain stability for the Kim Jong-un regime, the Political Bureau meeting adopted a series of decisions that included an overarching ethos, of which the ultimate focus was to lay the groundwork for April 2012. This was reflected in the New Year's joint editorial of North Korea, which declared that "Kim Jong-un is Kim Jong-il" in compliance with the dying wishes of the late leader. Accordingly, the 4th Conference of Party Representatives and 5th session of the 12th Supreme People's Assembly were held on April 11, 2012, and Kim Jong-un was elected to top posts in the WPK, military and administration. This completed the third-generation hereditary succession in North Korea and Kim Jong-un assumed all of his father's titles, including First Secretary of the WPK, member of the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee, Chairman of the Central Military Commission, and First Chairman of the National Defense Commission, thereby declaring the opening of his era.

As shown above, North Korea seems to have completed its dynastic succession of power for the post-Kim Jong-il regime within a period of 3 years and 3 months that had begun in 2009. This hereditary succession over three generations is an unprecedented deviation from socialist tradition that cannot be compared to any other dictatorship. The changes that await Kim Jong-un, however, could be shaped by external variables and the interplay of legacies left behind by the deceased father. Bearing this in mind, whether the new regime can steer a steady course will likely depend on North Korea's fluid situation of internal politics, prospects of economic upturn, creation of favorable international environments, and so forth.

In order to justify this hereditary succession, North Korea is taking steps to exploit the Kim Il-sung cult. In particular, the regime is making attempts to give Kim Jong-un the image of a supreme leader by fashioning him to remind the public of Kim Il-sung's youthful days. Moreover, the SPA Presidium President Kim Yong-nam introduced the expression 'the Kim Il-sung race' during his speech on September 28, 2010 that re-nominated Kim Jong-il to General Secretary of the WPK at the Conference of Party Representatives. Ever since this initial use, the phrase has made frequent appearance in official media. Revision of WPK rules in 2010 also stipulated the expressions 'Kim Il-sung Chosun' and 'Kim Il-sung Party,' followed by the designation of *Kimilsungism* and *Kimjongilism* as sole guiding principles in the revised preamble of WPK rules in 2012. The media also emphasize Kim Jong-un's equivalence with his predecessors, stating that he is "another Kim Jong-il," and tacitly demands that the public pledge their loyalty to him as they had sworn allegiance to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. Nonetheless, the objective and subjective conditions that face the current power succession are clearly different from those that accompanied Kim Jong-il's rise to power.

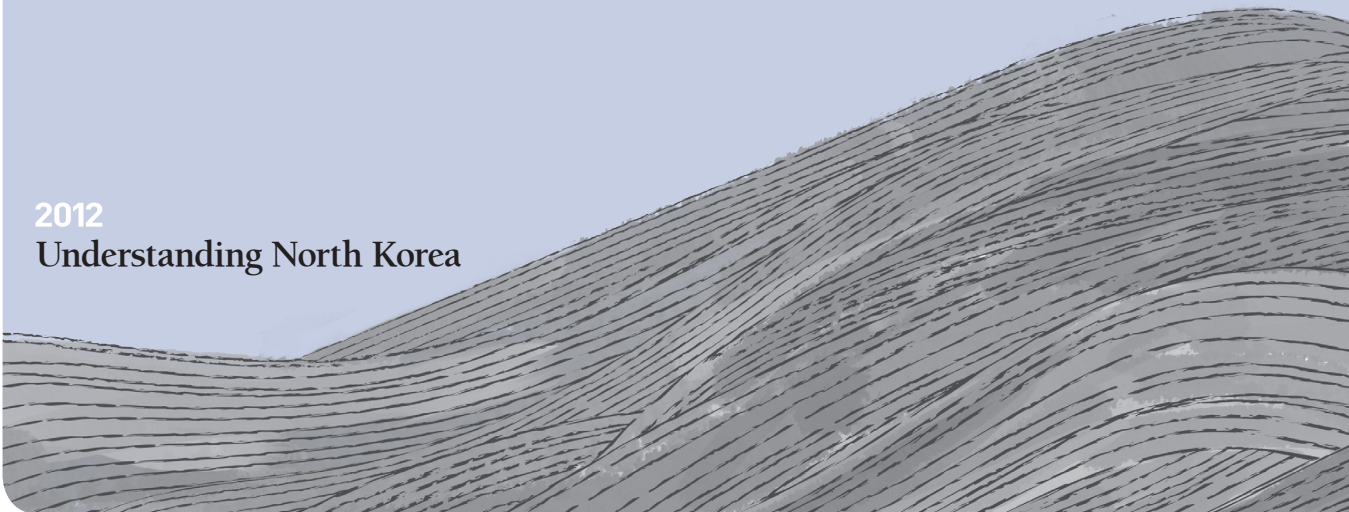


| A political poster emphasizing loyalty to the WPK

NORTH KOREA

2012

Understanding North Korea

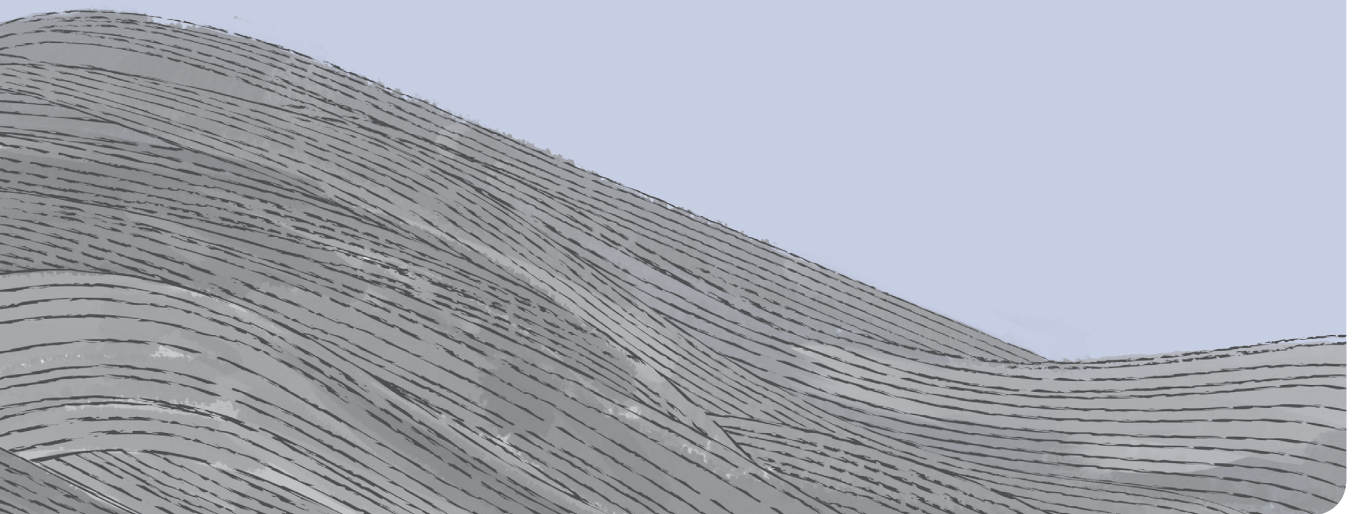


3

External Relations

Section 1. Foreign Policy

Section 2. Foreign Relations



Key Point

01

North Korean diplomacy during the Cold War was focused on improving ties with socialist and non-aligned countries, as part of a greater effort to bring the entire peninsula under the Communist banner and gain the upper hand over South Korea. Since the end of the Cold War, however, North Korea's need to focus on regime survival has compelled it to diversify its diplomatic efforts and improve relations with Western countries.

02

North Korea has striven to improve bilateral relations with the United States, having evidently concluded that a more normal relationship with the country is crucial to regime survival. It has also attempted to improve ties with Japan, in the hope of such practical benefits as reparation for colonial rule. Despite such efforts, however, North Korea's relations with the two countries remain in deadlock due to persistent nuclear issues, including the North's reluctance to comply with the agreements reached at the Six Party Talks.

03

North Korea is undertaking efforts to strengthen ties with China and Russia, not only to counter international pressure, but also to secure economic assistance and political support. Particular attention is being directed, in the form of mutual visits by senior officials, to the advancement of bilateral cooperation with China, its traditional ally.

04

North Korea has long used brinkmanship tactics that involve its development of nuclear bombs, missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. The North resorts to these tactics vis-à-vis the international community, especially the United States, in order to secure regime sustenance and economic support. They have resulted, however, not only in the escalation of tension on the peninsula, but also in the intensification of North Korea's isolation from the rest of the world.

Section 1

Foreign Policy

1. Policy Directions

Due to the bipolar structure of the Cold War, an ideological conflict centered on the United States and the Soviet Union, Pyongyang considered it imperative to establish ties with socialist nations. Competition with South Korea also triggered the regime to expand diplomatic relations with non-aligned states by promoting the anti-imperialist movement. The ultimate goal of North Korean diplomacy in this time was to bring the entire peninsula under the Communist banner, as well as to gain the upper hand over South Korea.

This changed after the Cold War. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and collapse of the East European socialist bloc further isolated North Korea from the rest of the international community, plunging it in the mid-1990s into a severe economic crisis now remembered as the 'Arduous March.' Under such difficult circumstances, the regime

had no choice but to try to diversify foreign relations and improve ties with Western countries, these efforts being focused on regime stability and survival. The prioritization of these goals has become especially apparent in North Korean diplomacy since Kim Jong-il's death

Having witnessed transitions in other socialist states, North Korea is making efforts to improve ties with the United States and Japan while reinforcing its once-estranged relationship with its traditional allies, China and Russia. This change in Pyongyang's foreign policy results from its need to emerge from international isolation, enhance regime stability, and overcome economic troubles. Believing that normal relations with the United States are critical to preserving the regime, North Korea has for the most part pushed for better ties with Washington, even during times of confrontation. By engaging in direct dialogue with the United States, the North has sought to receive food, fuel and other resources crucial for regime sustenance. In the meantime, relations with South Korea and Japan were deemed ancillary, and therefore used mainly as a means to create a more favorable environment for Pyongyang's diplomatic ties with other countries, primarily the United States.

Expanding foreign relations with members of the European Union and other Western countries allowed North Korea to secure more economic assistance. It has also been stepping up other diplomatic endeavors, including its resource diplomacy towards Southeast Asian countries, all as part of the greater effort to secure regime survival and other practical benefits.

Since the 1990s, North Korea has actively engaged in brinkmanship, deliberately creating confrontations and alternating missile launches or nuclear tests with requests for concessions. Such tactics not only escalated tension on the peninsula and in the international community, but also deepened North Korea's isolation. Over the last two decades, the United States and the world at large have made various attempts

to induce the North to abandon its nuclear ambition. In addition to the Agreed Framework, which the United States and North Korea concluded in 1994, Six Party Talks have convened sporadically since 2003, producing the September 19 Joint Statement in 2005 as well as the February 13 and October 3 Agreement in 2007.

In spite of these endeavors, North Korea conducted a series of provocations including its first nuclear test in October 2006 and long-range missile launches, in the hope of strengthening its hand in negotiations. In May 2009, a second nuclear test was carried out, eliciting strong condemnation from the international community and resulting in heavier sanctions that worsened the regime's isolation. Undaunted, North Korea launched a torpedo attack in March 2010 on the *Cheonan*, a South Korean naval vessel, followed in November of the same year by the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island. These attacks, which claimed the lives of South Korean civilians and soldiers, hardened the international community's perception of North Korea as a belligerent and dangerous regime. The regime exploited the tension to enhance domestic unity while blaming the Lee Myung-bak administration (which had come to power in 2008) for the deterioration of North-South relations. It is assumed that this recurring cycle of negotiation and provocation is partly motivated by a desire to pressure change in ROK-US policy towards Pyongyang as well as to divide South Korean society.

Meanwhile, North Korea has sought to reinforce relations with China and Russia, with the aim of curbing international criticism and US pressure. In particular, Kim Jong-il visited China on four occasions subsequent to the *Cheonan* sinking, in May and August of 2010 and 2011, using three of those occasions to participate in summit meetings with the Chinese leadership (May and August 2010, May 2011). These visits demonstrated the importance that Pyongyang places on the improvement of relations with Beijing. Thereafter, North Korean

senior officials have made additional trips to China, in order to secure economic aid and other assistance.

However, the current relationship between the US, China and Russia is unlike that which prevailed during the Cold War, as these three countries are more interested in cooperating for mutual interest than in engaging in conflict. Following Pyongyang's second nuclear test, China and Russia also consented to a UN Security Council resolution imposing sanctions on North Korea. This shows that there are limits to Pyongyang's diplomatic strategy.

Following the *Cheonan* sinking and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, the United States and Japan lent active support to South Korea's stance. They strongly condemned North Korea, rendering their support both to joint investigations and sanctions against it, in addition to urging the UN Security Council and other international organizations to issue condemnations of its behavior. On the other hand, China and Russia continued to voice their hope that a resumption of the Six Party Talks would help to 'preserve peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.' The two countries expressed doubts regarding the scientific results of the *Cheonan* investigation that had been presented by South Korea, and sided with Pyongyang in opposing the joint military exercises and other measures pursued by the ROK and United States to counter further belligerence. These differences evidently derived from the conflicting interests of the concerned parties in regard to the competition for influence in Northeast Asia.

2. North Korea's Foreign Policy-making Structure

The North Korean constitution identifies 'independence, peace, and friendship' as the principles underpinning the North's external policy and activities. As presented in the constitution, foreign policy is carried out to promote the following objectives: equality and independence

among friendly nations; mutual respect and non-interference in domestic affairs; improvement in political, economic, and cultural relations based on the principle of reciprocity; opposition to invasion and interference; and support of the international struggle for national and class liberation.

With these objectives and principles, North Korea's foreign policy is devised and implemented under the guidance of the Worker's Party of Korea (WPK). Reflecting the party-dominant state system, party guidance is executed by the secretary of international affairs and the international department of the Secretariat. These entities were to be commanded and supervised under the leadership of Kim Jong-il.

More specifically, there are two methods in which foreign policies are made and carried out: top-down and bottom-up. In the top-down system, key policy lines are decided by the supreme leader and subsequently implemented by relevant departments and agencies. The bottom-up system, meanwhile, enables working-level elites in the WPK, Cabinet and KPA to formulate, review and discuss policies. These are later reported to top policymakers such as WPK Secretaries and Directors, the Cabinet Premier, the Minister of the People's Armed Forces, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to be implemented after obtaining the supreme leader's approval and endorsement.

Foreign policies in North Korea are executed on different levels of party, state and non-government sectors, which are supervised by the WPK International Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and party-affiliated organizations respectively. The Foreign Affairs Ministry is mostly responsible for government-to-government diplomacy, while the WPK Department of International Affairs, Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), and Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee take charge of party, parliamentary, and people-to-people diplomacy, respectively.

In detail, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, comprised of a minister,

several vice ministers and over 30 regional and functional offices, undertakes the tasks of establishing diplomatic relations, concluding treaties with other nations, operating diplomatic missions abroad, and so forth. The ministry is also affiliated with a think tank known as the Institute for Disarmament and Peace. Meanwhile, non-government diplomacy is often promoted by the WPK-affiliated Korean Asia-Pacific Peace Committee and the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. The General Federation of Korean Trade Unions and other labor organizations are also involved in carrying out external activities in their respective areas.

Therefore, a unique aspect of North Korea's foreign policy can be observed, whereby various agencies join the WPK, Cabinet and SPA Presidium to share the responsibility of managing foreign affairs.

Contrary to such reality, however, the constitution stipulates that establishing external policy is the responsibility of the SPA Presidium. When the constitutional revision in 1998 abolished the post of state president, the President of the SPA Presidium assumed the role of receiving diplomatic credentials on behalf of the North Korean regime. The amended constitution further gave the SPA the mandate to ratify and repeal treaties signed with other countries, in addition to the decision-making and announcement regarding the appointment and summoning of diplomatic representatives to foreign states.

At the 12th SPA meeting held in April 2009, North Korea revised its constitution once again by inserting a new clause: "Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC) of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is the supreme leader of the DPRK." Accordingly, the constitution states that as the topmost leader, the NDC Chairman has the responsibility and right to supervise overall state affairs, including rights to grant amnesty and ratify or repeal major treaties signed with other countries.

Section 2

Foreign Relations

1. US-North Korea Relations

North Korea first began approaching Western countries in the 1970s, a point in time when President Nixon had visited Beijing and a desire for rapprochement was growing between the United States and the Soviet Union. During this period, Pyongyang approached Washington for the first time to discuss the replacement of the existing armistice agreement with a peace treaty.

In the 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the East European socialist bloc undermined North Korea's diplomatic base. When Beijing and Moscow finally established ties with South Korea, the regime in Pyongyang encountered almost complete diplomatic isolation. Consequently, North Korea made its best efforts to improve relations with the United States, which had emerged as the sole superpower of the post-Cold War era.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, also referred to as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), is an international treaty that prohibits non-nuclear weapon states from possessing nuclear weapons or nuclear states from transferring these weapons to non-nuclear states. The treaty was signed in July 1968 and entered into force in March 1970. South Korea acceded to the treaty in 1975 and North Korea, in 1985. Pyongyang announced its intention to withdraw from the NPT in March 1993, suspended this decision in following June, and once again declared plans to withdraw from the treaty in January 2003.

The Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea was adopted in October 1994, after the North had declared its intent to withdraw from the NPT in March 1993. The main components of the agreement stated that North Korea would comply with the IAEA safeguards agreement, accept ad hoc IAEA inspections, seal the spent fuel rods extracted from the 5-MWe reactor, and transfer them to a third country. Meanwhile, the provisions stipulated that the United States would provide light-water reactor (LWR) power plants and 500,000 tons of heavy oil per year until the completion of the first LWR power unit. This agreement eventually fell apart when North Korea violated its signatory obligation and pursued alternative nuclear programs using enriched uranium.

North Korea at this time attempted to force the United States into direct negotiations by declaring its intent to withdraw from the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** in March 1993 and refusing to receive nuclear inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As a result of this brinkmanship, the North succeeded in reaching an **Agreed Framework** with the United States in October 1994. The provisions of the agreement specified that the United States would supply two light-water reactor (LWR) power plants and pursue normalization of relations, in exchange for North Korea's promise to freeze its nuclear programs. In this way, the regime was able to craft a platform for the further improvement of US relations.

Thereafter, North Korea maintained a posture of wanting to improve relations with the United States, as highlighted by the regime's cooperative efforts to excavate and repatriate the remains of American soldiers lost during the Korean War, along with its assent to participating in four-party talks involving the two Koreas, China, and the United States in April 1996, to peacefully settle issues involving the peninsula.

In September 1999, the United States and North Korea met in Berlin to sign a missile accord, thereby creating a favorable climate for the improvement of bilateral relations. The United States then partially lifted economic sanctions against North Korea, and the North announced its missile moratorium.

Throughout these endeavors, former US Secretary of State William Perry functioned as the Clinton administration's North Korea Policy Coordinator. In addition, the United States devised a framework according to which it

would provide diplomatic and economic benefits to North Korea in cooperation with South Korea and Japan, provided that Pyongyang abandons its ambitions to develop weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear bombs and missiles. In October 2000, North Korean special envoy Jo Myong-rok visited Washington, and US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made a trip to Pyongyang which entailed in-depth discussions on various pending issues such as the establishment of diplomatic missions, identification of the remains of missing American soldiers from the Korean War, and specific measures to ease tension on the Korean peninsula.

When the George W. Bush administration came to power in January 2001, these US policies toward North Korea were reassessed. This resulted in greater emphasis on verifying the status of North Korea's nuclear and missile development programs, as well as on the reduction of its conventional weapons. In response to this hard-line stance, the regime in Pyongyang first urged Washington to abide by previous agreements made to improve bilateral ties, but later resorted to taking a tougher approach.

In his State of the Union address in 2002, President Bush condemned North Korea along with Iraq and Iran as constituting an 'axis of evil.' This came after the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, as part of an endeavor to foster international cooperation in the war against terrorism. The Kim Jong Il regime reacted strongly to this stigmatization, denouncing President Bush's statement as a 'declaration of war.' The situation worsened in October 2002, when US special envoy James A. Kelly visited Pyongyang, where his counterpart made remarks that appeared to concede the existence of a North Korean uranium enrichment program. Subsequently, the United States proclaimed that it would resume bilateral talks with North Korea only after the regime abandoned its nuclear aspirations.

The North responded with strong measures. In December 2002, the

regime lifted the freeze on its nuclear facilities, which since the Agreed Framework had been under the auspices of the IAEA. Furthermore, IAEA inspectors were deported from North Korea, which declared its withdrawal from the NPT on January 10, 2003.

The United States argued that North Korea's enriched uranium program constituted a violation not only of bilateral agreements such as the Agreed Framework (1994) and the Joint Declaration of Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (1992), but also international agreements including the NPT and IAEA safeguards agreement. It also reasoned that no compensation would be paid to North Korea, since it was bound by basic obligations to give up its nuclear development.

As tension escalated between Washington and Pyongyang, the governments of China and South Korea assumed mediator roles. Subsequently, three-party talks were held in Beijing during April 23-25, 2003 between the United States, North Korea and China. During the talks, the United States emphasized that North Korea should first renounce its nuclear programs, while North Korea insisted on engaging in dialogue with the United States before multilateral talks resumed.

By expanding diplomatic efforts such as partaking in the G8 and other summits with South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia, the United States pressured North Korea to carry out a "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement (CVID)" of its nuclear programs. At

the same time, Washington further increased pressure on Pyongyang by promoting the **Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)**, designed to prevent trafficking of weapons of mass destruction. It was also argued that North Korea's nuclear development had to be addressed within the framework of multilateral talks participated in by all concerned countries, because it constituted a provocation against the international community.

In contrast, North Korea claimed that its nuclear issue

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is an international cooperative regime launched in May 2003 to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The participating member states share relevant information to prevent proliferation and carry out joint exercises when necessary. South Korea joined the PSI on May 26, 2009.

originated from Washington's hostile policy towards Pyongyang, also stating that the United States has the capability and responsibility to resolve the situation. Moreover, North Korea threatened to "continue reinforcing its nuclear deterrence," arguing that the United States refuses to engage in bilateral dialogue and insists on multilateral talks only because it has no intention of resolving the issue.

After all these twists and turns, including the exchange of fierce accusations between the United States and North Korea, China and other concerned parties came together to create a new multilateral platform. Launched as the Six Party Talks, they involve six countries – the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia. The key developments of the Six Party Talks have been as follows.

The first round of the Six Party Talks took place in Beijing on August 27-29, 2003. At this time, the United States specified that North Korea would first need to abandon its nuclear program in order to discuss matters of ensuring regime security and other political and economic benefits. It also argued that various issues including missiles, conventional arms, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, terrorism, and abduction would have to be discussed before normalizing relations. For its part, the Northern regime protested that Washington needed to end its hostility against Pyongyang and implement necessary measures for denuclearization under the principle of simultaneous action.

During the second round of the Six Party Talks held on February 25-28, 2004, the United States emphasized that North Korea needed to end the highly enriched uranium program it had pursued with Pakistan's assistance. It also emphasized that North Korea must conduct a "complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement." As the first step towards this goal, the United States said that it would not oppose energy assistance to North Korea provided by South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia. The North, however, entirely denied the existence of its uranium program while indicating that although

nuclear development for military purposes might be suspended, it intended to continue pursuing a peaceful nuclear program. North Korea also insisted that any nuclear freeze must be compensated with economic benefits.

At the third round of talks that took place on June 23-26, 2004, the United States proposed a more flexible two-phase solution. The first phase required North Korea to spend the initial three months discussing an agreement on the principle of completely dismantling all nuclear programs, including its enrichment of uranium. Upon freezing these programs, North Korea would receive from South Korea, China, Japan and Russia monthly supplies of heavy oil amounting to tens of thousands of tons. Meanwhile, Washington would give temporary security assurances, ensuring that no efforts would be undertaken to invade North Korea or overthrow the regime. In the second phase, provided that North Korea completely dismantled all nuclear programs, the United States would offer assurances of permanent security, normalize bilateral relations, and expand economic assistance.

Yet, North Korea continued to deny the existence of a uranium program while insisting on receiving 'compensation for its nuclear freeze.' Pyongyang asserted that if the United States supplied energy assistance equivalent to 2 million KW, removed North Korea from the list of states sponsoring terrorism, lifted economic sanctions, and agreed to offer other compensations, it would freeze all nuclear facilities and reprocessed products, and might even dismantle them if necessary conditions were met.

The second session of the fourth round of Six Party Talks held on September 13-19, 2005 announced a joint statement (September 19 Joint Statement), which presented principles and objectives to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. This opened a door to resolving the problem, but implementing the joint statement turned out to be no easy task. To prevent North Korea from counterfeiting dollars, the

United States froze North Korean accounts in Macao's Banco Delta Asia (BDA). The North strongly reacted against this and test-fired a Taepodong 2 missile on July 5, 2006, followed by its first nuclear test on October 9 in the same year. In response, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted **resolution 1718**, which called for economic sanctions against North Korea.

Over the protracted period of the BDA impasse, the United States and North Korea held a series of bilateral discussions, finally agreeing to resume the Six Party Talks. Accordingly, the third session of the fifth round was held on February 8-13, 2007 and on the premise that the BDA issue would soon be resolved, the parties reached an agreement on the 'initial implementation measures of the September 19 Joint Statement (February 13 agreement).' From this, an institutional basis was established to fully implement the September 19 Joint Statement, which was devised to realize denuclearization on the Korean peninsula, establish a peaceful Korean regime, and create a peaceful order in Northeast Asia.

In the first session of the sixth round of the Six Party Talks held on March 19-22, 2007, reports presented by the five working groups were reviewed, including those regarding the normalization of US-North Korea and Japan-North Korea relations, economic and energy cooperation, peace and security mechanisms in Northeast Asia, and denuclearization of the peninsula. Discussions also took place at this time on the implementation of the initial measures and actions plans for the next stage.

UN Security Council Resolution 1718 was adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on October 14, 2006. In compliance with the resolution, the international community imposed various forms of sanctions on North Korea, including control over materials - conventional arms, WMD-related materials, luxury goods – financial assets, entry and exit, and inspection of cargoes.

Table 3–1 Key Agreements in the Six Party Talks

Name of Agreement	Key Points
<p>Joint Statement on September 19, 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismantlement of North Korea's Nuclear Programs and Removal of North Korea's Security Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – North Korea committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs. – The United States affirmed that it has no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula and has no intention to attack or invade North Korea. – North Korea stated that it has the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The other parties expressed their respect and agreed to discuss, at an appropriate time, the subject of the provision of light water reactor to North Korea. • Normalization of Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – North Korea and the United States undertook to respect each other's sovereignty, exist peacefully together, and take steps to normalize their relations. – North Korea and Japan undertook to take steps to normalize their relations. • International Assistance to North Korea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The six parties undertook to promote economic cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and investment. – China, Japan, ROK, Russia and the US stated their willingness to provide energy assistance to North Korea. – The ROK reaffirmed its proposal of July 12, 2005 concerning the provision of 2 million kilowatts of electric power to North Korea. • Vision for Peace and Stability on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The directly related parties will negotiate a permanent peace regime on the Korean peninsula at an appropriate separate forum. – The six parties agreed to explore ways and means for promoting security cooperation in Northeast Asia. • Principles for Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The six parties agreed to take coordinated steps to implement the aforementioned consensus in a phased manner in line with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action."
<p>Agreement on February 13, 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plans for Initial Phase: Within first 60 days <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – North Korea will shut down and seal existing nuclear facilities, including the reprocessing facility, and invite back IAEA inspectors. – North Korea will discuss with other parties a list of all its nuclear programs. – North Korea and the US will start bilateral talks aimed at moving toward full diplomatic relations. The US will begin the process of removing the designation of North Korea as a state-sponsor of terrorism and terminating the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act with respect to North Korea. – North Korea and Japan will start bilateral talks aimed at taking steps to normalize their relations. – The parties agreed to the provision of emergency energy assistance equivalent to 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil to North Korea. • Establishment of Five Working Groups: First WG meetings within next 30 days <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, Normalization of North Korea–US Relations, Normalization of North Korea–Japan Relations, Economy and Energy Cooperation, Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism • Action Plans for Next Phase: After the completion of the initial phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – North Korea would make a complete declaration of all nuclear programs and disable all existing nuclear facilities. – The other parties would provide economic, energy, and humanitarian assistance equivalent of 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil to North Korea. • Ministerial Meeting: After the completion of the initial phase • Peace Regime on the Korean Peninsula: The directly related parties will negotiate a permanent peace regime on the Korean peninsula at an appropriate separate forum.
<p>Agreement on October 3, 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Korea agreed to disable all existing nuclear facilities by the end of year. • North Korea agreed to declare all its nuclear programs by the end of year. • North Korea reaffirmed its commitment not to transfer nuclear materials, technology, or know-how. • The United States would begin the process of removing the designation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. • The United States would advance the process of terminating the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act with respect to North Korea. • The United States and Japan would make sincere efforts to normalize their relations with North Korea. • The five parties would provide economic, energy and humanitarian assistance equivalent of one million tons of heavy fuel oil.

The BDA issue, which had been a great obstacle in executing the agreements reached at the Six Party Talks, began to progress towards resolution. This induced North Korea to invite a group of IAEA inspectors in June 2007 and embark on freezing its 5-MWe reactor and other facilities in Yongbyon, in compliance with the February 13 agreement.

In the second session held on September 27-30 of the same year, the six parties agreed on the 'joint statement for second phase denuclearization (October 3 Agreement),' in accordance with the September 19 Joint Statement and February 13 Agreement. According to these provisions, North Korea had agreed to disable three nuclear facilities in Yongbyon by December 31, namely the 5-MWe reactor, plutonium reprocessing facility, and nuclear fuel rod manufacturing plant. In addition, it promised not to transfer nuclear materials, technology or know-how.

However, North Korea belatedly submitted its declaration of nuclear programs on June 26, 2008, well past the expected deadline of December 31, 2007. Furthermore, the North announced on August 26, 2008 that it would suspend disabling its nuclear development, on the grounds that the United States had not yet removed the regime from its list of states sponsoring terrorism. On October 11, 2008, a hundred days before the end of the Bush administration, the United States finally removed the North from the list, but no breakthroughs ensued. At the head delegates meeting that took place in Beijing on December 8-11 that year, North Korea refused to adopt a verification protocol that would include scientific sampling. This resulted in a failure to reach an agreement. Subsequently, the problem of North Korea's denuclearization was passed down to the Obama administration.

North Korea reacted promptly to President Obama's inauguration in January 2009, expressing expectations of achieving progress in



| The UN Security Council adopted resolution 1874 imposing sanctions on North Korea (June 12, 2009)

the Six Party Talks and the improvement of bilateral relations under the new administration. Yet the Obama administration made it clear that without the North's complete dismantlement of nuclear weapons and clearing of all suspicions, a normalization of relations would be impossible.

It was against this backdrop that North Korea launched a long-range missile on April 5, 2009, leading the UN Security Council to adopt a presidential statement and to designate three North Korean enterprises for sanctions. In response, North Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement saying that the regime would no longer participate in the Six Party Talks, indicating that it would resume reprocessing spent fuel rods.

UN Security Council Resolution 1874 was adopted unanimously by the UNSC on June 12, 2009 in response to North Korea's second nuclear test on May 25. On top of sanctions imposed under resolution 1718, the new resolution imposed strong additional measures against North Korea. These include reinforcing cargo inspection at sea, intensified financial and banking control, and extended arms embargo.

North Korea took further actions to conduct a second nuclear test on May 25, 2009. This test further isolated Pyongyang from the rest of the international community as the UN Security Council adopted **resolution 1874**, which called for much stronger sanctions. Nonetheless, the North continued to put pressure on Washington by reinforcing its nuclear capabilities. The regime announced that it had completed the reprocessing of nuclear fuel rods in 2009, and disclosed its enrichment facilities in 2010.

In July and October 2011, the United States and North Korea held two rounds of high-level meetings to discuss various issues, including possible US food aid and a temporary suspension of North Korea's uranium enrichment program. At this time, the United States demanded that North Korea take initial steps such as measures to halt its uranium enrichment and allow the return of IAEA inspectors. North Korea, however, insisted that the Six Party Talks should resume without pre-conditions. Upon Kim Jong-il's sudden death on December 17, 2011, the third round of the high-level talks was postponed from December to take place in Beijing on February 23-24. On February 29,

Washington and Pyongyang simultaneously released the details of the so-called Leap Day agreement. According to the provisions set forth, North Korea was required to take initial steps towards denuclearization by declaring a moratorium on its missile launch and uranium enrichment, also enabling IAEA officials to return to Yongbyon facilities. In return, the United States agreed to provide 240,000 metric tons of food aid.

In spite of this agreement, however, North Korea fired a long-range missile on April 13, 2012. Responding with unprecedented promptness, the UN Security Council adopted a presidential statement that strongly condemned the missile launch. The statement consisted of nine points, which included the addition of new items and organizations that would fall under sanctions, as well as corresponding measures to counter further missile or nuclear provocations. Accordingly, the UN Security Council singled out three additional North Korean companies for sanctions.

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry in Pyongyang fully rejected the UNSC's presidential statement and announced that the regime would no longer be bound by the February 29 agreement. The United States, for its part, regarded the missile launch as a provocation in violation of North Korea's international obligations and in defiance of UN resolutions, and thus announced the suspension of food aid to North Korea.

Table 3-2 Major Progress in the Six Party Talks

Round	Time	Major Progress
First	Aug. 27-29, 2003	• Formation of a consensus on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and principle of peaceful resolution through dialogue
Second	Feb. 25-28, 2004	• Reaffirmation of a consensus on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and principle of peaceful resolution
Third	Jun. 23-26, 2004	• Formation of a consensus on a need for initial actions for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and phased process based on the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action"
Fourth	Session 1 Jul. 26-Aug. 7, 2005	• Adoption of the September 19 Joint Statement
	Session 2 Sep. 13-19, 2005	
Fifth	Session 1 Nov. 9-11, 2005	• Affirmation of willingness to fully implement the September 19 Joint Statement
	Session 2 Dec. 18-22, 2006	• Reaffirmation of willingness to fully implement the September 19 Joint Statement and agreement on taking coordinated steps in its implementation
	Session 3 Feb. 8-13, 2007	• Agreement on the initial-phase actions for the implementation of the September 19 Joint Statement (The February 13 Agreement)
Sixth	Session 1 Mar. 19-22, 2007	• Agreement on the second-phase actions for the implementation of the September 19 Joint Statement (The October 3 Agreement)
	Session 2 Sep. 27-30, 2007	

Source : Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2007 Diplomatic White Paper*, p.38; *2008 Diplomatic White Paper*, pp.27-28

2. Japan-North Korea Relations

It was in the mid-1950s when North Korea first engaged in economic exchanges with Japan through indirect trade. At that time both countries had touched on the matter of normalizing ties, but it was not until the early 1970s that they embarked on formal discussions to address the issue.

Against the backdrop of international detente in the 1970s, Japan and North Korea made greater efforts to improve bilateral relations,

particularly driven by the expansion of friendship and cooperation between the United States and China, along with developments in inter-Korean dialogue. Nonetheless, talks on normalizing relations did not commence until January 1991. They were held eleven times altogether until November 2000. Throughout these discussions, the two sides displayed sharp differences of opinion on various issues, including compensation for Japanese colonial rule, the inspection of North Korea's nuclear facilities, and the fate of Japanese abductees. Consequently, little progress was made despite numerous rounds of contacts and talks. However, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang on September 17, 2002 produced a breakthrough in bilateral relations. During his visit, Prime Minister Koizumi had a summit meeting with Kim Jong-il, which was aimed at reaching comprehensive resolutions for major issues. The summit results were announced as the Pyongyang Declaration.⁵

On October 15, 2002, North Korea gave the five surviving Japanese abductees the authorization to visit their hometowns in Japan. The Japanese government, however, did not return them to North Korea, announcing on October 24 that they would remain permanently in Japan. It also demanded the repatriation of their families remaining in North Korea.

As agreed in the Pyongyang Declaration, Japan and North Korea resumed normalization talks for the first time in two years on October 29-30, 2002 in Kuala Lumpur. Japan insisted that North Korea abandon nuclear development and the two sides could not compromise their differences on abduction issues. The talks thus concluded without a date having been set for another meeting.

On May 22, 2004 a year and eight months after their first summit, Koizumi and Kim Jong-il held a second meeting, where they agreed to resume the normalization talks that had remained suspended since October 2002. The two leaders also agreed that five of eight surviving

⁵ In the Pyongyang Declaration between North Korea and Japan, Japan expressed self-reflection and an apology in regard to colonial rule, and agreed to provide North Korea with economic cooperation including grant aids and humanitarian assistance. North Korea, on the other hand, apologized for the abduction of Japanese citizens and promised that such a thing would not recur. It also agreed to abide by international agreements, and extended a moratorium on missile launching until after 2003.

abduction victims would return to Japan accompanied by the Japanese prime minister, while Charles Jenkins' family would later be allowed to meet the American runaway soldier in a third country. They also confirmed that the investigation into missing Japanese citizens would start again from scratch. In return, Japan agreed to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea and avoid passing any laws imposing sanctions against the North, as long as the regime complied with the Pyongyang Declaration.

Despite this progress, however, it proved difficult for Japan and North Korea to improve relations. In December 2004, North Korea handed over the remains of Japanese abductee Yokoda Megumi to Japan, but controversy over the authenticity of the remains grew, contributing to the rapid hardening of Japanese public opinion in regard to North Korea. The regime in Pyongyang reacted strongly to this, insisting that the abduction issue had been completely resolved.

At the thirteenth normalization talks held in Beijing on February 4-8, 2006, Japan and North Korea only confirmed the two sides' differences. The talks quickly fell through, and the deadlock in Japan-North Korea relations continues.

North Korea conducted a missile launch on July 5, 2006, followed by a nuclear test on October 9 in the same year. Japan subsequently led calls for international sanctions against Pyongyang, imposing additional sanctions of its own by prohibiting the landing of chartered planes, the entry of North Korean government officials and crew, and the import of all North Korean products.

Nevertheless, the agreement reached in the Six-Party Talks on February 13, 2007 contained a stipulation (Article 2, Clause 4) that Japan and North Korea should start bilateral talks on normalizing their relations. Accordingly, the two countries held a working-level meeting in Beijing on June 11-12, 2008 where issues of normalization were discussed. In this meeting, North Korea modified its position on

the issue of Japanese abductees and pledged to reinvestigate the matter. It also expressed a willingness to cooperate on extraditing the Red Army Faction members who had hijacked Japan Airlines Flight 351 (or *Yodoho*) and their families. In return, Japan agreed to lift some of the sanctions it had imposed on North Korea, to allow North Korean ships to enter Japanese harbors when they are transporting humanitarian goods, and also to allow the exchange of people between Japan and North Korea.

However, the Aso cabinet, which came into office in September 2008, made a strong demand for the resolution of the abductee issue. Consequently, Japan-North Korea relations once again cooled. When North Korea launched a long-range missile in April 2009 and conducted its second nuclear test in May of the same year, Japan actively participated in adopting the UNSCR 1874 on June 12, 2009. It also heightened pressure on Pyongyang by reinforcing bilateral sanctions, which included a complete prohibition of exports to North Korea.

When a Democratic Party cabinet came to power in Japan in September 2009, North Korea expressed hopes of normalizing relations. Unfortunately for Pyongyang, Japan's new Prime Minister Hatoyama adhered to the old position that North Korea must first abandon its nuclear programs and resolve the abduction issues. North Korea, for its part, said that Japan had no qualifications to participate in the Six-Party Talks because it had refused to join other countries in providing energy assistance to the North, under the pretext of unresolved abductee issues. The two sides remained in confrontational mode even after Naoto Kan was inaugurated as Japan's new prime minister in June 2010. With the sinking of the South Korean navy ship *Cheonan* in March 2010 and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in the following November, Tokyo took an even tougher stance towards Pyongyang.

Since the inauguration of the Noda cabinet in August 2011, Japan has stressed the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance and its hope for continued close cooperation with the United States and South Korea with regard to dialogue between the two Koreas, talks between the United States and North Korea, and the Six-Party Talks. At the same time, it has also indicated willingness to negotiate directly with North Korea.

Japan's basic stance on North Korea's nuclear programs is that they are a direct threat to national security. Therefore, Tokyo believes that through close cooperation with the United States and South Korea, the UNSC sanctions as well as its bilateral sanctions must be strictly implemented, while efforts to realize North Korea's denuclearization must continue in the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

3. China-North Korea Relations

There have been ups and downs in China-North Korea relations over the sixty some years since the regime in Pyongyang was established. Nonetheless, in political, economic, and military areas the two countries have generally maintained a relationship described as being "as close as teeth and lips." Even after the collapse of the socialist bloc, China has maintained support for North Korea on the basis of ideology, which leaves it as the only ally the North can rely on among the few remaining socialist nations.

Amid its post-Cold War transformation, however, China adopted policies that place greater weight on economic benefits rather than ideology. This has led to substantial trials and tribulations for China-North Korea relations. In 1991 China abandoned a system of barter trading it had maintained with the socialist bloc, and started to demand payment in hard currency in its trade with North Korea. Furthermore, the establishment of diplomatic relations between

China and South Korea in August 1992 became a catalyst for a rapid deterioration in relations between Beijing and Pyongyang.

Though the two sides maintained all surface signs of an alliance, their relations remained slightly strained. After Kim Il-sung visited China in October 1991 and Chinese President Yang Shangkun made a trip to North Korea in 1992, the traditional exchange of state visits was suspended for eight years.

With the official inauguration of the Kim Jong-il regime in September 1998, North Korea expended great effort to improve its relations with China, because it needed Chinese assistance to overcome international isolation and economic hardship. Accordingly, Kim Jong-il made his first trip to Beijing in May 2000 and six more visits to China thereafter until the end of 2010, in order to find ways to expand bilateral cooperation between the two countries

On an informal visit to China on January 15-20, 2001, Kim Jong-il reached an agreement with the Chinese leadership on enhancing their friendly and cooperative relationship. Having toured high-tech factories as well as banking and commercial facilities in the Fudong district of Shanghai during his visit, Kim expressed high praise for what China had achieved through its reform and open-door policy.

A subsequent visit by Chinese President Jiang Zemin to Pyongyang on September 3-5, 2001 provided an opportunity for the two countries to restore their relations, which had undergone strains after China's normalization of relations with South Korea. China pledged to provide rice, heavy oil, and fertilizer to North Korea, and the two sides agreed to advance their political relations by strengthening ties between their communist parties.

Inaugurated in 2003, the Hu Jintao government stressed the importance of strategic cooperation with Pyongyang and affirmed its North Korea policy aimed at upholding tradition, building future-

oriented endeavors, maintaining friendly ties, and expanding bilateral cooperation. Moreover, Hu Jintao's visit to North Korea in October 2005 raised the bilateral relations to a more practical level. During his meeting with Kim Jong-il, Hu reiterated four principles for the improvement of China-North Korea relations. The four principles were: upholding the tradition of exchange of high-level officials, expanding the area of cooperative exchanges, targeting joint development through economic and trade cooperation, and pursuing common interests through active cooperation between the two countries.

On January 10-18, 2006, Kim Jong-il again visited China, where he had meetings with Hu Jintao. During his visit, Kim toured businesses and laboratories in economic hubs such as Beijing, Guangdong Province, and Shenzhen. It was noticed at this time that Kim Jong-il was accompanied by a group of his top economic officials, including Prime Minister Pak Pong-ju, as well as WPK directors Pak Nam-ki and Ri Kwang-ho.

However, when North Korea conducted its first nuclear test in October 2006, China condemned Pyongyang more strongly than ever before, and did not object to the adoption of a UN resolution imposing sanctions against it. Even under these circumstances, Beijing maintained its position that the North Korean nuclear issue had to be resolved through dialogue and negotiation, and opposed full-scale economic sanctions that would have forced Pyongyang into a corner.

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties, China and North Korea designated 2009 as the "Year of Friendship," in the course of which visits of high-level officials were exchanged. On the Chinese side, Director of the International Department of the Central Committee Wang Jiarui visited Pyongyang on January 22-24, and Premier Wen Jiabao met with Kim Jong-il on October 4-6. On the North Korean side, Premier Kim Yong-il visited Beijing on March 17-20 to attend the commemoration ceremony of the 60th anniversary.

Amid such friendly exchanges, however, North Korea's second nuclear test in May 2009 led to renewed strain in bilateral relations. Immediately after the test, China expressed its regret in official statements and even joined UNSC sanctions against North Korea.

Kim Jong-il visited China four times between May 2010 and August 2011. Three summit meetings with Chinese counterparts during these visits demonstrated North Korea's strong desire to expand cooperation with China. The Chinese government announced that Kim Jong-il visited Dandong, Dalian, Beijing, and Shenyang during May 3-7, 2010 and engaged in a meeting with President Hu Jintao. At this time, the two leaders agreed to reinforce "strategic communication" while continuing efforts to exchange senior officials and expand economic and trade cooperation. Kim also toured Jirin, Changchun, and Harbin from August 26 to 30, 2010, and met again with Hu Jintao in Changchun. It is believed that at this Changchun summit, the two leaders continued the discussion begun at their May visit in regard to the Six-Party Talks, the Changjitu development project and other forms of economic cooperation and assistance. Kim Jong-il's two consecutive visits to China were unprecedented; it is presumed that North Korea was seeking improved relations with Beijing as a way out of the isolation in which it found itself after the sinking of the South Korean vessel *Cheonan*.

In the bilateral summit held during Kim Jong-il's visit to China on May 20-27, 2011, the two sides agreed on preserving their friendship through generations. The two leaders also recognized both sides' efforts to implement the Changchun agreements and agreed on the need to seek denuclearization on the Korean peninsula through the Six-Party Talks. According to a North Korean report, President Hu had emphasized the importance of enhancing friendly relations between China and North Korea and indirectly expressed his support for North Korea's hereditary succession of power by stating that China

“highly respects the spirit of the Conference of Party Representatives.” It was presumed that Pyongyang sought cooperation with China to create a favorable economic environment for building a “strong and prosperous nation” by 2012, while on the political side, it endeavored to resume Six-Party Talks and dialogue with the United States to ease international sanctions.

On December 19, 2011, two days after Kim Jong-il’s death, the Chinese government made an official statement according to which China and North Korea would continue strengthening relations between their two parties, states, and people, in order to actively contribute to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia. This was perceived as foreshadowing a closer cooperation between the two sides, both of which had an interest in maintaining stability in North Korean politics in the wake of Kim Jong-il’s death.

Believing that maintaining the status quo on the peninsula is advantageous to its own economic development and national security, China has expressed regret and condemnation in regard to North Korea’s missile launches and nuclear tests, while remaining opposed to sanctions that could destabilize the North Korean regime. China supported a UNSC resolution condemning North Korea’s launching of a long-range missile in April 2012, but reiterated its stance that Pyongyang and Washington should adhere to the February 29 agreement and resolve their differences through dialogue and compromise.

Evidently China also shares the view that improving inter-Korean relations is the first step to resolving problems on the peninsula. Given the unique features of China-North Korea relations and China’s prioritization of national security, their friendly, cooperative relationship is expected to continue.

4. Russia-North Korea Relations

Until the end of the Cold War, a friendly alliance was maintained between the Soviet Union and North Korea. Moscow backed the establishment of the regime in Pyongyang in a spirit of ideological unity. After the Korean War, the USSR helped North Korea's post-war reconstruction and armament, while keeping a check on Beijing-Pyongyang relations. With the signing of the Soviet-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in July 1961, the Soviet-North Korean Treaty of Military Assistance in May 1965, and the treaty on technology and economic assistance in June 1966, North Korea received military and economic assistance from the USSR. Nonetheless, during the era of detente in the 1970s, Kim Il-sung claimed to be pursuing an independent path, siding with neither Beijing nor Moscow.

Since the end of the Cold War, Moscow has exercised a balanced diplomacy on the peninsula, leaving Pyongyang with little choice but to adjust its relations with Moscow. When the Soviet Union fell in December 1991 and a Commonwealth of Independent States comprised of eleven republics was launched, North Korea quickly established diplomatic relations with each and every republic.

The first meeting of the Russian-North Korean Commission for Trade, Economy, and Science Cooperation was held in April 1996 in Pyongyang, where the two sides eventually signed a treaty on investment protection. The aim was to increase Russia's investment in the Rajin-Sonbong area and to expand bilateral trade through the supply of crude oil and the exchange of metalworking products.

As economic cooperation between the two countries expanded, political relations also gradually recovered. The first round of talks on a new security treaty began on January 21, 1997. Both sides agreed to leave out a clause on automatic military intervention, which had

been a key issue in negotiations, as well as a clause expressing Russia's support for Pyongyang's unification formula, known as the Koryo Confederation. The two sides initialed the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation in Pyongyang on March 17, 1999, and it was officially signed in February 2000.

The new security treaty transformed bilateral ties between Russia and North Korea from an ideologically-based political and military alliance to an economic partnership.

After the signing of this treaty, Russian President Vladimir Putin became in July 2000 the highest ranking Russian or Soviet leader to visit North Korea, where he laid the foundation for strengthening cooperation between the two countries. Kim Jong-il and Putin took part in one-on-one and expanded summit meetings, finally signing a joint declaration regarding mutual cooperation and North Korea's missile launch.⁶

Returning Putin's visit, Kim Jong-il made an official trip to Russia from July 26 to August 18, 2001. The exchange of state visits brought bilateral relations back on track, enabling the two countries to expand cooperation in a full range of areas. The Moscow Declaration, jointly announced by the two heads of state on August 4, 2001, included agreements on the restoration of bilateral cooperation, the connection of the Trans-Siberian Railway with the inter-Korean rail line, consultation of policy toward the United States, and sharing the same views on situations in the Korean peninsula.

Kim Jong-il visited Russia once again on August 20-24, 2002. A third summit meeting was held with President Putin in Vladivostok, where the two agreed to make efforts promoting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. They also concurred on expanding economic cooperation between Russia and North Korea, including the issue of linking the inter-Korean rail line with the Trans-Siberian railway.

⁶The key points of the Russian–North Korean joint declaration were as follows: The two parties shall affirm the spirits of the new treaty aimed at expanding mutual cooperation and collaboration; contact each other without delay in case either party is invaded or its security is threatened; respect the purpose and principles of the UN Charter and oppose the use of force or threats that threatens the Charter; uphold the 1972 Anti–Ballistic Missile Treaty; emphasize the peaceful nature of North Korea's missile programme; oppose the construction of a theatrical missile defense system in the Asia–Pacific region; expand global economic cooperation; actively link their trade, economy, science, and technology.

In March 2007, the fourth Russian-North Korean joint economic committee meeting was held, the first such meeting in six years. In October 2007, Vice-Ministerial talks between the two countries also took place, for the first time in four years, to discuss practical ways to expand economic cooperation. During the Six Party Talks, Russia accommodated North Korean positions to a certain extent when making agreements on the initial implementation actions of the September 19 joint statement on February 13, 2007, as well as on the second-phase implementation actions for the September 19 joint statement in October 3, 2007. Evidently Russia needed to counterbalance the United States and Japan by supporting Pyongyang, while the Kim Jong-il regime needed Russia in order to help preserve its rule.

Close cooperation between Russia and North Korea continued. In Moscow in April 2008, the two countries signed an agreement on modernizing railways between Rajin and the Tumen River along with Rajin port. Moreover, Russia signed a contract to lease the Rajin-Tumen River railway in early August in Pyongyang. Celebrating the 60th anniversary of their bilateral relations, the two countries held a groundbreaking ceremony on the Rajin-Hassan railway and Rajin port on October 4.

The Russian vice foreign minister's visit to Pyongyang led to further bilateral exchanges in 2009. Nonetheless, Russia openly condemned North Korea after its second nuclear test on May 25, and also supported the adoption of UNSC sanctions against it.

Though the bilateral relations suffered a certain setback in 2010, Kim Jong-il paid a visit to Russia on August 20-25, 2011, at the invitation of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The two leaders held a summit meeting at an army base in Ulan-Ude, where they agreed on



Modernizing railways between Rajin, North Korea and Hassan, Russia

the resumption of the Six-Party Talks, the expansion of economic cooperation, and the construction of a natural gas pipeline across Russia and the two Koreas. Through such tri-lateral construction projects, Russia stands to gain in its endeavor to develop the Russian Far East. Moscow also seeks to assume the role of mediator between South and North Korea.

On the North Korean nuclear problem, Russia aims at enhancing its status by mediating between the United States and China, at the same time checking their dominance in the region. Moscow also strives to exert its influence on North Korea and create a new political and economic order that would serve its own interests in Northeast Asia.

5. EU-North Korea Relations

Just before the 54th session of the UN General Assembly in September 1999, North Korea proposed to the United Kingdom and most other members of the European Union a foreign ministers' meeting, the first such proposal it had ever made, in the apparent hope of expanding its relations with European countries. On January 4, 2000, North Korea established full diplomatic ties with Italy, a member of both the European Union and the G7, thereby securing a foothold from which to approach other West European countries. In the following September, Pyongyang proposed establishing diplomatic ties with seven EU member states with which it had hitherto not had diplomatic relations.

The EU member states responded positively to North Korea's initiatives. Following the third Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Seoul in October 2000, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Spain expressed their desire to establish diplomatic ties with Pyongyang, accelerating bilateral negotiations on the process. As many member states had at the ASEM expressed their willingness to form bilateral ties with North

Korea, an EU delegation headed by Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, then chairman of the EU, visited Pyongyang. Prime Minister Persson thus became the first head of state from a Western country to meet with Kim Jong-il. During this meeting, Persson received Kim Jong-il's confirmation of a moratorium on missile launches and discussed with him North Korea's human right conditions. The two leaders agreed that North Korea would send an economic delegation to Europe. On May 14, immediately after Persson's return from the trip, the European Commission announced its decision to establish diplomatic ties with Pyongyang.

At the same time, North Korea also made efforts to improve its relations with individual European states. It established diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom on December 12, 2000, and Germany on March 1, 2001. By 2010, it had established ties with all 25 members of the European Union except for France and Estonia.

Pyongyang also strove to expand economic relations with European nations. A North Korean economic delegation headed by Minister of Trade Ri Kwang-kun visited Belgium, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom in March 2002 to study the capitalist economic system. In addition, North Korea made efforts to expand exchange and cooperation with European countries by frequently sending short-term trainees to study there. In December 2002, the North decided to replace the means of foreign payment from the U.S. dollar to the euro.⁷

Especially noteworthy is that the EU and the North have held joint workshops on economic reform since 2004. These workshops are co-sponsored by Germany's Friedrich Naumann Foundation, the EU delegation in Seoul, and North Korea's foreign ministry. The British embassy in Pyongyang, which represents the European Union in North Korea, has provided support for these workshops, in which a number of economists and diplomats from EU member states have participated. The first one was held in August 2004 to review the history of North

⁷The Voice of Russia reported, "North Korea's Foreign Trade Bank has declared that foreign citizens working in North Korea have to move their dollar accounts and exchange all cash in US dollars into other foreign currencies within next few days." According to the report, "all banks in North Korea would switch dollar accounts into euro accounts." (December 2, 2012)

Korea's economic development and discuss prospects for change in the wake of the 2002 economic reforms. The second workshop, which took place in Pyongyang during October 11-14, 2005, dealt with topics such as the state's role in economic management, strategies for attracting foreign investment, and the restructuring of state enterprises and agriculture. These workshops brought over 100 North Korean officials from economic ministries and other agencies together with economic experts from eight EU member states, EU diplomats, and heads of foreign companies in Pyongyang.⁸

The European Union has continued a political dialogue with North Korea and addressed human right issues as one of the key agendas. However, as there was no sign of improvement on the North Korean side, the EU has since 2003 repeatedly introduced resolutions on North Korean human rights to the UN Human Rights Commission located in Geneva, Switzerland. The Commission has adopted a series of resolutions condemning human rights abuse in North Korea, and urged its government to make efforts to improve the situation. Since 2005, renewed efforts have been made to adopt a North Korean human rights resolution in the UN General Assembly every year. The European Union has taken initiatives to introduce the resolutions in the General Assembly. Although they are not legally binding, they undoubtedly put pressure on North Korea, because they provide legal grounds for ongoing measures regarding the issue of human rights.

Political dialogue between the European Union and North Korea was severed when a human rights resolution introduced by the EU was adopted by the United Nations in November 2005. Talks did not resume until 2007, when certain progress was made in the third session of the fifth round of the Six Party Talks. However, North Korea's long-range missile launch in April 2009 and its second nuclear test in May quickly led to another freeze in relations. Following the sinking of the South Korean navy ship *Cheonan* in March 2010, the

⁸ Park Young-ho et al., *Situations in Northeast Asia in the 21st Century and North Korean Human Rights* (Baeksan Jaryowon: Seoul, 2006), p.245

European Parliament adopted a ‘resolution on the situation in the Korean peninsula’ in June 17.

In short, North Korea may hope that improved relations with the European Union will lead to economic assistance, but it has thus far failed to achieve this objective due to controversies over nuclear development, missile launches, and human rights abuse.

Table 3–3 Diplomatic Ties with Other Countries (as of Dec. 2010)

Region	No. of Countries with Diplomatic Ties		Countries with Diplomatic Ties with Both Koreas	Countries with Diplomatic Ties with Only	
	South Korea	North Korea		South Korea	North Korea
Asia	36	25	25	11	0
Americas	34	24	23	11	1
Europe	53	49	48	5	1
Middle East	19	17	16	3	1
Africa	46	46	46	0	0
Total	188	161	158	30	3

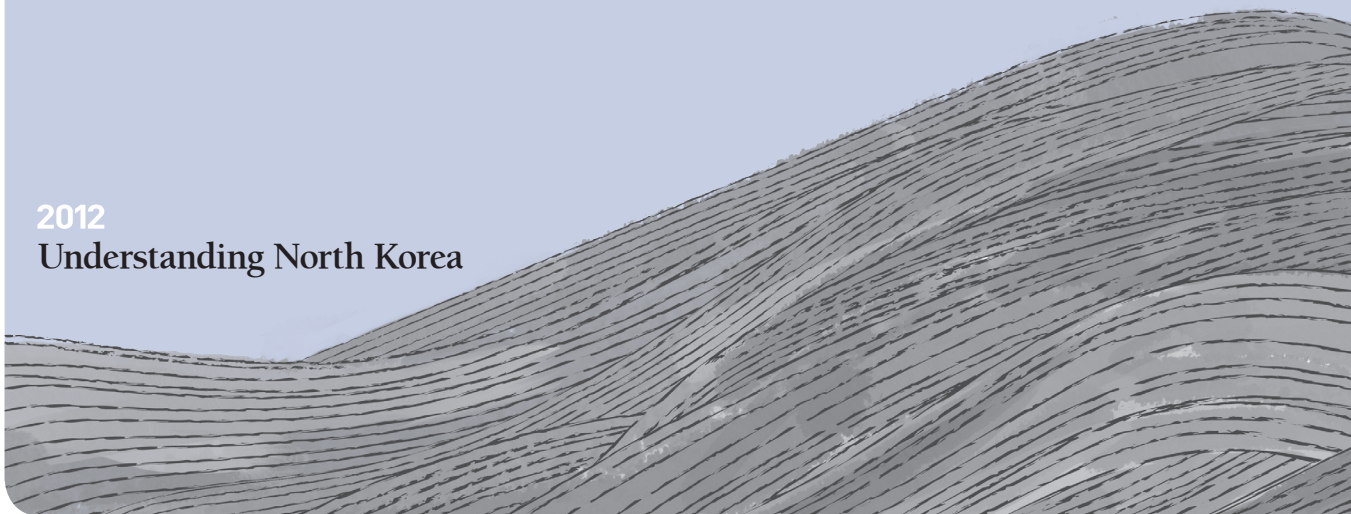
* Excepting Taiwan and South and North Korea, South Korea has diplomatic ties with 188 out of 192 countries in the world. The only four countries that do not have diplomatic ties with South Korea are Macedonia, Syria, Kosovo, and Cuba.

Source : Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2011 Diplomatic White Paper*, pp.276–277

NORTH KOREA

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Understanding North Korea



4

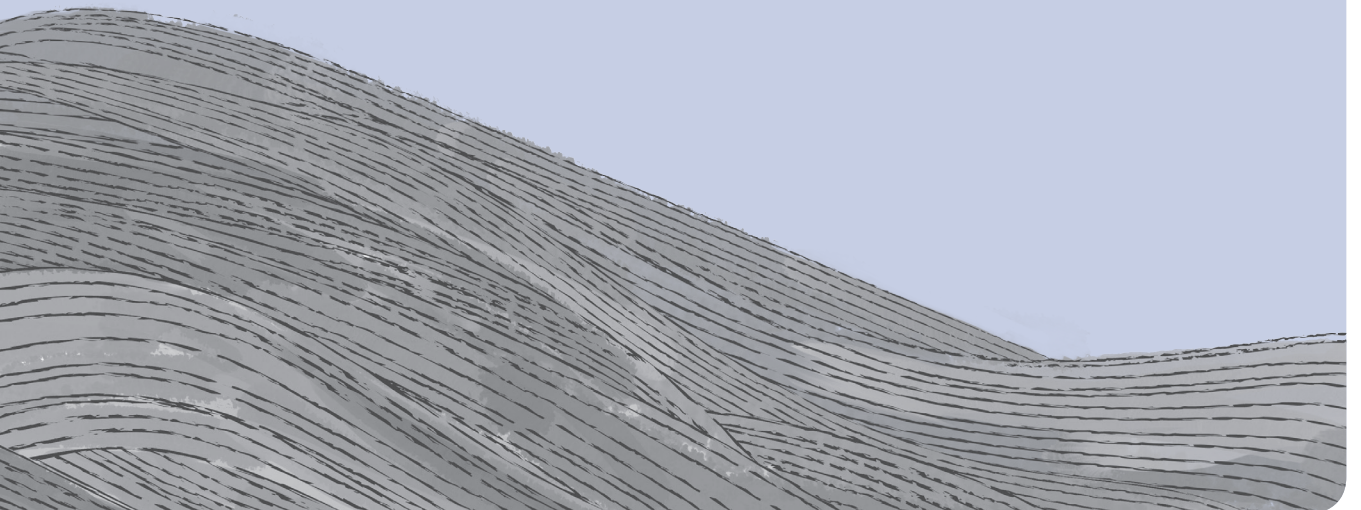
Military Strategy and Capacity

Section 1. Characteristics and Functions

Section 2. Structure and Institutions

Section 3. Military Strategy and Capacity

Section 4. Military Relations and Provocations against the South



Key Point

01

North Korea's military takes on an internal role as the armed forces of the WPK, revolution and *suryŏng*, committed to guarding the regime and defending its ruler. On the external front, it is the military means that enables the WPK and *suryŏng* to work towards achieving the political objectives of independence and the communization of the Korean peninsula.

02

North Korea's claim to build a strong and prosperous nation has been accompanied by efforts to develop strategic weapons such as nuclear bombs and missiles. This resulted in cuts in international aid to North Korea, including recent cuts at a time when it was already reeling from a failed currency reform. The regime is now set on reinforcing its capability to stage special warfare, including Special Forces Units and electronic attack. North Korea's development of nuclear and other strategic weapons underpin its extreme tactics of brinkmanship, and achieving superiority in military prowess has been exploited to extort concessions from the international community. This remains a threat to peace in Northeast Asia and the world at large.

03

To revive its decrepit economy, North Korea has long mobilized its troops in the construction of buildings, bridges, harbors, and roads, in addition to consignment management and other agricultural developments. North Korea's military also secures operating funds by means of business activities, including panning for gold and projects that earn foreign currency. Consequently, some sectors of the armed forces have been transformed as viable economic units for the survival of the military.

04

North Korea has the world's largest military compared to the size of its population, counting its reserve forces. With a quantitative advantage in conventional forces, the North retains the capacity to stage a limited war that involves terrorist methods or surprise attacks to assure the quick capture of key regions, as well as military strategies that would achieve occupation of the entire Southern region before reinforcement arrives.

Section 1

Characteristics and Functions

1. Characteristics and Functions of the KPA

The preamble revision of the WPK rules in September 2010 stipulates, “the pressing objective of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) is to build a strong and prosperous socialist nation in the northern half of the Republic, and achieve tasks of national liberation and democratic revolution on a nationwide scale. Meanwhile, the ultimate objective is to place the entire society under the banner of *juche* ideology and fully realize the independence of the general masses.”

In accordance, the internal role of the Korean People’s Army (KPA) is to become the armed forces of the WPK, the revolution and the *suryŏng*, committed to defending its ruler. On the external front, the KPA serves to realize political objectives of both the WPK and the *suryŏng*, which is to ‘achieve unification of the Korean peninsula under communism,’ by means of ‘independence’ and ‘revolution and liberalization of the South.’

Constitution in North Korea states that “the mission of the KPA is to carry out the political line of the military-first policy, and thereby defend the leadership of the revolution and safeguard the interest of the working class, in addition to protecting the socialist system, achievements of the socialist revolution, freedom, independence and peace on the fatherland.”

As cited above, the key mission of the KPA is to defend the leadership of the socialist revolution. This enables the supreme leader to regard the military as the only means of assuring his survival and sustaining the regime. Meanwhile, the special interest and privilege accorded the armed forces induces their support and obedience.

With the collapse of the East European communist bloc, military status in North Korea was further consolidated under the ideological banner of the military-first policy. As described by the party newspaper *Rodong Sinmun*, the military-first policy is “a unique mode of politics that dedicates maximum effort to reinforcing the KPA, in which military power becomes the basis that propels general tasks in the vanguard of the socialist revolution and construction of a socialist nation (Oct. 9, 1998).” As such, this political method gives top priority to reinforcing the armed forces and places the military at the center of all state affairs. In 2012, a New Year’s joint editorial was published subsequent to Kim Jong-il’s death, in which Kim Jong-un was equated with his late father, along with being idolized as the military figurehead, eternal center of national unity, and supreme leader. This presentation of the young ruler further underscored the importance of establishing his sole leadership.

Though explicit advocacy of a military-first policy only began in 1998, the armed forces in North Korea were never considered less important than any other sector. This is evident in the KPA’s foundation and organization (Feb. 1948), which took place seven months prior to the establishment of the Northern regime (Sept. 1948).

North Korea has always regarded the KPA as its highest priority, and developed the armed forces to serve both the *suryŏng* and WPK for socialist revolution and national unification.

The North continues to pursue its military-first policy and address the KPA as revolutionary armed forces. This indicates that the regime, which maintains its power base in the military, has not abandoned its desire to take over by force and unify the Korean peninsula under communism.

The Four-point Military Guideline is the bedrock of North Korea’s military policy that promotes such objectives. The North’s constitution states that “on the basis of politically and ideologically arming the military and populace, the state shall realize a self-defensive military force built on the following objectives: (1) a cadre-based army, (2) modernization, (3) militarization of the populace, and (4) a stronghold-based fortified nation.”

Table 4-1 Four-point Military Guideline

Military Guidelines	Policy Objectives
Transformation of the entire forces into a cadre army	To train all soldiers politically, ideologically, and technically, and enable them to handle upgraded tasks in case of emergency
Modernization of the entire forces	To equip the troops with modern arms and combat skills, to train them to handle advanced weapons competently, and to help them learn modern military science and skills
Armament of the entire population	To arm the entire working class, including workers and peasants, politically and ideologically along with the People’s Army
Fortification of the entire country	To construct extensive defense facilities across the country to turn it into a impregnable fortress

Source : KINU, *North Korea Overview 2009*, p.89

In 1992, a constitutional revision in North Korea gave the Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NCD) the right to command and control all military forces. Further revisions in 1998 reinforced the NDC’s role, granting rights to create and abolish central organs of national defense, and to supervise all defense projects. In September 2010, the Conference of Party Representatives convened to revise

the preamble of the WPK rules, which established the military-first policy as the basic political mode of socialism and stipulated that the state shall, under the banner of military-first policy, induce socialist revolution and realize the construction of a socialist state. The same conference elected Kim Jong-un as Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), thus validating the legitimacy and basis for his control over the military. Shortly after the death of Kim Jong-il, a meeting of the Political Bureau was held at which Kim Jong-un was elected Supreme Commander of the KPA, ostensibly to honor his father's dying wishes. Other titles soon followed, and he was elected CMC Chairman at the 4th Conference of Party Representatives held on April 11, 2012 and First Chairman of the NDC at the Supreme People's Assembly held on April 13, 2012.

The aggregate military power referred to in North Korea's constitution encompass 1.19 million regular troops and 7.7 million reserve troops, which include 600,000 Reserve Military Training Units (RMTU), 5.7 million Worker-Peasant Red Army (WPRA), 1 million Red Youth Guards (RYG), and 400,000 para-military troops (i.e. Military Security Command, Ministry of People's Security, and Speed Battle Youth Shock Brigades). Overall management of the national defense implies the positional advantage of having control and command over all areas of political, military, and economic capabilities.

Citing the above, armed forces in North Korea are important military tools for socialist revolution and national liberation, and also play a key role in ensuring the continuation of the regime and system. In his masterpiece *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz said, "the relation between military and diplomatic power is similar to that of cash and check," and it just so happens that North Korea has concentrated on maintaining external relations based on the security of its military capabilities.

Recently, the North is mobilizing a large portion of its military to

achieve economic development and public order. These troops were deployed to various sites of economic construction such as large buildings, cultural centers, highways, power plants, canals, ranches and fish farms, as well as to areas of farming and inspection.

This militarizing of the economy has become a vicious cycle for the regime, however, as it finds it difficult to break free from the system of having a military presence in the national economy. Such a concept of militarizing the economy was first introduced by Stalin upon his denouncement of capitalist society, but it has become a typical economic phenomenon in North Korea.

This has had several effects on the national economy. First, the populace has had to bear more taxes to meet military expenditures. Second, increasing economic dependence on the military causes distortions in the allocation of human and material resources, in addition to cutbacks in resource supplies needed for civilian purposes. Third, a majority of finished goods and raw material have to be channeled to support non-productive military armament. Fourth, it hampers rational investment and constructions of new civilian facilities. Fifth, instilling conformity to military discipline and ethos in all aspects of the economy impedes the development of liberal and cooperative social relations and order.

Consequently, the militarization of economy has contributed to North Korea's impoverishment, and will likely continue to have a direct effect on the future survival of the regime and its military-first policy.



| North Korean soldiers at work

Section 2

Structure and Institutions

1. Command Structure and Military Organs

Key military organs in North Korea include the Central Military Commission (CMC), the Ministry of People's Armed Forces (MPAF), the General Political Bureau (GPB), the General Staff Department (GSD), and the National Defense Commission (NDC).

Among them, the NDC was established along with the adoption of the socialist constitution in 1972. In 1992, it became the supreme guiding organ of the armed forces when the constitution was revised to build institutional support for Kim Jong-il's military control. To reinforce NDC functions, further amendments followed which authorized the management of overall national defense (1998) and promoted its status as the supreme guiding organ of national defense (2009).

The Chairman of the NDC takes command of all activities of North

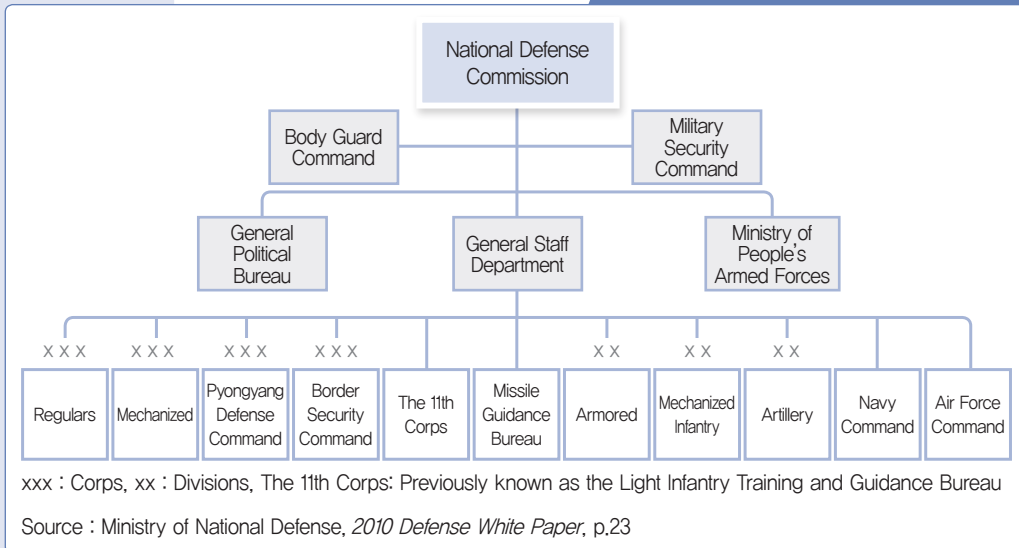
Korea's armed forces and national defense projects. While the GPB oversees the WPK's organization and other political and ideological projects, the GSD commands military operations, and the MPAF represents the military at home and abroad. The MPAF came into being when the regime was established in 1948 to take charge of military-related foreign affairs, industry, finance and other administrative works, but the constitutional revision in 1998 relocated the MPAF under the direct guidance and command of the NDC. At present, Kim Jong-un is known to have assumed the positions of Supreme Commander of the KPA, Chairman of the CMC, First Chairman of the NDC. This empowers the young ruler to command and oversee all military forces in North Korea, in addition to exercising administrative and power over them.

In December 1962, the 5th session of the 4th Central Committee adopted the Four-point Military Guideline proposed by Kim Il-sung. To implement the guideline, a military commission was newly established under the Central Committee, which was renamed the Central Military Commission (CMC) in November 1982. The CMC oversees the discussions and decisions of military policies and their implementation, reinforces the armed forces including the KPA, conducts the organization and supervision of projects promoting the munitions industry, and exercises military command. In the meantime, the GPB takes charge of political tasks of the WPK within the KPA with similar authority as other organs under the Central Committee, and this in effect enables the WPK to tighten its grip over the military. Party officials are also assigned to each and every military unit, so that they may guide and direct all works of the armed forces to comply with WPK lines and policies.

In compliance with Kim Jong-il's last wishes, Kim Jong-un was elected Supreme Commander of the KPA at the GPB meeting on December 30, 2011. The responsibility of the Supreme Commander is

to command and control military organizations including the GPB, GSD and MPAF, and issue direct orders to the Escort Bureau and Guard Command. The Escort Bureau is designed to guard key facilities in the city of Pyongyang and protect Kim Jong-un, his family and top WPK officials, while the Guard Command acts as the secret police that cracks down on regime dissidents.

Figure 4-1 Military Command Structure



2. Conscription System and Army Life

All men in North Korea are required to register for enlistment at the age of 14. Two rounds of physical examination are conducted when they reach the age of 15 during the final year of middle school, thus allowing them to join the service after graduation. The minimum requirement for check-up used to be 150cm in height and weight of 48kg, but as youths in North Korea began to grow smaller in size due to food shortages, this was adjusted to 148cm and 43kg since August 1994. Yet, even such criteria are relaxed due to the lack of eligible candidates and the decline in the proportion of female soldiers.

Excluded from military service are those who fail physical exams, who have families from the hostile class, and other delinquents who do not fit in the *songbun* system (families within the second parental cousin or first maternal cousin range of those who partook in anti-communist activities or defected to South Korea, families of defectors from South Korea or political prisoners, ex-convicts, etc.). Meanwhile, exempt from military service are those who engage in particular lines of work or beneficiaries of political consideration (i.e. security officers, scientists, industrial engineers, artists, instructors, administrative officers, college students who pass military science exams, students of special or elite schools, only sons of aged parents, etc.).



| Female North Korean gunners in training

North Korea presented the terms of military service in 1958 issued as Cabinet Decision No. 148 and mandated army service for three and a half years, navy service for four years. In actuality, however, this was often extended to a period of five to eight years, and in April 1993, North Korea adjusted mandatory service to ten years upon Kim Jong-il's instructions. The 6th session of the 10th Supreme People's Assembly also passed a military service law in March 2003, which specifies ten years of obligatory service for all male candidates, whereas the terms were curtailed for female volunteers to seven years. Yet, this does not include Special Forces (e.g. light infantry units, sniper units, etc.), who are required to serve for more than thirteen years, since indefinite period of service is requisite for soldiers under special instructions or with special skills.⁹

Meanwhile, the percentage of female soldiers in units varies from ten to thirty percent. They are often assigned to transport and administration, or become medics, signalers and sentries (at bridges or tunnels). Coastal artilleries, anti-aircraft guns, and small air defense

⁹ In North Korea, the term of military service is determined by Cabinet Decision No. 148. However, the WPK's military policy and the Ministry of People's Armed Forces' policy precede the cabinet decision.

batteries are also often managed by women soldiers.

Regardless of rank, those who break military discipline face various disadvantages at the workplace after discharge. During their time in the barracks, all soldiers must follow a ten-point guideline, which Kim Jong-il himself took part and gave orders to devise.

Table 4-2 Training Program for Military Officers

Rank	Training Program	Remarks
Draftees	Transferred to the military mobilization agency (first to special forces unit, then in the order of the Navy, Air Force, and Army)	Special forces units and special branch of service first
Recruits	Recruit training center at each unit (3 months for general troops and nine months for special forces)	Due to economic difficulties, the period of training for new recruits is curtailed.
Privates	Private → Lance Corporal → Corporal → Lance Sergeant	Takes 5-7 years
Non-commissioned Officers	Non-commissioned Officers Academy (3 months) Sergeant → Staff Sergeant → Sergeant First Class → Warrant Officer (Chief Sergeant) *After serving 3 to 5 years, light infantrymen and snipers can be promoted to the rank of sergeant within 5 years when recommended on their merits.	In general, men are discharged from the army as staff sergeant after 10 years of military service.
Second Lieutenants	2 years at the Military Officers Academy (Commanders Class: Top graduates in the class are commissioned as the lieutenants.) 4 years (College class for lieutenants)	The ratio between political and military education in the Military Officers Academy is 5:5, while it is 3:7 in the Military College.
Lieutenants	Promoted after 2-3 years	
Company Commanders	Promoted to commander after 4-6 years	
Battalion Commanders	Graduated from Kim Il-sung National War College (3 years) after 3-7 years	
Regiment Commanders	Completed the tactics study class at Kim Il-sung National War College	Generals are promoted at the supreme leader's order.

Source : Compiled from data provided by various institutions

In North Korea, the General Political Bureau promotes various competitive campaigns to enhance internal control and unity in the military. The most representative campaigns include winning the following titles: the Three Revolution Red Flag (at company level), the O Jung-hup 7th Regiment (at regiment level), and the Gold Star

Elite Guard (at division and brigade level). Those who perform well are awarded WPK membership, field trips, prizes, vacations, and preferential treatment in resource supplies.

According to military rules, soldiers are also entitled to 15 days of leave per year and special leaves of 10 to 15 days upon events of family weddings, death of a parent, or commendation awards. The rules, however, are rarely observed, and only around 10 days are granted soldiers when they need to attend their parent's funeral or obtain military supplies. It has been found that only about 20 percent of soldiers are allowed on leave to visit parents, and one-third to half of military service in North Korea on average is dedicated to non-military activities such as public construction and farming.

Army units in North Korea provide soldiers with staple foods of the meal, but it is up to each unit either to purchase or obtain side dishes in ways that are suitable to each geographical location such as farming, fishing or gathering. In the past, troops were provided with three basic meals a day, and served rice and two or three side dishes including cooked or pickled vegetables. In the 1990s, however, the food situation in North Korea became so severe that military divisions had to set up temporary sanatoriums. Foreign aid since the 2000s somewhat alleviated this food shortage, but things turned for the worse when the international community withdrew aid in response to the North's development of weapons of mass destruction. North Korea therefore took actions to supplement the military diet, raising livestock such as goats and pigs at individual units ranging from independent platoons to division headquarters.

When cases of disease occur in North Korean troops, treatment is performed as follows: Those who require less than 7 days of treatment are sent to regimental clinics staffed with 8 to 10 army surgeons and around 10 nurses; patients that require treatment up to 15 days or less are transferred to divisional hospitals staffed with 20 to 25 surgeons

and over 50 nurses; those who need more than 15 days to 6 months of treatment or surgery are transported to general hospitals at army corps which have 60 to 70 army surgeons and around 130 military or civilian nurses; meanwhile, long-term patients are discharged from service on the pretext of family hardship.¹⁰ More than half of all inpatients are known to suffer from malnutrition.

The above internal military conditions and North Korea's introduction of the July 1 Economic Management Improvement Measures in 2002 caused the KPA to face problems of its own. Military authorities, therefore, have allowed a considerable number of army units to engage in foreign trade, commercial activities, labor mobilization, and various other profit-making projects. This being the case, soldiers prefer posts that enable extra income, such as border guards under the Guard Command. Shortages in supply and daily necessities within the military are generating aberrations and other offenses that damage civil-military relations.

¹⁰The North Korean army has discharged those soldiers whose families have economic difficulties or whose parents have no other provider in the family due to family hardships suffered since 1995.

Table 4-3 Regular Exercises and Other Activities of Ground Forces

Months	Type of Training and Activities
January–February	Preparation for field tactical training, field maneuvers exercise by each branch, engineer reconnaissance, deployment exercise
March–	General shooting exercises with live ammunition at each battalion and division
May–	Repairing of barracks and roads, planting seedlings in the fields for side dishes
Mid June–	Summer exercise begins Collective training : political education, lining drill, physical training Field training : by each branch, in semi-underground tunnel lodging
Mid July–	River-crossing during the rainy season, combat swimming, march, offense and defense exercise, shooting exercises with live ammunition
October	Preparation for the winter : harvest, storage of vegetables, collection of firewood, barracks repair
November	Preparation for winter exercises : checking of combat gear
December	In the morning : focused on indoor exercises including shooting practice In the afternoon : long march with full combat gear, physical training, lining drill, field shooting exercise

Source : Compiled from data provided by various institutions

3. Military Ranks and Party Organization

Military ranks in North Korea are called 'military titles' and there are fifteen different levels for officers and six for those enlisted.

The officers are grouped into four categories: ① marshal grade (Grand Marshal, Marshal, Vice Marshal); ② general grade (General, Colonel General, Lieutenant General, and Major General) ③ field grade (Brigadier, Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, and Major) ④ company grade (Captain, Senior Lieutenant, Lieutenant, and Junior Lieutenant).

The enlisted ranks are categorized in two different categories: ① non-commissioned officers (Warrant Officer, Sergeant First Class, Staff Sergeant, and Sergeant) and those who choose to remain in service after their mandatory period (Sergeant First Class, Staff Sergeant, and Sergeant-in-Initial Service). ② enlisted personnel (Corporal and Private), which are divided into four sub-categories (Lane Sergeant, Corporal, Lance Corporal, and Private) in order to boost morale and enforce discipline between ranks.

Until the early 1990s, the KPA hierarchy listed six general-grade ranks in the following decreasing order of authority: Marshal, Vice Marshal, General, Colonel General, Lieutenant General, and Major General. On April 13, 1992, the KPA added another rank by granting the title of Grand Marshal upon Kim Il-sung two days prior to his 80th birthday.

Kim Jong-il, on the other hand, was elected Supreme Commander of the KPA at the 19th session of the 6th Central Committee meeting on December 24, 1991, and was abruptly named Marshal on April 20, 1992 shortly before the 60th anniversary of the KPA foundation. On February 14, 2012, just two days before his 70th birthday, he was also given the title of Grand Marshal by a joint decision of the Central Committee, Central Military Commission, National Defense Commission, and SPA Presidium.

In North Korea, general-level promotions are conducted in times of anniversary celebrations such as the birthdays of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, WPK's founding date, and the effective date of the Korean War armistice agreement. Most North Korean generals received their promotions at such times, including those 70 who received their new ranks at the order of Kim Jong-un shortly before the centennial of Kim Il-sung's birth.

In the meantime, every unit level of the KPA has its own departments of staff, political and security. The WPK apparatus is also represented at every military unit to engage in political activities vis-à-vis the military. This implies that the WPK, in practice, exerts control over the KPA. To be specific, the KPA Party Committee takes center stage, while there are individual party committees for each regiment and larger military unit as well as party cells or sub-groups for each company and platoon. Each battalion or larger military unit also has political departments, which are distinct from party committees.

As such, political organs deploy political commissars to military divisions and regiments, in addition to political directive officers¹¹ to battalions or smaller units. From these placements, political personnel coordinate and supervise all military activities including operation and training, along with all political activities that take place within corresponding army units. Moreover, a co-signing system is used, which requires the political commissar's signature for military directives to take effect. Political commissars of regiments or larger military units, on the other hand, are under the direct control of the WPK Secretariat and thus managed separately from other KPA political organs. Throughout this surveillance and containment apparatus, the WPK Organization Department wields the greatest authority, since it evaluates officer performance and daily activities. At present, around 20 percent of ordinary soldiers are estimated to be WPK members, while about 40 percent in Special Forces are considered to have party status.

¹¹ Company political counselors keep themselves informed of their company's formal and informal state by interviewing an average of 20 soldiers a month.

The Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League is another entity organized in each KPA unit, which works to bind non-party members under the guidance of the WPK and its political organs. To reduce possible internal conflicts, however, KPA authorities also emphasize the importance of unity between officers and soldiers, party members and non-members, and superiors and subordinates.¹²

The reason for such multiple layers of surveillance and control and the emphasized importance of ideological education in North Korea lies in the changing nature of the KPA. Its role now extends beyond its commitment to secure the Northern territory and regime under wartime management, and includes such tasks as achieving socialist revolution and defending the WPK and the supreme leader. From the perspective of the commander-in-chief, this policy of divide and rule provides advantages in preserving power and command over the military. In short, the KPA's tightly crisscrossed lines of political, security and military apparatus are institutionalized in such a way that resistance against the one-man dictatorship would be no easy task.

¹²The unity between officers and the ranks is of course a matter of harmony between officers and soldiers, while the unity between party members and non-members is a matter of concord between WPK members and those in the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League who yet have party membership.

Section 3

Military Strategy and Capacity

1. Military Strategy

North Korea's military strategy, given its war capacity and specific geographical conditions on the Korean peninsula, is to engage in preemptive surprise attacks and simultaneous strikes on South Korea's front and rear. In essence, the North means to stage a quick and decisive war by proceeding to create panic in enemy camps, take the initiative in the war from the start, while at the same time deploying its mechanized corps equipped with tanks, armored vehicles and self-propelled artilleries deep into South Korea's rear in order to overtake the entire peninsula before U.S. reinforcements arrive.

Since the mid-1970s, North Korea has continued to expand its military capacity, focusing on conventional arms and equipment, with greater weight placed on quantity than quality. Special efforts were made to improve the North's capability to stage simultaneous strikes

against the South's front and rear, make swift attacks deep into enemy territory, and initiate preemptive surprise attacks. By the end of 1980, it was noted that North Korea was capable of conducting warfare on its own for 2 to 3 months, including its forward deployment of additional forces, formation of mechanized corps, establishment of large special operations forces, and deployment of additional long-range artillery near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

Despite ongoing economic troubles, North Korea has not wavered from efforts to modernize its arms and pursue the development of strategic weapons for mass destruction, such as biochemical, nuclear weapons, and missiles, all with the objective of building a strong and prosperous nation. This implies that North Korea intends to unify the peninsula under communism by means of an aggressive military strategy, while at the same time developing an asymmetric deterrence against the United States with its weapons of mass destruction.

The North's strategy of preemptive surprise attacks based on its four-point military guideline involves a wide range of warfare, from large-scale preemptive attacks by regular armed forces to detour surprise attacks by irregular troops such as special operation forces. Given that North Korea's military potential is relatively lower than South Korea's, there is a possibility of North Korea staging limited warfare to accomplish a quick takeover of the Southern capital, a metropolitan area with a population similar to that of the entire Northern region, as well as a GNP tens of times higher. At present, the North Korean military has positioned some 70 percent of its ground forces in the forward area south of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line, and the considerable number of these forces in underground tunnels poses a significant threat to South Korea.

The North has deployed and fortified a large number of long-range artilleries that could pose direct threats to South Korea's capital and other metropolitan areas near the front line; including 170mm self-

propelled guns with a range of over 50km and 240mm multiple rocket launchers with a range of over 60km. It has also dispersed a few dozen air bases across the Northern part of the Korean peninsula. This concentration and forward-deployment of offensive and maneuver equipment along the front line indicate that North Korea remains steadfast in its basic military strategy of preemptive surprise attacks.

Blitzkrieg strategies based on quick and decisive battles or lightning war are often called speed battles. To this end, North Korea has made all efforts to expand its mechanized, highly mobile, and lightweight forces, in addition to obtaining and maintaining an offensive weapons system needed for quick attacks, including the production of SCUD missiles, increased firepower of ground and air forces, and build-up of high speed landing ships and fire support crafts.

Table 4-4 Missions and Roles of Special Operation Forces

Types of SOF	Missions and Roles
Objectives	To attack and destroy targets, to disturb the enemy's rear area, to launch terrorist attacks, to neutralize major strategic and tactical facilities such as communication stations, missile bases, and air-fields
Sniper Brigades	To breach the enemy's major defense lines, to strike strategic targets with 82-mm mortars and multiple rocket launchers, to disguise as ROK troops and infiltrate, to organize pro-North Korean sympathizers
Seaborne Sniper Brigades	To launch a surprise attack on naval vessels, radar bases, or supply bases, to start a guerilla war using high-speed boats and LCACs
Air Force Sniper Brigades	To strike equipment and facilities in air bases
Airborne Infantry Brigades	To destroy logistics bases, to block reinforcement, to secure strategic strongholds
Army Corps Reconnaissance Battalions	To open a secret passage, to kidnap key figures, to reconnoiter, to destroy enemy facilities
Light Infantry Brigades	To secure key points, to launch an attack on the enemy's command posts, to support main units A total of 6 battalions, each with 6 companies Each company consists of 120 troops Equipped with 60-mm mortars and portable missile launchers

Source : Compiled from data provided by various institutions

North Korea is thought to pursue a blitzkrieg strategy for two reasons: First, the North would be unable to sustain a long-term war, since its economic capacity is much smaller than that of South Korea. Second, it fears that South Korea holds great potential for military power, which can be acquired once domestic productions are converted to wartime industries, in addition to mobilizing human and material resources.

Consequently, North Korea's '*juche* strategy' is a mixed strategy combining Mao's guerilla tactics with old Soviet military strategies in a way that suits the actual situation on the Korean peninsula. The key essence of this strategy is to combine large-scale regular warfare with guerilla attacks, which will enable the North Korean forces to engage the enemy from every direction. This would turn the whole peninsula into a battleground without a distinction between the front and rear boundaries. With such tactics, North Korea would be able to strike key facilities and instigate rebellions from the rear with asymmetric capabilities, while holding the enemy forces at the front.

In North Korea, military orders have been given to construct tunnel bases since the end of 1970, followed by instructions to build the 'Grand Corridor for Unification (underground tunnels)' across the DMZ in September 1971. It is presumed that, as in the case of the Vietnam War, the North Korean military means to join the invasion troops with underground forces, making it difficult for South Korea to counter any surprise attacks. At present, there are more than 8,200 underground facilities across North Korea, including mines, tunnels and underground shelters. More than 300 units of TBM equipment (South Korea has around 20 units) imported from Switzerland and Sweden since the late 1970s are being used to build such facilities.

At the 5th Party Congress on November 12, 1970, Kim Il-sung presented a report on the issue of reinforcing North Korea's national defense power. He emphasized that "North Korea has many

mountains, rivers, and streams, in addition to a long coastal line. If such topographical advantages are put to good use and combinations of large and small-scale operations and regular and guerilla warfare are effectively conducted, even those enemies equipped with state-of-the-art military technology can be destroyed.¹³

This kind of military strategy can be theoretically applied on the Korean peninsula, but in reality, there are numerous limitations. North Korea may have the military capacity to make provocations or to trigger conflicts, but attaining its ultimate objective would be a difficult task, given that North Korean forces lack the capability to sustain warfare. Political indoctrination and topography are not the only factors that decide the outcome of war; other elements come into play, including the overall environment of battlefields, educational level of troops, quality of arms, uncertainties, unpredictable conflicts, contingencies, and so forth.

In the meantime, there is no overlooking the fact that North Korea, turning a deaf ear to the international community, has gone beyond conventional weapons to focus directly on the research and development of nuclear, ballistic and chemical weapons of mass destruction.

¹³ *People's Army* (Pyongyang: KPA Publishing Co., 1987), pp.43–47. North Korea has recently modified the concept of Operational Maneuver Groups, which was developed by the Soviet Union in order to penetrate NATO rear areas using swift maneuvering of tank units, in view of the topography of the Korean peninsula. However, it has also been argued that the applicability of such tactics would still be limited on the peninsula, except in the western region where there are vast areas of open terrain.

2. Standing Forces and Equipment

As of November 2010, the size of North Korea's standing troops is estimated to be 1.19 million in total, which is thought to consist of 1.02 million in the army, 60,000 in the navy, and 110,000 in the air force. This is 1.8 times that of South Korea's military, which consists of 650,000 troops. (See Table 4-5)

North Korea's ground forces consist of fifteen army corps or equivalent units, including nine front and rear corps, two mechanized corps, the Pyongyang Defense Command, Border Guard Command,

Missile Guidance Bureau, and 11th Corps (formerly known as the Light Infantry Training and Guidance Bureau).

In the frontline, existing light infantry battalions under the command of four army corps were expanded to regiments while an extra light infantry division was added to each corps. About 70 percent of North Korea's ground forces were forward deployed in frontline areas south of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line. This deployment of troops reflected a blitzkrieg concept based on penetration assaults. Since South Korea's capital Seoul is located only a short distance from the DMZ, the forward deployed North Korean troops have been a major cause of tension on the peninsula.

One of the distinctive features of North Korean ground forces is that they are organized around mechanized, armored, and special operation forces. In recent years, believing that mechanized units and tank divisions were suitable for operation in the topography of the peninsula, North Korea has restructured these forces into brigades, and reorganized troops by creating new tank, mechanized and missile units to carry out modern warfare more effectively.

In addition, North Korea boasts the world's largest special operation force. With more than 200,000 special operation troops trained for unconventional warfare, it is known to be capable of simultaneously infiltrating tens of thousands of troops into enemy lines by air and water.

North Korea also turned most of its army corps and reserve forces under the Ministry of People's Armed Forces into mechanized units, which will be deployed to reinforce its regular troops upon initiating an attack. Furthermore, the military has over vast regions installed camouflaged camps and disguised facilities several times greater in scale than existing camps, in addition to building an extensive network of invasion tunnels across frontline areas. It is perceived, therefore, that North Korea has the capability to launch surprise attacks against the South without needing additional preparations or forward deployed reinforcements.

Table 4-5 Comparing Military Forces of South and North Korea

Classification			South Korea	North Korea	
Troops (in peace time)	Total		650,000	1,190,000	
	Army		520,000	1,020,000	
	Navy		68,000	60,000	
	Air Force		65,000	110,000	
Major Combat Strength	Army	Units	Corps	10 (including Special Warfare Command)	15
			Divisions	46	90
			Mobile Brigades	14	70 (not including 10 Reserve Training Units)
	Equipment		Tanks	2,400	4,100
			Armored Vehicles	2,600	2,100
			Field Artilleries	5,200	8,500
			MLRS/MRL	200	5,100
			Ground-to-Ground Missiles	30 (Launchers)	100 (Launchers)
	Navy	Surface Ships	Combatants	120	420
			Amphibious Ships (LST/LSM)	10	260
			Mine Warfare Vessels	10	30
			Support & Aux. Vessels	20	30
		Submarines	10	70	
	Air Force	Combat Aircrafts		460	820
		Surveillance & Reconnaissance		50 (including those belonging to the Navy)	30
		Transport Aircrafts		40	330 (including AN-2s)
		Trainers		180	170
		Helicopters (Army/Navy/Air Force)		680	300
	Reserve Troops			3,2 million	7.7 million (including the Reserve Military Training Unit, Worker and Peasant Red Guard, and Red Youth Guard)

* The number of troops in South Korean Navy includes 27,000 Marines and South Korea's ground units and equipment includes those of the Marine Corps.

* The number of North Korean field artillery does not include 76.2-mm guns deployed at the regiment level.

* The table above provides a quantitative comparison for public discretion as qualitative assessments are limited.

Source : Ministry of National Defense, 2010 Defense White Paper, p.271

Another characteristic of North Korea's ground forces is their large quantities of combat equipment combining new and old-style arms. T-series tanks, including those from the T-54, T-55, T-62 and T-72 lines, are their primary military equipment. They also own some old model T-34 tanks as well as light tanks.

Recently, North Korea has modified the concept of operation maneuver group (OMG), which was originally developed by former Soviet forces to break through NATO's defensive positions by swiftly mobilizing its tank corps. The North Korean military revised this to fit the peninsula's terrain. According to some experts, however, this military concept may not be easily applied to the peninsula, except for western regions where there is a lot of open terrain.

North Korea possesses about 1.7 times more tanks than South Korea, which has around 2,300 battle tanks in total. Considering the relative superiority of South Korean tanks and antitank weapons, there may be doubts about the efficiency of North Korean tanks. Nonetheless, given the short length and breadth of Seoul's terrain, the sheer number of new and old model tanks in North Korea can pose a threat to South Korea.

North Korea has more than 8,500 pieces of howitzers (of 76.2/100/122/132/170mm caliber), 5,100 pieces of multiple rocket launchers (of 107/122/132/240mm caliber), and 11,000 pieces of anti-aircraft guns and other air defense weapons.

Performance-wise, various weapons found in North Korea's ground forces, including T-62 tanks, M-1973 armored vehicles, various self-propelled guns, multiple rocket launchers, AT-3/4 anti-tank missiles and modified SCUD missiles, are modernized weaponry. North Korea is currently making concentrated efforts to modernize its military equipment by building *Pokpung-ho* ("Storm Tiger") tanks, which are reproduced designs of Soviet-made T-72s, along with introducing, manufacturing and deploying 23mm anti-aircraft guns.

Meanwhile, North Korean naval forces have a total of over 810 battle ships, including principal surface combatants, submarines, and support ships. The principal surface combatants include over 420 patrol ships, cruisers, torpedo boats, and fire support boats, 90 or more high-speed amphibious ships, over 130 air-cushion vehicles (ACV), and around 70 submarines and midget submarines. A large number of North Korean ships are old models, and geographically disadvantaged because the peninsula forces operate separately in the East and West Sea. Furthermore, many vessels are small in size, so their maneuverability may be vulnerable to bad weather or not operate well on the open sea.

Nonetheless, given that North Korea possesses a large number of forward-deployed small speed boats, including torpedo boats, guided-missile patrol boats, and long-range coastal artillery pieces, it appears capable of launching surprise attacks on enemy troops and ships from near the NLL. And since SSC-2B SAMLET and CSSC-2 SILKWORM surface-to-ship missiles are deployed within an 80-95 km range of the east and west coasts, it is observed that South Korea's Deokjeok Island in the West Sea and the cities of Sokcho and Yangyang on the east coast are within reach of such North Korean weaponry.

In the meantime, the North Korean navy has built its own hovercraft to deploy for operation. With a speed of 40-52 knots, these high-speed landing craft have excellent mobility and can be used for landing

troops and cargo. North Korean naval forces consist of one naval command, two fleet commands, thirteen operational commands, more than forty naval bases and two naval sniper brigades. In particular, North Korea has continued to improve submarine capabilities and develop new torpedoes and mines, and as observed in the case of the *Cheonan* sinking (2010), they pose serious threats to the South Korean navy.



North Korean soldiers at a drill with 130 mm caliber M-46 field guns |

As for North Korean air forces, there are more than 820 fighter aircraft, around 30 reconnaissance aircraft, over 330 transport aircraft, some 300 helicopters, and more than 170 trainer aircraft. These aircraft are forward deployed in the bases located south of Pyongyang and Wonsan, maintaining a capability and posture for surprise attacks. Using the Antonov An-2 cargo and utility aircraft, along with helicopters that maneuver at low speeds and altitudes, North Korean air forces have the ability to deploy special force agents effectively behind the South Korean front lines.

Among these, MIG-15/17s produced in the 1950s are used as trainer aircraft, which boast a high rate of operation since parts are domestically produced and maintenance and repair are easily performed. They can be useful in carrying out air interception and air-to-surface strikes on the peninsula, due to the short length and breadth of the battlefields. In addition, North Korean air forces operate more than 20 air operation and reserve bases, some of which have underground runways.

3. Reserve Forces

According to one of North Korea's four military guidelines, "to arm the entire population," the regime has mobilized around 30 percent of the population between the ages of 14 to 60 to acquire over 7.7 million reserve forces. Every member of the reserve forces is given various combat gears, including personal arms, equipment, and crew-served weapons. These forces respond to emergency calls and enter boot camps to receive 15 to 30 days of military training at least once a year.

Upon the departure of the Chinese army in 1958, North Korea organized its reserve forces and civil defense corps called the Worker-Peasant Red Guards (WPRG) in January 1959, in addition to reorganizing discharged soldiers among the WPRG members

into the Reserve Military Training Unit (RMTU) in 1963. The Red Youth Guards (RYG), a military organization for senior middle school students, was created in September 1970. The RMTU, the core of North Korea's reserved forces, consists of men between the ages of 17 and 50, as well as unmarried women volunteers between ages of 17 and 30. Its local units are organized into either divisions or brigades depending on the size of the administrative unit or workplace. College students who join the RMTU are not allowed to graduate unless they complete their training program, and once they complete 6 months of training over summer vacation during their second and third year in college, commensurate to that of regular troops, are commissioned as second lieutenants. The RMTU members are given 100 percent of personal arms and equipment as well as 70 to 80 percent of crew-served weapons, and are required to complete as much as 500 hours of training each year. The intensity of their training is equivalent to those taken by active-duty soldiers. As the RMTU is organized, equipped with firearms and undergo intensity of training similar to those of soldiers on active duty, they can be immediately mobilized to defend rear areas or called up as reserve forces in case war breaks out. At present the RMTU accounts for over 600,000 troops.

Meanwhile, the WPRG was renamed as the Worker-Peasant Red Army (WPRA) at the Party Conference that convened on September 28, 2010, and is expected to play a role similar to that of the regular army. The WPRA currently consists of those men not belonging to the RMTU who can be mobilized between ages of 17 and 60, as well as of women who are organized at each administrative unit and workplace between ages of 17 and 30. Along with the civil defense corps, the WPRA's basic responsibilities include guarding the workplace and other important facilities, as well as regional and anti-aircraft defense. They are supplied with all personal arms and equipment and some crew-served weapons. A total of 160 hours of training is required. Their current numbers stand at 5.7 million.

In addition, the Red Youth Guards (RYG) consists of male and female senior middle school students aged between 14 and 16. Organized into companies and battalions at each school, RYG members are subject to a total of 160 hours of on-campus drills every Saturday and seven days of training during vacations, including a shooting exercise using live rounds at the RYG drill camp. As the royal guards of the regime, the RYG are mainly responsible for removing anti-revolutionary elements and playing a leading role in improving North Korea's combat capability. In an emergency, they would perform the duties of rear guards or suicide squads to supplement those of junior army officers. They are supplied with all personal arms and equipment and some crew-served weapons. They undergo a total of 450 hours of training (substantially increased from 270 hours in the past) a year. Their current number stands at one million.

North Korea also has about 400,000 reserve troops affiliated with other paramilitary forces, including the Ministry of People's Security, the Logistics Mobilization Guidance Bureau, an agency responsible for providing and managing war supplies, and the Speed Battle Youth Storm Trooper Squad, a team that is often brought into public work projects. They are on a constant alert for immediate mobilization.

Table 4-6 North Korea's Reserve Forces

Type	Strength	Remark
Reserve Military Training Unit	600,000	Subject to combat mobilization – men between 17 and 50, women between 17 and 30
Worker and Peasant Red Guard	5.7 million	Equivalent to South Korea's Homeland Reserve Forces
Red Youth Guard	1 million	Military organization of middle school students
Para-military units	400,000	Secret Service Command, Ministry of People's Security Logistics Mobilization Guidance Bureau, Speed War Youth Shock Troops
Total	7.7 million	

Source : Ministry of National Defense, *2010 Defense White Paper*, p.27

4. Development of Nuclear and Other Strategic Weapons

For strategic reasons North Korea has continuously improved its weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear bombs, ballistic missiles, and chemical and biological weapons. The development of asymmetric capabilities seems to serve three objectives: to secure military superiority over others, to have an effective bargaining chip, and to promote internal unity.

Until now, North Korea has repeatedly conducted nuclear tests and developed strategic weapons to extract political and economic benefits from the outside world. This has caused serious instability in the international community, also triggering angry backlashes and sanctions. The world has considered North Korea's two nuclear tests as a particularly serious challenge to the international non-proliferation regime.

As early as in the 1960s, North Korea had sent its nuclear scientists to the largest nuclear research institute in the Soviet Union, the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna. The number of professionals currently working in the North Korean nuclear industry is known to be about 3,000, including over 200 top-class experts.¹⁴ North Korea is also known to have about 4 million tons of uranium in recoverable deposits. Pyongyang gave an impetus to its nuclear weapons program at the beginning of the 1980s.¹⁵ Over 300 scientists and engineers are known to have been stricken with atomic-related diseases during the course of their work.

Having imported a 2 MW IRT-2000 research reactor from the Soviet Union in the mid-1960s, North Korea strove to develop reactor design technology. By the 1970s, the regime had succeeded in expanding the output of its research reactor using homegrown technology. Henceforth, North Korea has concentrated efforts to acquire a complete

¹⁴ Ministry of National Defense, *Q&A on Weapons of Mass Destruction*, 2004, p.54

¹⁵ Ministry of National Defense, *How Much Do You Know on Atomic, Biological and Chemical Weapons and Missiles?*, 2001, p.95

nuclear fuel cycle ranging from supplying nuclear fuel to reprocessing spent fuel.

On October 21, 1994, the United States and North Korea signed the so-called Agreed Framework. According to the agreement North Korea pledged to suspend the construction of a graphite moderated nuclear reactor and accept inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In return the United States pledged to provide two units of light-water reactors, establish liaison offices between Washington and Pyongyang, and supply 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil to North Korea each year until completing the construction of light-water reactors. Later, North Korea had additional negotiations with the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and finally concluded an agreement on the provision of light-water reactors on December 15, 1995.

Although it had announced it would accept ad hoc and general inspections by the IAEA in January 1996, North Korea continued to refuse inspections of undeclared facilities and the collection of soil samples. Pyongyang also refused to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and to participate in the annual United Nations nuclear disarmament conference that convened on February 25, 1997.

After the outbreak of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States, North Korea dragged its feet on nuclear issues, citing differences in opinion and pressure from the United States. In October 2002, US special envoy James Kelly visited North Korea, where he voiced suspicions of a uranium enrichment program. In response, the Kim Jong-il regime declared the suspension of its nuclear freeze and restarted nuclear facilities on December 12, 2002. It also withdrew from the non-proliferation treaty on January 10, 2003. When the United States discussed presenting the North Korean nuclear issue to the UN Security Council, a spokesman for the foreign ministry in Pyongyang issued a statement on October 2, 2003 claiming North

Korea would convert plutonium extracted from reprocessed spent fuel for the purpose of reinforcing its nuclear deterrence. On February 10, 2005, North Korea again challenged the global community by reiterating its claim of possessing a nuclear deterrent.

At the fourth round of the Six Party Talks held in Beijing from September 13 to 19, 2005, a six-point joint statement (September 19 Joint Statement) was adopted, containing principles for the dismantlement and implementation of North Korea's nuclear weapons program. This signaled a possible resolution of the nuclear issue. But with the future of the Six Party Talks in doubt due to the issue of US sanctions against Banco Delta Asia, North Korea defied the international community by launching a long-range missile on July 5, 2006 and conducting a nuclear test on October 9, 2006.

Subsequently, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution on October 16 imposing sanctions against the North and the fifth round of the Six-Party Talks was held from December 18 to 22, 2006, but was stymied by disagreements between Washington and Pyongyang in regard to nuclear issues as well as the Banco Delta Asia problem. The two countries later held a series of meetings in Berlin from January 16 to 18, 2007 and discussed the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. Finally, the third session of the fifth round of the Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing from February 8 to 13, where an agreement was reached on initial actions for implementation of the September 19 Joint Statement.

Unlike the Agreed Framework signed between the United States and North Korea in 1994, the February 13 agreement was also signed by the other four parties to the Six-Party Talks, and clarified that the burden of compensating North Korea would be borne equally by the US, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia. According to this agreement, these five countries pledged to provide economic, energy and humanitarian assistance up to 1 million tons of heavy oil upon

North Korea's declaring all its nuclear weapons program and shutting down all nuclear facilities as a first step toward denuclearization. The United States also promised to begin the process of removing North Korea from its list of states sponsoring terrorism as well as exempting it from the Trading with the Enemy Act.

For its part, North Korea agreed not to transfer nuclear technology and to declare all its nuclear programs by the end of 2007. In conformance with the agreement, North Korea shut down three key nuclear facilities, including a 5-megawatt electric research reactor, a radiochemical laboratory, and a nuclear fuel-rod fabrication plant in Yongbyon. Despite this progress, however, the North failed to submit a declaration on its nuclear facilities until June 26, 2008, almost six months after the original deadline.

A head delegates' meeting was held on December 20, 2008 to confirm this declaration, and verification procedures including the collection of samples were discussed. North Korea, however, refused to allow the collection of samples and the meeting ended without result. North Korea also conducted its second nuclear test on May 25, 2009, in defiance of UNSC Resolution 1718, which had prohibited any additional nuclear tests. At present, it seems North Korea is currently pursuing a nuclear weapons program based on highly enriched uranium.

Following this second nuclear test, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1874 on June 12, 2009. It consisted of 34 points, calling, among other things, for the imposition of a strict arms embargo and financial sanctions against North Korea, as well as closer inspection of cargo going in and out of the country.

North Korea also has research and production facilities for biochemical weapons, the result of concerted efforts dating back to the early 1960s. Though overshadowed by the nuclear issue, North Korea's biochemical weapons program should also be recognized as a serious military threat.

Many experts believe that the regime is currently operating several research centers in Kanggye and Yongsong, as well as chemical weapons facilities in Hungnam, Manpo, Aoji, and Chongjin.¹⁶

North Korea is known to possess an estimated stockpile of 2,500 to 5,000 tons of 17 different types of toxic gases, including blister, nerve, choking, and blood agents as well as mustard gas. Biological agents in its possession include cholera, anthrax, and smallpox. The regime is known to have the ability to culture these biological warfare agents and operate production facilities for such weapons in Chongju and Munchon.

After many years of relying exclusively on imported missile technology, North Korea had by 1986 succeeded in producing missiles based on its own technology. The regime is currently estimated to have the ability to produce about 100 units of SCUD B and C missiles a year. These self-developed missiles have been exported to several Middle East countries, including Iran and Libya.

In the 1970s, North Korea embarked on developing ballistic missiles. By the mid-1980s it had deployed SCUD-B and SCUD-C missiles to deploy in front regions. By the 1990s, the regime had succeeded in deploying Rodong missiles with a range of 1,300km and in 2007. It deployed medium-range Musudan missiles in front areas, thus placing Japan and Guam as well as other areas within its 3,000km striking range. On July 5, 2006, North Korea test fired multiple missiles including the Taepodong 2, SCUD, and Rodong. On May 25, 2007, when South Korea was celebrating the launching of its own Aegis destroyer, North Korea test-fired its new short-range ground-to-ground missiles, known as KN-02.¹⁷ It also fired a long-range missile on April 5, 2009¹⁸ and, from May 25 to June 1, six short-range missiles from the east coast. Three years later, on April 13, 2012, the North launched a long-range missile before an invited group of major foreign journalists, but the launch ended in failure.

16 The February 2007 issue of *Popular Mechanics* warned that North Korea possesses 5,000 tons of chemicals and operates 32 biochemical plants, 20 biological weapons-related facilities, and 12 chemical weapons-related facilities while 30 percent of its missiles and field guns are capable of carrying chemical weapons. According to US Army's NATO Handbook on the Medical Aspects of NBC Defensive Operation, it costs \$2,000 to kill one enemy combatant with conventional weapon and \$80 billion with nuclear weapon, but only \$1 with biological weapon.

17 In a report published by the Strategic Studies Institute of US Army War College on February 3, 2008, Daniel Pinkston, senior researcher at the International Crisis Group, pointed out that North Korea has almost reached a point where it can produce ballistic missiles on its own but still relies on the outside for advanced technology and parts.

18 On April 13, 2009, the UN Security Council condemned that North Korea's launching of long-range rocket as a violation of the UNSC resolution 1718 which demanded North Korea to suspend additional nuclear tests and firing of ballistic missile and adopted unanimously a president's statement calling for reinforced implementation of sanctions against North Korea, including a freezing of North Korea's assets supporting its ballistic missile program.

In a report submitted to Congress, the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence expressed its concern over North Korea's export of nuclear and missile technology to Iran and other actors. The agency stated its belief that North Korea had reached a point where it is almost self-sufficient in supplying the parts needed to develop and produce ballistic missiles.

Table 4-7 Specification of North Korean Missiles

	SCUD-B	SCUD-C	Rodong	Musudan (IRBM)	Taepodong 1	Taepodong 2
Range (km)	300	500	1,300	Over 3,000	2,500	Over 6,700
Warhead Weight (kg)	1,000	770	700	650	500	650-1,000 (Est.)
Remarks	In operational deployment	In operational deployment	In operational deployment	In operational deployment	Test-firing	Under development

Source : Ministry of National Defense, *2010 Defense White Paper*, p.282

Section 4

Military Relations and Provocations against the South

1. External Military Relationship

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and East European socialist bloc in 1990, North Korea came to the conclusion that its survival would henceforth depend primarily on its own military capability. In order to overcome the crisis it faced, the regime has since promoted a military-first policy, regulating its entire society in a military manner.

In 1997, even amid severe economic difficulties, North Korea reinforced maneuvers for its mechanized corps in rear areas as well as infiltration exercises for its special operation forces, while substantially stepping up joint tactical exercises between its air force and navy. It also monitored wartime readiness and training of its troops in all areas. In March 1998, for instance, the regime publically issued a nationwide wartime mobilization order for the purpose of an integrated exercise, involving the public, regime, and military, that was meant to rehearse a shift to a war footing. Intensive energy-saving map exercises

were conducted afterwards for landing and takeoff drills for AN-2s, hydroplanes equipped with boats. In 1999, the regime deployed a large number of field guns with large caliber and multiple rocket launchers in underground facilities near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The regime also created an electronic warfare unit and started to train military hackers.

Following the general officers' talks held between the two Koreas in June 2004, North Korea suspended propaganda broadcasts against South Korea along the DMZ. At the same time, however, it substantially stepped up the political and ideological education of its troops. The Korean People's Army reduced the number of large-scale military exercises, but increased drills for special operation forces and communication units, while placing unusual emphasis on the importance of exercises. Following the Iraq war, North Korea started to train a large number of military hackers in preparation for cyber war, expanded light infantry units, and reinforced capabilities for special warfare such as night fighting, mountain combat, and street battles. The North Korean forces are also known to have improved their electronic jamming skills as a means of dealing with electronic warfare as well as defense against precision guided missiles.¹⁹

Since the end of colonial rule, North Korea's external military relations had focused on its two main patrons, the Soviet Union and China. In the aftermath of the Korean War, the regime had to concentrate efforts on rebuilding devastated industries, but military reinforcement resumed in the beginning of the 1960s. On July 6, 1961, Kim Il-sung visited Moscow, where he signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union, and on July 11, he visited Beijing to conclude a similar treaty with China.

The Sino-North Korean treaty stipulated that in the event of the contracting party's involvement in war, the other party would render immediate military and other assistance. It also prescribed that unless

¹⁹ On July 10, 2008, the Subcommittee on Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) of US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee expressed a concern on a possible development of EMP weapons by North Korea. It is alleged that North Korea has 500 to 600 computer hackers specialized in cyber warfare in the Research Center No. 110 under the Reconnaissance Bureau of the KPA General Staff Department.

both parties agreed to amend or terminate the treaty, it would remain in force in spite of objections raised by the other party.

In the case of the Soviet-North Korean treaty, former Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev visited Pyongyang in January 1992 as President Yeltsin's special envoy. At this time, he readdressed the need to review the automatic military intervention clause in Article 1 of the Soviet-DPRK Treaty of 1961. In September 7, Russia notified North Korea of its intention not to extend the treaty, which was thus allowed to expire on September 10, 1996.

In March 1999, Russia and North Korea initialed a new friendship treaty similar to those Russia had signed with Mongolia and Vietnam. Instead of providing 'immediate military intervention and assistance,' Russia agreed to 'make immediate mutual contact upon security emergencies.' This 'Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighborly Relations and Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the DPRK' was formally signed in Pyongyang on February 9, 2000.

In April, 2001, a North Korean military delegation visited Russia, where it signed a bilateral agreement on cooperating in the areas of defense industry and military equipment. In a summit meeting held in Moscow on August 4, Kim Jong-il and Vladimir Putin announced an eight-point joint statement calling for faithful abidance by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, expansion of bilateral cooperation in economic and military areas, and the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea.

In October 2002, a North Korean army and air force delegation visited Russia and reinforced bilateral ties by agreeing to expand exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. On his way to Russia in August of the same year, Kim Jong-il stopped off at a training center for the Russian Far Eastern forces, where he observed their military exercise.

In the meantime, a North Korean air force delegation made an

inspection of an aviation complex in Pakistan in May 2001. In the following month, a high-level North Korean delegation visited Myanmar to discuss bilateral cooperation in the defense industry. North Korea has long spent efforts to strengthen its ties with countries in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. These efforts have been motivated not just by political or diplomatic considerations but also by the need to find markets for North Korea's arms and military technologies. In addition, North Korea has maintained military cooperation with Iran, Syria and other Arab countries. Of special concern to the international community has been its dispatch of nuclear and missile engineers to Iran.

However, the most important country in North Korea's military diplomacy remains China. In accordance with a bilateral agreement on military exchange signed in August 1971, the two countries have exchanged military delegations two to three times a year thereafter.

In October 2000, for instance, a Chinese military delegation headed by Minister of National Defense General Chi Haotian visited North Korea to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army's assistance in the Korean War. The ceremony was attended by all top leaders of the Workers' Party and North Korean government as well as the Korean People's Army. This presented a striking contrast with the welcoming ceremony held in the same month for US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, which was attended only by military generals.

Following Director of the General Political Bureau Jo Myong-rok's visit to Beijing in April 2003, a high-level Chinese military delegation visited North Korea in May to discuss ways to improve the bilateral military relationship and to exchange their positions on nuclear issues. In January 2006, accompanied by senior military leaders, Kim Jong-il visited Guangzhou and other industrial areas in China before having a summit meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao. The two leaders

are presumed to have discussed North Korea's pending issues. In the following April, Chinese National Defense Minister General Cao Gangchuan visited Pyongyang, where an agreement was reached on expanding friendship and cooperation in the military areas between the two countries.

Moreover, in August 2007, a Chinese goodwill delegation visited North Korea. In December, Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Wu Dawei visited Pyongyang to meet with North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun and convey China's positions as the host of the Six-Party Talks. On December 12, 2008, Chinese Defense Minister General Liang Guanglie met with North Korean officials in charge of external affairs and underlined the importance of expanding exchanges and cooperation between the militaries of the two countries.

One unusual visitor to Pyongyang during this period was Nong Duc Manh, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the highest-ranking official from that country to visit North Korea in more than 50 years. North Korea had sent more than 200 pilots to Vietnam during the Vietnam War, in the course of which eleven of them are known to have been killed in action. In July 2008, a North Korean military delegation visited Mongolia to discuss issues related to agricultural development.

Meanwhile, North Korea has constantly requested direct dialogue with the United States. On July 13, 2007, in the name of the KPA mission to Panmunjom, it proposed military talks involving UN representatives. And in a statement issued on January 22, 2008, by the spokesman of the Korea National People's Committee on the Protection of Peace North Korea called for the conclusion of a peace treaty between North Korea and the United States. Nonetheless, North Korea has continued to expand military cooperation with Arab countries, including Libya, Iran and Syria. As already mentioned, its dispatch of a group of nuclear and missile engineers to Iran drew unfavorable

attention from the international community.

Since the first inter-Korean summit in 2000, a series of military talks between South and North Korea was conducted, including those between the respective defense ministers and working-level contacts. In the general officers' talks held on June 3-4, 2004, the two Koreas adopted and put into effect 'an agreement on the prevention of accidental clashes in the West Sea, suspension of propaganda broadcasting, and removal of propaganda devices from the areas near the Military Demarcation Line (MDL).' Accordingly, both sides restrained their naval ships from possible confrontations, prohibited any unprovoked actions against each other, ceased propaganda activities and removed all propaganda devices from the MDL line.

Later, a working group meeting of the third round of general officers' talks was held on July 20, 2005, culminating in an agreement to establish correspondence offices to prevent accidental West Sea clashes. The construction of these offices on August 13 enabled the two Koreas to make urgent calls using radio or wireless communication. An agreement was also made to enable inter-Korean communication between North and South Korean vessels, based on communication networks shared among international merchant ships. Both sides also agreed to exchange information regarding ships engaged in illegal fishing activities.

During the third and fourth round of general officers talks held on March 2-3 and May 16-18, 2006, respectively, South Korea proposed to prevent confrontations and establish joint fishing grounds in the West Sea. These talks, however, ended without result as the North insisted on drawing a new maritime West Sea border. Later, in the seventh round of general officers' talks held in December 2007, the two Koreas adopted an agreement to provide military guarantee for passage, communication and customs clearance. Of the military talks held since 2000, however, few have been effective in producing agreement on

matters directly relevant to the building of inter-Korean trust.

As long as the stand-off between South and North Korean military forces continues, they could face a serious crisis or irrevocable catastrophe resulting from a misunderstanding or misjudgment caused by voluntary or involuntary factors. Subsequently, the importance of accurately estimating the situation, maintaining readiness for all contingencies and preventing military collision between the two Koreas cannot be overemphasized.

2. North Korea's Provocations against the South

Over the last half century, North Korea has made over 2,660 military provocations against South Korea. Even taking into account the fundamental instability of the divided peninsula, North Korea's military attacks, infiltrations and other provocations against the South must be seen as the most fundamental cause of the dysfunction in inter-Korean bilateral relations.

Even before the Korean War, the North Korean military pursued national unification by armed forces as their top policy priority, while at the same time implementing a typical communist mix of carrot-and-stick tactics. On the surface, North Korea may seem to want reconciliation and peace, but in reality, it has remained faithful to a doctrine calling for the accomplishment of its goals even by the means of war and violence. North Korea has advocated military action along with united front tactics throughout the last decade or so.

Even during peaceful dialogue or institutional negotiations, North Korea has often engaged in 'unreasonable' actions such as provocations, violence, and terrorism when situations do not proceed according to plan, the goal being to force its counterparts to change their stance or make concessions. At other times, the regime has made peace

overtures or launched charm offensives in the form of dialogue or token cooperation, only to resort to military force and pressure to obtain its objectives.

Looking back on inter-Korean relations over the last half century, one can see this pattern in the North's various attacks, infiltrations and provocations against the South. The most typical example of all is the invasion that set off the Korean War. Pyongyang had proposed peace talks shortly before mobilizing its mechanized units, artilleries and 200,000-strong infantry in a surprise attack across the Southern border at daybreak on a Sunday. North Korea also drilled invasion tunnels while announcing a historic joint statement for peaceful unification on July 4, 1972. There was also an assassination attempt on then South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan while he was visiting Rangoon, Myanmar with his entourage in 1983. Earlier that same year, North Korea had proposed a three-way dialogue of the two Koreas and the United States to discuss the possibility of a US-North Korea peace treaty and an inter-Korean non-aggression pact.

Around the 2000s, while economic cooperation between the two Koreas as well as South Korea's economic assistance to the North was in progress, the North carried out a series of provocations against the South, including an infiltration of the South with its midget submarine, two nuclear tests (2006 and 2009), and three test firings of long-range missiles (1998, 2006 and 2009). Other examples include: the Second Battle of Yeonpyeong in 2002, which was sparked by North Korean vessels that had intruded the Northern Limit Line in the West Sea. At this time, the North fired at a South Korean patrol boat on the day a match between South Korea and Turkey was played during the Japan-Korea World Cup; the torpedo attack on the South Korean corvette *Cheonan* in March 2010, just after the resumption of South Korea's humanitarian assistance to the North, including rice and cement; and the artillery shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in November 2010, just

before Red Cross talks between the two Koreas were scheduled to take place.

The root of this provocative behavior can be found in North Korea's belligerence, which originates from Stalin's plan to communize Asia. Another cause can be also found in the regime's 'revolutionary doctrine,' which calls for the use of any tactical methods necessary to achieve a desired end.

(1) The Korean War

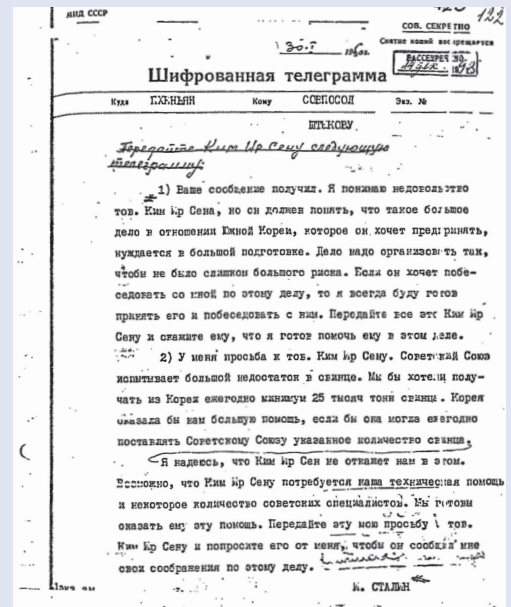
The first and most typical example of North Korea's provocation is the invasion that sparked the Korean War of 1950-53. Even during the Soviet military occupation (1945-48) Kim Il-sung and other North Korean leaders had reached the conclusion that forced unification would be the surest and fastest way to bring the entire peninsula under the communist banner. Accordingly, the invasion was prepared with elaborate plans, based on a carrot-and-stick strategy and the theory of communist revolution. The ensuing war caused over three million deaths in both South and North Korea, resulting in over 100,000 orphans and the separations of ten million families, along with tremendous property damage in North and South. Military conflict on the peninsula eventually took on international dimensions, thus launching the Cold War in earnest and further solidifying Korea's division.

Immediately before the outbreak of war Kim Il-sung made clandestine visits to Moscow and Beijing to sign secret military pacts with Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong. These pacts enabled North Korea to concentrate its energy on reinforcing its invasion capabilities. At the same time, Pyongyang launched a series of disguised peace offensives against South Korea and the international community, calling for political negotiations between the leaders of the two Koreas and submitting to the UN Secretary General a declaration of its desire for

peaceful unification.

Under such circumstances, North Korean troops intruded into the DMZ without declaring war, and at dawn on June 25, 1950 began an all-out surprise invasion of the South. Seoul fell in three days time as the Northern forces dominated the war, needing only a few days to push the battlefield as far down as the Nakdong River. This early domination of the fighting had much to do with the fact that half the North Korean troops deployed along the frontline were former members of the Korean Volunteer Army or Allied Anti-Japanese Forces of the Northeast Region, with rich combat experience acquired from fighting Japanese troops in continental China. Meanwhile, the South Korean army, having only recently been established, was under-trained and under-equipped.

Upon the outbreak of the war, the United Nations convened a Security Council meeting, during which it condemned North Korea's attack as an illegal act of invasion. UN forces, consisting of a total of sixteen nations including the United States, entered the war, recapturing Seoul after a successful landing at Incheon. The Republic of Korea (ROK) forces also succeeded in crossing the 38th parallel to reach the Amnok (or Yalu) River by the end of October 1950, but were later pushed back by the Chinese army, resulting in a standstill. The Soviet Union then proposed a ceasefire to the United Nations. This proposal was accepted by the UN forces, leading to ceasefire negotiations in July 1951. After more than two years of repeated war and negotiations, the two sides finally signed an armistice agreement on July 27, 1953.



| A Soviet document approving North Korea's invasion of the South (January 30, 1950)



| Kim Il-sung visits the Soviet Union in March 1949

Table 4–8 South and North Korean Forces at the Beginning of the Korean War

South Korean Forces		North Korean Forces
103,827		201,050
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Army (94,974): 8 divisions and support units · Navy and Marine Corps (6,956): guard units and Marine Corps units · Air Force (1,897): one flight wing and seven bases 	Troops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Army (182,680): 10 divisions and support units · Navy and Marine Corps (15,570): three waters defense commands and Marine Corps · Air Force(2,800): one air division
0	Tanks (Armored Vehicles)	242
(Armored Vehicles : 27)		(Armored Vehicles : 54)
1,051		2,492
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Self-propelled artillery: 0 · 105mm M3 Howitzers: 91 · 81mm, 60mm Mortar launchers: 960 	Artillery Guns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Self-propelled artillery(SU-76): 176 · 122mm, 76 mm Howitzers: 552 · 85mm, 37mm Anti-aircraft artillery: 36 · 120mm, 82mm, 60mm Mortar launchers: 1,728
2,040	Anti-tank Artillery	550
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 2,36^{mm} Anti-tank guns: 1,900 · 57mm Recoilless rifles: 140 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 45mm Anti-tank guns: 550
36	Naval Ships	110
Patrol boats: 36		Patrol boats: 30 , Auxiliary vessels: 80
22	Aircraft	226
L-4: 8, L-5:4, T-6:10		YAK-9, IL-10, TU-2, trainers, reconnaissance Aircraft

Source : Ministry of National Defense, *2010 Defense White Paper*, p.242

Three years of war provoked by the communist side reduced the Korean peninsula to ashes. Over 140,000 South Korean soldiers were killed and more than 450,000 were wounded, while the North Korean forces suffered about 1.8 million casualties. In addition, the South Korean economy was almost paralyzed due to the destruction of over 40 percent of its production facilities. North Korea, too, suffered an economic setback, because most of its key industrial foundations and production facilities were also burnt to the ground. South and North Korea, both new nations established in 1948, lost most of their key industrial facilities as well as human and material resources during the three years of war that ravaged the region.

Table 4–9 War Casualties among ROK and UN Forces

	KIAs and those who later died as a result of wounds received in action	WIAs	MIAs and POWs	Total
ROK Forces	137,899	450,742	32,838	621,479
UN Forces	40,670	104,280	9,931	154,881
Total	178,569	555,022	42,769	776,360

Unit : persons

Source : Ministry of National Defense, *2010 Defense White Paper*, p,249

Table 4–10 Civilian Casualties

Massacred or killed	Wounded	Kidnapped or missing	Total	Other Victims
373,599	229,625	387,744	990,968	Refugees : 3.2 million, War widows : 300,000 War orphans : 100,000

Unit : persons

Source : Ministry of National Defense, *2010 Defense White Paper*, p,249

(2) North Korea’s provocations against South Korea: From the 1960s to 1980s

Even after the ceasefire, North Korea engaged in numerous military provocations against the South, albeit changing tactics according to the times. The communist regime has intentionally created tension by strategically implementing a wide range of provocations, including aggressive military actions, nuclear tests and missile launches, in order to take the initiative in inter-Korean relations and pursue its own interests. In addition, since the end of the Korean War, the North has conducted over 1,640 infiltrations of South Korea by land and sea, and over 1,020 other provocations including shooting incidents, shelling attacks, assaults, naval skirmishes, sea-jacking, violation of airspace, and missile-firings.

These provocations can be classified into several categories according to the time period. In the 1960s, for example, in accordance with its

plan of instigating a communist revolution in South Korea, North Korea infiltrated South Korea with armed spy agents and made limited military provocations near the MDL. Throughout the 1970s, détente between the East and West blocs induced it to promote dialogue between the two Koreas, but at the same time, Pyongyang continued to implement a carrot-and-stick strategy. In the 1980s, with the economic gap between the two Koreas growing ever larger, North Korea resorted to terrorist attacks in order to sow confusion in South Korean society.

Table 4-11 Infiltrations and Provocations by North Korea: From 1954 to 2010

	No. of Cases	Description
Infiltrations	1,640	· 720 cases on land, 920 cases in sea
Local Provocations	1,020	· 470 cases on land (90 cases of shootings and artillery fires, 70 cases of raids, abductions, etc.) · 510 cases in sea (490 cases of illegal crossing of border by naval ships/fishing boats, 20 naval skirmishes) · 40 cases in the air (20 violations of cases of South Korean airspace, 10 missile launches, etc.)

Source : Ministry of National Defense, *2010 Defense White Paper*, p.250

As post-war reconstruction was coming to a finish in the 1960s, North Korea embarked on a series of limited military attacks on the South aimed at bringing about a communist revolution there. The first attack was made on January 21, 1968, when a squad of 31 North Korean armed spy agents affiliated to the 124th Army Unit crossed the DMZ, infiltrated into the South and made a raid on the Blue House, the presidential residence in Seoul. The raid resulted in the deaths of seven South Korean soldiers, police officers, and civilians. The military and police search party killed 28 commandos while capturing one alive; the remaining two managed to escape. From October 30 to November 3 that year, a total of 120 North Korean armed commandoes infiltrated into the Uljin and Samcheok area of Gangwon Province on three separate occasions. It took two months for a combined team of South Korean military troops, reserve forces and police to track them down, whereupon they shot dead 113 of them and captured seven alive. The

lives of more than 20 South Korean soldiers, police and civilians were lost during the course of this pursuit.

In the 1970s, North Korea promoted a two-pronged strategy. As rapprochement between East and West led to change in the international situation, North Korea called for inter-Korean dialogue while continuing efforts to bring about a communist revolution in South Korea. North Korea's sporadic provocations during this decade were aimed at creating conflict within South Korean society. The most typical attempt made by North Korea during this period is the axe murder of American soldiers, which took place on August 18, 1976 in the Panmunjom area.

At the time, several American and South Korean soldiers were pruning a poplar tree in the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom when North Korean troops suddenly approached to murder two American soldiers with an ax and wound nine other American and South Korean soldiers. In response to the incident, the US Command in South Korea issued an order for combat readiness and moved the aircraft-carrier *Ranger* into South Korean waters. Faced with such decisive steps taken by the United States and South Korea, Kim Il-sung sent an apology to the UN Commander on August 21.

Following the assassination of President Park Chung-hee on October 26, 1979, North Korea made further attempts to exploit the confusion roiling South Korean society. While proposing working-level talks aimed at holding a prime ministers' meeting at the beginning of 1980s, the Northern regime also carried out provocations against the South in an effort to prevent it from restoring social stability. During this period, North Korea embarked on a new pattern of provocation involving terrorist attacks by bomb blasts, a change from the guerilla infiltrations of the past.

On October 9, 1983, North Korean agents exploded bombs at the Aung San National Cemetery in Rangoon, Myanmar in an attempt to

assassinate President Chun Doo-hwan and his entourage, who were then on a goodwill visit to the Southeast Asian country. Although President Chun himself was unhurt, the vice prime minister and 16 other members of the entourage were killed, while 14 others were wounded. Furthermore, on November 29, 1987, Korean Airlines Flight 858 flying from Abu Dhabi to Seoul exploded over the ocean near Myanmar, killing all 115 passengers and crew members on board. It was later disclosed that two North Korean agents, Kim Hyun-hee and Kim Sung-il, had conducted the bombing mission on orders from Pyongyang in order to disrupt preparations for the upcoming Olympic Games in Seoul.

(3) North Korea's military provocations against South Korea in the 1990s and 2000s

During the Cold War, North Korea had relied mostly on military provocations such as infiltration by armed spy agents, special forces, and guerilla troops, in addition to limited attacks in the Panmunjom and DMZ area, the bombing of civil airliners, and the kidnapping of South Korean citizens. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, even while developing various types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological and chemical capabilities, North Korea continued infiltrating the South using asymmetric capabilities such as submarines and missiles. In the 2000s, in particular, North Korea launched well-planned strategic attacks and provoked naval clashes near the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the West Sea. The most serious provocations that had taken place since the inauguration of the Lee Myung-bak administration were the sinking of the South Korean vessel *Cheonan* and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, which was indiscriminately aimed at soldiers and civilians alike. Whether staging attacks or just making threats, North Korea sought to benefit from or resolve pending inter-Korean issues or negotiations, as well as to receive compensation or induce changes in the South Korean and

international stance on various issues. There is also a high likelihood that the North pursued domestic political goals of sustaining its regime and facilitating another hereditary succession of power.

In the 1990s, typical infiltrations and provocations made by the Korean People's Army took place in the East Sea. On September 18, 1996, for example, when a North Korean midget submarine was stranded on the coast of Gangneung, reconnaissance agents on the submarine murdered eleven unarmed members of the crew before escaping to the South. The South Korean army and a police search team joined local reserve forces in tracking down the infiltrators in a mop-up operation, in the course of which thirteen of them were killed. Eleven South Korean troops also died in exchanges of fire with the North Koreans. Subsequently, on June 22, 1998, another Yugo-class North Korean submarine became stranded on the coast of Sokcho, and was towed towards the coast by a South Korean navy vessel early the next morning. All nine members of the submarine crew and putative spy agents had blown themselves up before they were found.

On June 15, 1999, ignoring warnings issued by the South Korean navy, six North Korean patrol boats crossed the NLL, entering South Korean territorial waters at a point 10 km west of Yeonpyeong Island. These North Korean boats then launched a preemptive strike on South Korean naval vessels, sparking an exchange of fire. This skirmish, later known as the First Battle of Yeonpyeong, was the first sea battle fought between the two sides' navies since the Korean War.

Following the first inter-Korean summit in 2000, North Korea engaged in various bilateral talks and forms of economic cooperation while still carrying out military provocations against the South. On June 29, 2002, the second naval skirmish between the two Koreas took place near the NLL off the coast of Yeonpyeong Island in the West Sea. Determined to avenge their defeat in the first battle of Yeonpyeong three years earlier, the North Korean navy made a surprise attack from

behind on a South Korean patrol boat, leaving six South Korean sailors dead and eighteen wounded. North Korea also suffered more than 30 casualties.

Since its inauguration in 2008, the Lee Myong-bak administration has promoted a principled North Korea policy. In response, North Korea has repeatedly engaged in military provocations against the South as a means of intimidating and raising pressure on the Lee administration. On November 10, 2009, another skirmish between the two Korean navies broke out in waters 2.2 km west of Daecheong Island, near the NLL. While North Korean patrol boats were being driven out of South Korean territorial waters, the two sides exchanged fire. Though the South Korean side suffered no casualties, there were heavy casualties on the North Korean side, which also sustained severe damage to one of its vessels.

In addition, North Korea made shows of its military capacity by test-firing long and medium-range missiles in 1998, 2006 and 2009. Launched were Rodong missiles in the 1990s (range of 1,300 km), Musudan missiles in 2007 (range of 3,000 km), and the Taepodong-1 and Taepodong-2 (long-range missiles) in 1998 and 2006, respectively. It also launched a long-range rocket in 2009.

North Korea's nuclear development is the most important obstacle to better relations with both South Korea and the rest of the international community. It is also the greatest threat to peace for South Korea and other countries in the region. Since the 1990s, North Korea has combined missile launches and nuclear tests, and despite efforts by the international community and watchdog agencies, it has never shown a sincere commitment to denuclearization. This may indicate that Pyongyang is determined to use its nuclear program as a low-cost military means of avoiding international sanctions, and as a surefire way to tip the scales in its favor.

North Korea has carried out two nuclear tests: one on October 9,

2006 and the other on May 25, 2009. In addition, its foreign ministry spokesman first indicated Pyongyang's intention to develop a uranium enrichment program on April 2009 and insisted in November 2010 that more than 2,000 centrifuges were in operation for uranium enrichment. Judging from such evidence, one may easily presume that Pyongyang is also working on a nuclear weapons program based on highly-enriched uranium. After the post-Cold War era, North Korea has displayed a greater degree of abnormality in its behavior than can be observed elsewhere in the world.

(4) Northern Limit Line and Military Provocations by North Korea

North Korea argues that the **Northern Limit Line (NLL)** was established unilaterally by the United States, and must therefore be repudiated and re-established. Since its first violation of the maritime boundary in 1973, North Korea repeated infiltrations and military attacks in the NLL area from the end of the 1990s to early 2000s.

There are several reasons for North Korea's insistence that the NLL is an unlawful boundary drawn unilaterally by the United Nations Forces: First, it bolsters Pyongyang's demand for a peace treaty with the United States that would replace the current armistice agreement. Second, by turning the waters around the NLL into a disputed area, North Korea wants to establish a new maritime boundary to its advantage. Third, a heightened crisis around the NLL in the West Sea would provide greater economic profits to North Korea through an increased harvest of marine products, including blue crabs. Fourth, through military provocations and infiltrations, North Korea may also secure additional political benefits.

The Northern Limit Line

(NLL) While negotiating the armistice agreement of July 27, 1953, the United Nations Command and the Communist bloc established a demarcation line on land, but failed to reach an agreement on a maritime boundary. On August 30, UNC commander General Mark Clark promulgated the NLL as a military control line in the West Sea, restricting patrol activities of the United Nations navy and air force in order to prevent any accidental crash in the waters off the Korean peninsula. The NLL in the East Sea was drawn based on a maritime extension of the Military Demarcation Line on land. In the meantime, the NLL in the West Sea was established based on a line equidistant from five islands under the control of the UNC commander on the one hand, and the North Korean coast on the other, and by connecting twelve sets of coordinates in the area northwest of the Han River mouth. When armistice negotiations began the UNC had control over most islands off the coast of Hwanghae Province as well as the coastal areas, but conceded all but five of them to the North upon conclusion of the agreement.

Although North Korea has recently disputed the NLL, it had for over more than fifty years recognized the maritime boundary and abided by it. For instance, it had agreed to meet on the NLL in 1984 to receive South Korea's assistance for flood victims. Stranded North Korean vessels were returned to North Korea on the NLL in 2002 and 2003. Additional clear evidence for Pyongyang's acceptance of the NLL is that it had also recognized it in the Basic Agreement signed between the two Koreas in 1992 as well as other bilateral agreements.

The NLL is the maritime boundary between South and North Korea and the area south of it is clearly South Korea's territorial waters. North Korea's denial of this validity constitutes a clear violation of the Armistice Agreement of 1953 and international law, as well as the South-North Basic Agreement of 1992. Ever since the armistice agreement was signed, South Korea has respected the NLL as a line sustaining the stable enforcement of the agreement. The NLL has long

played the role of a maritime military demarcation line. Both the Armistice Agreement and the Basic Agreement clearly state that the NLL must be respected.

North Korea had accepted the United Nation Command's establishment of the NLL and raised no objections to the NLL until 1973, when it intentionally violated the maritime boundary on the West Sea 43 times during a two-month period from October to November 1973. On July 1, 1977 North Korea claimed an Exclusive Economic Zone up to 200 nautical miles (370 km) and on August 1 unilaterally established a new maritime military demarcation line.

North Korea's provocative actions ceased for a time due to the signing of the **South-North Basic Agreement** and a **Follow-up Agreement on Nonaggression**, which define the areas under each side's jurisdiction. Despite this agreement, however, North Korea repeatedly violated the

Article 11 of the South-North Basic Agreement

stipulates that the demarcation line between the two Koreas and the areas for nonaggression shall be "identical to the Military Demarcation Line provided in the Military Armistice Agreement of July 27, 1953, and the areas that each side has exercised jurisdiction over until the present time."

Article 10 of the Follow-up Agreement on Nonaggression

also stipulates: "The South and North shall continue to discuss a non-aggression line on the sea. Until a new maritime non-aggression demarcation line is established, the areas for non-aggression on the sea shall be those that each side has exercised jurisdiction over until the present time."

NLL. North Korea's provocations led to three naval skirmishes: the First and Second Battle of Yeonpyeong and the Battle of Daecheong. In all three cases, the exchange of fire started when North Korean patrol boats crossed the NLL and initiated attacks on South Korean vessels.

Furthermore, on March 26, 2010, North Korea sent a Yeono class miniature submarine into South Korea's territorial waters south of the NLL and sank the *Cheonan*. The submarine torpedoed the South Korean corvette while it was on a surveillance operation off the coast of Baengnyeong Island. 46 of its 104-member crew were killed in the sinking.

Table 4–12 Major North Korean Provocations in the West Sea since 1999

Jun. 15, 1999	The Battle of Yeonpyeong broke out after six North Korean patrol boats had violated South Korea's waters at a point 10 km west of Yeonpyeong Island, ignored the warning and started to shoot at ROK patrol boats.
Jun. 29, 2002	The Second Battle of Yeonpyeong broke out after a North Korean patrol boat had violated South Korean waters and intentionally attacked a ROK naval ship, killing six and wounding eighteen among the ROK crew.
Nov. 10, 2009	The Battle of Daecheong broke out after a North Korean patrol boat had crossed the NLL at a point 9 km east of Daecheong Island and launched a surprise attack on ROK's naval ships, ignoring their warnings. After an exchange of fire, the North Korean boat was sent back to the North.
Mar. 26, 2010	A North Korean mini submarine that had infiltrated into South Korean waters sunk the ROK corvette <i>Cheonan</i> by a surprise torpedo attack, resulting in the deaths of 46 South Korean crew members.
Nov. 23, 2010	North Korean forces fired artillery guns and multiple rocket launchers (MRLs) at civilian houses and military facilities on Yeonpyeong Island. The exchange of fire lasted for 50 minutes as the South Korean troops fired back. Two ROK Marine soldiers and two civilians were killed. Eighteen soldiers and civilians were wounded.

Immediately following the attack, the South Korean government established a civilian-military joint investigation team to look into the incident. The joint investigation team concluded that the *Cheonan* had been sunk as the result of an external underwater explosion caused by a North Korea-made torpedo. This conclusion coincided with findings made by a multinational information analysis team that had studied North Korea's submarine capabilities as well as items collected at the site of the explosion. On May 24, following the announcement by the joint investigation team, President Lee Myong-bak proclaimed his determination in a statement released to the nation: "The sinking of



The South Korean corvette *Cheonan* being salvaged after having been sunk by a North Korean torpedo attack |



Private residence destroyed by North Korea's bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island |

the *Cheonan* is North Korea's military provocation against the Republic of Korea. We will take decisive measures to call North Korea to account for it." Subsequently, the South Korean government imposed sanctions against Pyongyang.

On November 23, 2010, North Korea bombarded military facilities and private houses on Yeonpyeong Island. Using as its pretext a South Korean artillery exercise which had taken place in waters south of the NLL, the North fired multiple rocket launchers. In response, South Korean forces returned fire. The exchange continued for fifty minutes, resulting in deaths of two civilians and two soldiers. The shelling of Yeonpyeong Island was the North's first attack on South Korean territory since the signing of the armistice agreement in 1953. The fact that the shelling claimed the lives of innocent civilians makes it an especially serious provocation that cannot be ignored.

However, through the Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) and other state-run propaganda media, North Korea insisted that the area south of the NLL is its territorial waters, while blaming South Korea for the artillery attack. It has made a similar argument to China and the international community.

Table 4–13 The *Cheonan* Sinking and Shelling of Yeonpyeong Island

	Sinking of the <i>Cheonan</i>	Shelling on Yeonpyeong Island
Type of North Korean Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Torpedo attack from a mini submarine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 170 shots by multiple rocket launchers and coastal artillery guns
Development of Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · March 31—A civilian–military Joint Investigation Group (JIG) was established with 59 active service members, 17 government officials, and 6 civilians. · April 12—The JIG was reorganized to include 49 Korean and 24 foreign experts. · May 20—The JIG made an official announcement that the <i>Cheonan</i> had been sunk by North Korea’s torpedo attack. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 14:47–15:15 ROK Marine Yeonpyeong unit responded to the attack by firing 50 rounds of K–9 self-propelled artillery. · 15:12–15:29 North Korea launched the second attack with 20 rounds of MRLs and coastal artillery. · 15:25–15:41 The ROK Marine unit responded to the second attack with 30 rounds of K–9 artillery.
Damages Caused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 46 out of 104 crew members are dead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Two ROK marines were killed and 18 were wounded. · Two South Korean civilians were killed and many wounded.
Result of Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The <i>Cheonan</i> was split and sunk due to a shockwave and bubble effect generated by the underwater explosion of a torpedo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In addition, a total of 133 buildings (33 completely destroyed, 9 half destroyed, and 91 partially destroyed) and power and communications facilities were damaged. Wildfires broke out at ten different sites.
North Korea’s Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · North Korea denied its involvement and insisted that the whole incident had been fabricated by South Korea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · North Korea insisted that it was acting in a rightful self–defense against a South Korean provocation.
Measures Taken Against North Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The ROK government announced the May 24 measures, which completely suspended trade and exchange between the two Koreas, prohibited navigation of North Korean vessels in South Korean waters. · On June 17, the European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning North Korea. · The G8 Summit Meeting also adopted a joint statement condemning North Korea. · On July 9, the UN Security Council condemned the sinking of the <i>Cheonan</i> in a presidential statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The ROK government strongly demanded that North Korea take responsible measures. The South Korean National Assembly defined it as an act of armed provocation and strongly condemned it. · The United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and other countries around the world were outraged by North Korea’s blatant provocation and condemned it.

The South Korean government imposed bilateral sanctions against the North following an announcement on results of investigation into the sinking of the *Cheonan*. The May 24 sanctions were aimed at making Pyongyang realize that misbehavior would bring punitive consequences. The South Korean government also demanded that Pyongyang apologize for the provocations and punish those responsible. In addition, the government reiterated to North Korea that

the NLL is the maritime boundary between the two Koreas, and that additional provocations would be countered with retaliatory strikes.

North Korea has used military actions as a tool and means in dealing with inter-Korean issues over the last several decades. The communist regime has also relied on carrot-and-stick tactics, mixing violence and negotiation in order to obtain its goals. Since the end of the 1990s, North Korea has drawn attention with its strategy of using nuclear tests and military provocations as cards to play against South Korea and the international community. Pyongyang seems to have aimed at reaping profits in various areas by drawing the international community's attention to North Korea, putting pressure on the South Korean government, demanding economic assistance, and inducing conflicts within South Korean society.

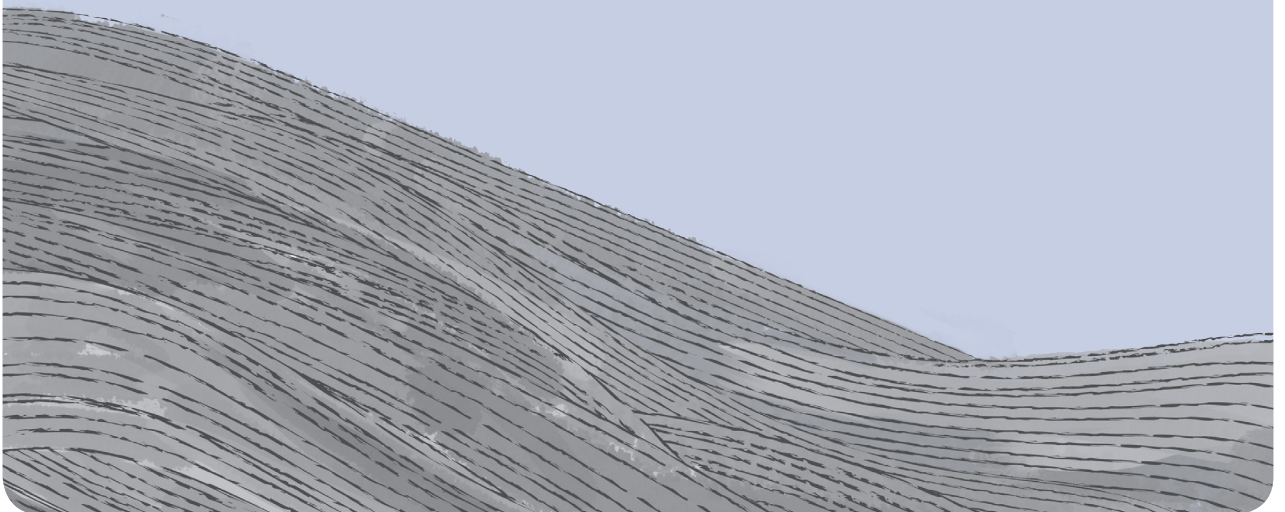
5

Economy: Present and Outlook

Section 1. Economic System and Basic Economic Policy

Section 2. Macroeconomic Status of North Korean Economy

Section 3. Economic Policy : Changes and Outlook



Key Point

01

North Korea, under a two-pronged strategy of regime maintenance and economic revival, has since the 2000s remained committed to its traditional policies, including self-reliance and parallel development of the military and economy. In the meantime, a shift in policy focus is taking place from heavy industry to defense industry, in order to support the North's military-first policy.

02

From the 1990s, North Korea posted negative economic growth for nine consecutive years due to the collapse of the socialist bloc and various other problems inherent to North Korea's own system. Policies for economic revival, an increase in foreign aid, and the expansion of inter-Korean economic cooperation led to a slight upturn in the 2000s, but this soon gave way to another slump beginning in 2006.

03

The official inauguration of the Kim Jong-il regime implemented a series of policies: The regime aimed at improving the economy by placing top priority on developing the defense industry and advancing science and technology; it sought to put industries back on their feet by helping them to acquire advanced technologies and concentrated funds; it allowed a limited degree of liberalization in order to attract foreign capital; it also set out to improve economic efficiency by giving more room to market forces. Nonetheless, North Korea's domestic resources had already been too depleted for these endeavors to yield significant results.

04

North Korea introduced the so-called July 1 Economic Management Improvement Measures in 2002, in line with attempts to improve the economy by allowing a limited measure of liberalization within the framework of its planned economy. These efforts bore little fruit, while the spread of markets was thought to have contributed to a general decline in socialist morale. Subsequently, North Korea reverted in October 2005 to reactionary and regressive policies, in an apparent effort to restore traditional management methods.

05

North Korea has sought to revivify the economy by implementing retrogressive measures, such as invoking socialist principles, emphasizing the superiority of its socialist planned economy, and conducting a currency reform. Without genuine policies of reform and opening, however, North Korea will not be able to achieve economic recovery. Indeed, the obstacles standing in the way of that goal are likely to accumulate.

Section 1

Economic System and Basic Economic Policy

Compared to the Soviet Union, China and the socialist states of Eastern Europe, North Korea, has maintained a more orthodox form of centralized planned economy. Since the end of 1990s, however, sustaining this system became difficult due to the worsening economic and financial crisis, which in turn created a gap between institutional prescriptions and economic realities. As the North's planned economy began to malfunction, black markets emerged to play an important role in the daily economic activities of the masses. The regime responded to these changes at the start of the 2000s, and moved to conduct partial reforms in order to better address the dire economic situation. This attempt, however, was soon abandoned and North Korea went back to reinforcing its centralized planned economy. It can be said, therefore, that such contradictory policies have resulted in economic distortions and divisions in North Korea.

I. Aspects of North Korean Economy

North Korea's economy is in essence a planned economy based on socialist ownership, which, according to the North, is "a system in which all means of production and produce are collectively owned either by society or groups." As such, all forms of wealth and goods produced are owned by the state. An exception of sorts is made for cooperative farms and social cooperative organizations as they are recognized by the regime. This, however, is actually no different from state ownership, since they also fall under the management of central planning and rationing system.

The scope of private ownership in North Korea is more limited than in other socialist nations; at most, earned income and daily necessities fall under this category. When the planned economy was beginning to encounter difficulties, the regime revised its constitution to partially expand the scope of private ownership for social organizations and individuals. Accordingly, social and cooperative organizations were allowed to take ownership of land, ships, agricultural equipment, and small and medium-sized plants and enterprises. Meanwhile, individuals were authorized to take side jobs such as cultivating private lots, earn income through legal financial activities, and inherit personal possessions.

In recent days, the stringent system of socialist ownership in North Korea has begun to break down to some degree, as individuals have been accumulating wealth through market activities. To elaborate: Trade and other economic activities on the part of individuals have enabled the general population to accumulate monetary assets, which are in turn invested in struggling factories, enterprises and commercial agencies. This has opened the door to *de facto* private ownership of the means of production. Moreover, though North Korea strictly prohibits private ownership of real estate such as private homes, individuals

engage in transactions involving state-owned residential properties by bribing relevant authorities to turn a blind eye to changing their names on 'state housing permits.' This has enabled private ownership of housing among small groups of individuals.

North Korea had hitherto maintained the most orthodox form of a Stalinist-style centrally planned economy. But as the economic situation grew worse, and its planned economy could not be supplied with sufficient raw and subsidiary materials for normal operations, North Korea introduced the July 1 Economic Management Improvement Measures in 2002 (July 1 Measures). The measures resulted in the partial modification of the central planning system. Since old methods of central planning based on 'principles of a single detailed plan' were no longer viable, the regime established the State Planning Committee to oversee key economic indicators of strategic and national value, including the defense industry, infrastructure industry and leading economic sectors, while individual agencies, factories and enterprises were given the responsibility of autonomous management for other economic indicators.²⁰ This decentralization of planning and assignment was necessary because the central authority was unable to supply the funds and materials required to implement the plans.

The July 1 Measures however, have since been repealed, and North Korea has again reinforced its management system in the context of a centrally planned economy. Despite such efforts, the economy remains partially decentralized due to ongoing hardship. The black markets created in response to economic turmoil and the general markets permitted under the July 1 Measures have created distortions in the North's system, expanding decentralization into informal sectors of the economy. In other words, with perpetual shortages in raw materials impeding efforts to normalize the planned economy, state-run enterprises and agencies have had to either increase their involvement in illegal economic activities under the pretext of legality, or achieve

²⁰ KINU, *North Korea Overview 2009*, p.183

their set targets by purchasing needed raw materials or selling goods at the aforementioned markets. Moreover, more and more people have been engaging in these informal economic activities to earn or supplement their income ever since the public ration system ceased functioning properly.

In short, North Korea's planned economy is currently managed in a partially decentralized form, despite the regime's repeated emphasis since the 2000s on reinforcing its centrally planned structure. At this point, informal sectors of the economy supplement the official economy. All this can be viewed as aspects of a post-socialist planned economy.

2. Basic Economic Policy

Having established its socialist economic system in the early 1960s, North Korea has maintained three basic policies in developing its economy: policies of 'a self-sufficient national economy,' 'heavy-industry-first development,' and 'military-economy parallel development.' These three key policies were maintained into the post-Cold War era, but were revised to a small extent when the North's economy spiraled downward in the 1990s. Nonetheless, the three policies have been established in close relation with the survival strategy of the military-first policy, and have either remained consistent or even been reinforced.

(1) Policy of Building a Self-sufficient National Economy

The basic development policy for North Korea's economy since the establishment of its socialist system has been a 'policy of building a self-sufficient national economy,' based on the principles of self-reliance. As claimed by the North, a national self-sufficient economy is one in which "not only human and physical factors in productions are

self-supplied, but also the link between production and consumption is fully achieved to realize a system of self-reliant reproduction within the national state.”²¹ Keeping to this policy direction, external economic relations in North Korea had been considered as a supplementary means of enabling the regime to import a bare minimum of needed raw materials and capital goods. This self-reliant course has isolated North Korea from the international division of labor, and its domestic industries have remain locked in a system that disregards the principles of comparative advantage in the world market. Efforts to develop industrial technology on the sole basis of domestic resources have led to a great gap between the state of North Korea’s economy and that of technologically advanced global economies.

In realization of such limitations, North Korea set out in the beginning of the 1970s to loosen its policy of self-reliance, taking out foreign loans in an effort to import advanced technologies from capitalist countries in the West. In the 1980s, the regime also enacted joint venture laws to attract foreign investment. Nevertheless, it can be inferred that until the 1980s, North Korea’s foreign economic policies were not intended to expedite liberalization at home, but merely to supplement the domestic planned economy.

When the socialist economic bloc collapsed in the late 1980s, North Korea’s ‘self-completing, self-dependent policy’ faced inevitable modification. Unlike in the past, when energy and raw materials provided by the Soviet Union enabled North Korea to maintain the pose of a self-reliant state, it now had no choice but to expand relations with capitalist countries in order to acquire needed resources. Against this backdrop, North Korea established its first special economic zone, the Rajin-Sonbong Economic and Trade Zone (known as Rason), and set about attracting foreign direct investment and promoting the establishment of joint ventures with foreign capital. From the mid-1990s, the regime even permitted limited investment opportunities

²¹ *Economic Dictionary* (2)
(Pyongyang: Social Science
Publishing Co., 1985), p.208

for South Korean capital. By the beginning of the 2000s, Kim Jong-il stated that North Korea “should import from overseas, rather than waste efforts and materials trying to produce the needed resources that [it] doesn’t have or isn’t capable of making well.”²² This exhibited indications of a policy shift towards a so-called ‘21st century policy of self-reliance.’

Along with the July 1 Measures, North Korea expanded its special economic zones by announcing the establishment of other districts including the Shinuiju Special Administrative District (Sept. 2002), the Gaeseong Industrial District (Oct. 2002), and Mt. Geumgang Tourism District (Nov. 2002). Among them, efforts to establish Shinuiju was defeated due to China’s unwillingness to cooperate, while districts of Gaeseong and Mt. Geumgang were executed with South Korea’s exclusive capital investment. As such, North Korea in the 2000s was able to further expand the liberalization of its foreign economic measures, more than it had before under the so-called ‘mosquito-net liberalization’ of the 1990s. At present, North Korea faces reinforced sanctions from the international community and other obstacles to acquiring currency due to its 2nd nuclear test in 2009 and ongoing provocations against the South. This has motivated the regime in January 2011 to elevate Rason, which had undergone slow development since 1991, into a special city to facilitate further expansion. In addition, two new special zones were designated, namely the river islands of Hwanggumpyong and Wihwa, in order to conduct joint development at the China-North Korea border.

Nonetheless, it would be hard to say that North Korea is following the Chinese path to economic liberalization, which entailed the designation of four special economic zones as far back as the early 1980s. The North, rather than joining the international economic order, seeks to maximize the effect of liberalization within the limitations of international sanctions. Although Kim Jong-il assessed China’s reform

²² *Kim Il-sung University Bulletin*, Fall 2006

and liberalization highly during his visit to its three northeastern provinces in early August 2010, he later stated, via a *Rodong Sinmun* editorial on September 18, 2010, that “Relying on external forces to find ways for better living is a manifestation of a selfish perspective that only takes one’s own well-being in account, regardless of what happens to future generations. The Party is firmly determined to build a strong economy based on the principles of self-reliance and *juche* ideology, without delving into sycophancy and reliance on external powers.” This editorial, entitled ‘Self-reliance is what defines our economic revival and rapid progress,’ clearly reflects the intention behind North Korea’s effort to expand its external economic relations. North Korea’s recent measures to open up to China, however, may have other reasons than trying to earn foreign currency amid strengthened international sanctions and withering inter-Korean economic cooperation. From Kim Jong-il’s above statement, it can be inferred that North Korea remains true to its policies of building a self-sufficient national economy, but it can also be noted that it is undertaking a broader sense of liberalization measures than in the past, as it seeks to legislate and revise relevant laws for special economic zones in line with those of China.

(2) Building a Military–first Economy

In the past, socialist countries such as the Soviet Union and China developed their military and economy in parallel, in the hope of taking a dominant position against the capitalist bloc. North Korea, which saw itself in competition with South Korea for legitimacy, followed suit in adopting the socialist policy of parallel development in the mid-1960s. The direct cause for this move, however, is thought to have been the Sino-Soviet split and other ideological disagreements that erupted within the socialist bloc in those years. At that time, Kim Il-sung advocated the importance of national self-defense, arguing that it was necessary to fortify the armed forces even at the risk of delaying economic progress. The regime adopted this two-track policy to

develop military strength and economy at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee in October 1966, and it continues to maintain and reinforce this same basic policy to this day.

Following the adoption of this two-track policy, the share of North Korea's national budget allocated to defense expenditures climbed rapidly. Until 1966, the defense sector comprised around 10 percent of total expenditures, but this rose to over 30 percent in the period from 1967 to 1971. Since the 1970s, the official budget allocated to defense in North Korea has been 14 to 17 percent, but many experts presume that the regime actually spends around 30 to 50 percent of its total state funds on the defense industry.

The parallel development of the military and economy introduced in the mid-1960s posed daunting challenges for the North. First, it shaped national industries into a military-industrial complex. North Korea's heavy and chemical industry was put to use producing armament and munitions. The regime placed non-military and military sectors under the First Economic Committee and Second Economic Committee of the WPK respectively, and this deepened the division of the national economy into a civilian (or first) economy and a military (or second) economy. Second, the concentration of investment in munitions impeded the development of the civilian industry, which had an adverse effect on the consumer sector and created a 'poverty trap' for the people of North Korea that still exists. Third, the munitions industry did not remain confined to just national defense, but gradually branched out into civilian production, which carried economic implications. In this way the 'military economy' became a privileged economic sector in North Korea. Since the 1990s, it has become an ever larger part of the overall national economy amid the general economic downturn.

In spite of this adverse effect on the economy, Kim Jong-il took his regime's official launch in 1998 as an occasion to modify and reinforce

the two-track policy into a ‘military-first economic development policy. The New Year’s joint editorial in 2012, which presented the policy direction of the new Kim Jong-un regime, made clear that North Korea would continue on the same path even after Kim Jong-il’s death: “No matter how severe the storm is, we must firmly adhere to the revolutionary legacies the Great General has bequeathed us... The victory of establishing a powerful nation is built on the gun stock of the military-first policy.”

According to North Korea, the military-first economic construction policy would solve all problems associated with achieving a socialist revolution and building a strong nation, based on ‘principles according to which the military precedes everything else.’ This means that since Kim Jong-il’s rise to power, North Korea’s economic planning has focused on facilitating and developing the military industry, while matters of normalizing and facilitating other industries including heavy, light and agriculture were thought secondary. In a sense, military-first economic development created distortions in a national economy that already faced difficulties due to the parallel development of the military and economy during the Kim Il-sung era. Though military and related heavy industries were given top priority under Kim Il-sung, there was room for discussion on issues of balanced development for the public sector, including light industry and agriculture. In comparison, Kim Jong-il’s new policy line stuck to prioritizing the military industry in resource allocation even during times of economic crisis.

(3) Primary Development of Defense Industry

Upon establishing a socialist planned economy, North Korea adopted an unbalanced growth strategy based on the concept of prioritizing heavy industry development as a way to fully realize its self-sufficient national economy. The North claimed that “at the center of socialist industrialization is the preceding development of heavy industry.

And when a powerful cluster of heavy industry centered on machine production is achieved, a self-sufficient manufacturing system will be established that will drive technological advancements across the people's economy."²³ This implies that North Korea has pursued a key strategy of heavy-industry-led development to build its self-reliant economy. Moreover, the adoption of this policy direction came in support of North Korea's two-track development of the military and economy. Such parallel development remained a consistent and key economic policy in the North, except for a brief period in the early 1990s when agriculture, light and trade industries were emphasized as leading sectors to meet economic challenges. When the regime further remodeled this policy direction into military-first economic development, the primary focus on heavy industry also shifted to placing greater emphasis on the primary development of the defense industry.

Following the economic crisis of the 1990s, North Korea's overall industrial production dropped to below half of its 1980s level. This widespread crisis bore the potential to spill over into the munitions industry and military economy, crucial sectors for the regime. In response, the North introduced the policy of military-first economic construction that gave precedence to military matters above all others, and accordingly prioritized the defense industry in allocating its diminished financial resources.

At a time when financial resources were significantly depleted due to economic hardships, North Korea needed to justify its allocation of resources to the defense industry over other sectors. This allocation derived from the perceived necessity of preserving the regime by means of defense development such as missiles and nuclear bombs. The North also reasoned that subsequent to economic turmoil, the defense sector would become a stepping stone on which the regime would be able to maintain existing economic structures and reinvigorate

²³ *Economic Dictionary* (2)
(Pyongyang: Social Science
Publishing Co., 1985), pp.715–716

other industries.

The prioritization of the defense industry is further buttressed by the logic that meeting material demands of defense is imperative in order to ensure the advancement of light industry and agriculture, both of which have a great impact on people's lives.²⁴

North Korea's top priority in defense advancement is a revised and expanded version of the former policy prioritization of heavy industry development, which further distorts and constrains the national economy. The prioritization of heavy industry is known to have caused problems since the late 1970s, not long after its implementation in the 1960s. To elaborate, the concentrated investment of limited resources in the heavy industry sector disrupted the balance between different industries and the general public suffered from shortages of daily necessities since the 1980s.

Bearing in mind the weakness of the defense industry's link to the civilian sector, North Korea's prioritization of the defense industry is expected to not only exacerbate the imbalance among industries, but also to hamper the normalization of the economy as a whole, making it harder for the populace to climb out of poverty. When economies experience a crisis in supply-side economics or a severance of links between industries, the general remedy is to secure the financial resources required to normalize production by promoting the export industry, followed by efforts to normalize other industries in the hope of generating a greater spillover effect. At the same time, steps to resolve food shortages must be taken in order to improve industrial productivity.

Instead of taking such measures, however, North Korea introduced a 'policy direction for science and technology,' which gives preferential allocation of funds to areas of science and technology required for the enhancement of national defense. Though famine was still widespread in the late 1990s, the regime described science and technology as

²⁴ See *Commentations on Our Party's Economic Thoughts in the Military-first Era* (Pyongyang: WPK Publishing Co., 2005)



A North Korean poster advocating the defense industry-first policy |



A North Korean poster emphasizing the importance of the military-first economic development policy |

key to economic recovery, even announcing a ‘five year plan for science and technology development,’ to be carried out in five consecutive phases from 1998 to 2022. Concurrently, four leading industries (machine and metalwork, coal production, electric power, and rail transportation) were singled out for prioritized investment, but this was pursued only to normalize sectors closely related to the munitions industry. As a result, North Korea’s economy has taken on a dichotomized structure: on one hand, the public economy is in ruins, while the defense economy has reached a level that enables nuclear armament.

Section 2

Macroeconomic Status of North Korean Economy

No official indicators of North Korea's overall macroeconomic conditions have been published since 1965. From time to time, the regime presents bits of various data at international platforms, but they contain inconsistent statistics that reflect different political motives. Economic figures published by North Korea are not considered trustworthy, since they are used for propaganda purposes to promote the regime.

For this reason, the Bank of Korea (BOK) has since 1990 applied capitalist methods of estimation to assess North Korea's macroeconomic indicators, and these may be the only meaningful figures for reference. There are certain limitations, however, to understanding the North's real economy based on these numbers. This is because the BOK estimates the gross and per capita GNI by applying South Korean prices and exchange rates to various production approximations of North Korean industries. The BOK tends to overestimate such macroeconomic indicators, since the added value and currency value

of the North are considerably lower and the dichotomized variables of state and market price cause volatility in the price structure. In spite of such limitations, these BOK estimates are perceived to be helpful in understanding the North's macroscopic trends, and they have been used to determine its macroeconomic conditions as below.

1. Economic Growth and Industrial Productivity

(1) Rate of Economic and Industrial Growth

A study of North Korea's trends in economic growth rate since the 1990s based on the BOK estimates of the North's gross domestic product (GDP) has produced results as described in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Trends in North Korea's Economic Growth

(Unit : %)												
'90	'95	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10
-4.3	-4.4	0.4	3.8	1.2	1.8	2.1	3.8	-1.0	-1.2	3.1	-0.9	-0.5
(9.3)	(8.9)	(8.8)	(4.0)	(7.2)	(2.8)	(4.6)	(4.0)	(5.2)	(5.1)	(2.3)	(0.3)	(6.2)

Note : Numbers in parenthesis are South Korea's growth rates

Source : The Bank of Korea, *The Results of Estimating North Korea's Economic Growth Rates*, each year

Figure 5-1 Trends in GDP Growth of South and North Korea

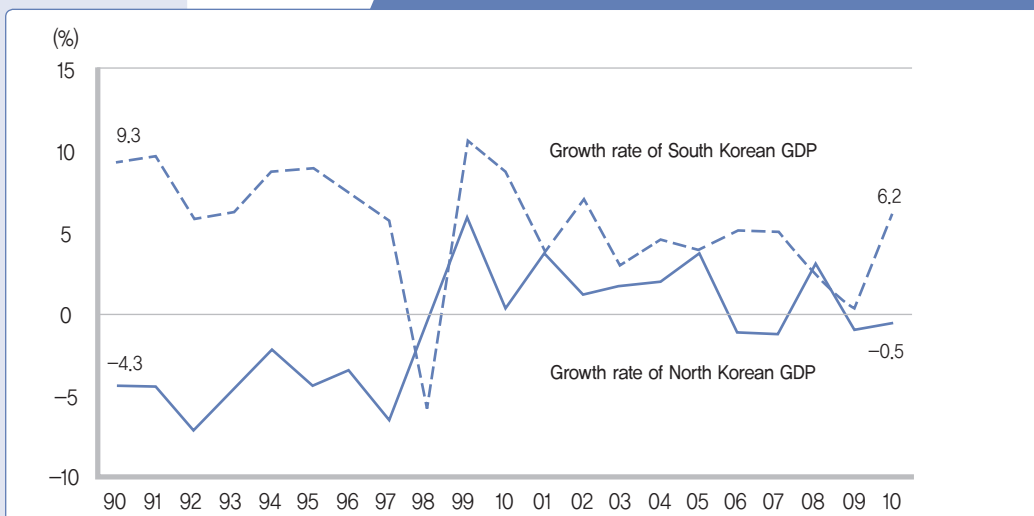


Figure 5-1 shows that since the collapse of the socialist economic bloc in 1990, North Korea recorded an annual growth rate of -4.1 percent on average from 1990 to 1998. As a result, its total production was reduced to less than half of what it was at the end of 1980s. Only around 20 percent of factories are known to have been in operation in the 1990s, while most plants such as those in rural districts suspended all operation, excepting the few remaining in munitions and key industries. North Korea's economic crisis in the 1990s was triggered by the Soviet Union's declaration that it could no longer supply oil and other raw materials to the North as a socialist trade partner. When import of oil and other raw materials was halted or reduced, there was an immediate adverse effect on production in key industrial sectors, and this soon triggered a chain reaction across all industries, severing the linkages between them. As a result, North Korea's economy went into an unprecedented decline as if in wartime, plunging the populace into poverty.

It can be observed from Figure 5-1 that the economy had begun to recover in 1999, but economic troubles continued with no virtuous cycles at hand. To put things in more detail: the national economy recorded a positive growth rate of about 2.2 percent on average from 2000 to 2005, but this turned to negative in 2006, for an average growth rate of -0.1 percent from 2006 to 2010. In the meantime, rates of growth for individual industries as shown on Table 5-2 demonstrate a small imbalance in North Korea's real industrial production in the 2000s.

Table 5-2 Trends in Growth of Key North Korean Industries

Industry	(Unit : %)																
	1990	1992	1994	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery	-10.5	-3.3	2.8	-2.7	9.2	-5.1	7.3	4.2	1.7	4.1	5.3	-2.6	-9.1	8.0	-1.0	-2.1	
Mining	-5.6	-5.7	-5.2	-15.8	14.2	5.8	4.9	-3.8	3.2	2.5	3.1	1.9	1.5	2.4	-0.9	-0.2	
Manufacturing	-3.2	-18.3	-3.9	-18.3	7.9	1.4	3.2	-1.5	2.7	0.3	4.8	0.4	0.7	2.6	-3.0	-0.3	
(Light)	-0.9	-7.6	-0.1	-14.2	2.9	6.3	2.3	2.7	2.7	-0.2	3.8	-0.6	-2.2	1.3	-2.1	-1.4	
(Heavy)	-4.1	-21.3	-5.5	-20.3	10.4	-1.0	3.7	-3.9	2.8	0.4	5.4	1.0	2.2	3.2	-3.5	0.1	
Construction	5.9	-2.4	-26.9	-10.0	24.4	13.5	7.1	10.5	2.1	0.4	6.1	-11.5	-1.5	1.1	0.8	0.3	
Service	0.7	0.8	2.3	1.0	-1.7	1.1	-0.3	-0.2	0.6	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.7	0.7	0.1	0.2	

Source : The Bank of Korea

To be specific, mining production recorded an average growth rate of 2.4 percent, while the heavy and light industry posted an average of 2.5 percent and 0.8 percent respectively from 2003 to 2008. This indicates that North Korea's real industrial production had registered marginal improvement since the mid-2000s. In fact, a drop in agriculture production was to blame for the overall negative growth recorded in 2006-2007. North Korea's economy thus registered a 3.1 percent increase in 2008 thanks to an 8 percent climb in food production that year.

Three factors are considered to have come into play for this positive growth in the mining and heavy industry from 2003 to 2008, which was witnessed for the first time since the North's economic downturn in the 1990s.

First, North Korea was provided with large amounts of foreign assistance such as food and fertilizer, which enabled the regime to uphold its defense industry-led policy, while at the same time allocating financial resources to strategic and key industries. This is thought to have promoted inter-industry linkages in North Korea. Throughout this period, Pyongyang did not devise long-term economic

plans as it did in the past, but instead set forth mid-term plans to provide expenditures aimed at normalizing industries in strategic and key sectors. The economic plans introduced for selected industrial sectors include the three sets of ‘five-year plan for science and technology development’ (1998-), a ‘three-year plan for energy supply and demand’ (2003-2005), and a ‘three-year plan for key industries’ (2006-2008).

Second, the strategy to build a dichotomized military-first economy is deemed to have briefly taken effect. With the July 1 Measures in place, North Korea introduced market elements to improve the civilian economy, and diverted the generated added value to the planning sector.

Third, the following factors are also considered to have contributed to recovery: abundant rainfall due to global warming, successive completion of medium and large hydroelectric power plants that had been under construction since the late 1990s, partial recovery of coal mines damaged by floods in the mid-1990s, and an annual average of a 5 percent increase in power generation in the years from 2003 to 2008 thanks to heavy fuel oil supplied by the international community in accordance with the Six Party Talks.²⁵

Fourth, large amounts of aid annually provided by South Korea and others since 1999 are thought to have played a part, as well as expanded inter-Korean economic cooperation, including Mt. Geumgang tours and the Gaeseong Industrial Complex. Consequently, the overall operation rate of plants rose to a 30 percent level, a slight increase from the 1990s.

Nonetheless, North Korea’s industrial growth rate in 2003-2008 reflected a structural imbalance, as light industry stagnated and agriculture posted negative growth. Since 2008, however, the North has responded by concentrating investment in the chemical industry, a key factor in normalizing light industry and agriculture. In the New

²⁵ See KINU, *General Evaluation of North Korean Economy 2008 and Outlook for 2009* (Seoul: KINU, 2009), pp.21–24

Year's joint editorial annually published since 2010, light industry and agriculture have been identified as two 'key fronts,' and expenditures for these sectors have been increased. The joint editorial published in 2011 proclaimed that year as the 'year of light industry' and 2012 as the 'year of the people,' also exhorting for the 'flames of Hamnam' to flare up more fiercely in the sectors of light industry and agriculture.

In other words, North Korea focused its efforts on recovering the inter-industry linkages that exist between the coal industry, the coal chemical industry, light industry and agriculture. (The coal industry has been key to the last two sectors since the 1980s.) To this end, the regime has carried out construction projects and alternative investment measures including the February 8 Vinalon Complex, Namhung Youth Chemical Complex, and Hungnam Fertilizer Complex. However, the coal and chemical industry has been in a worldwide decline since the

1970s. It also involves a power-intensive process technology. Considering this, it would be hard to expect North Korea to normalize its light industry and agriculture as intended. The regime's official media made much of the fact that the February 8 Vinalon Complex had re-opened after sixteen years. They also emphasized that Kim Jong-il had twice visited the facility in February 2010.²⁶



The February 8 Vinalon Complex in Hungnam |

North Korea started using carbide extracted from locally mined anthracite coal when foreign currency shortages prevented it from importing as much crude oil as it had in the 1980s. Carbide has since been used to fuel plants that produce vinalon, a type of synthetic fiber. It is reported that North Korea had aspired to produce up to 420 different kinds of chemical products to normalize the light industry sector, but due to power shortages these plans came to naught. Also, the North has introduced gasification processes for anthracite and lignite coal in order to normalize operations of its Namhung Youth

²⁶ *Rodong Sinmun* reported on it extensively on February 11, 2010, covering the news in pages 1 through 4.

Chemical Complex and Hungnam Fertilizer Complex. This attempt, however, is considered to have limitations, as it consumes a lot of energy and nitrogen fertilizer, the latter an essential ingredient for food production. This indicates that unless North Korea fundamentally revises its industrial policy of prioritizing resource investment in the defense industry, it would be difficult to normalize and facilitate the sectors of agriculture and light industry. Nonetheless, the New Year's joint editorial released in 2012 reaffirmed that North Korea under Kim Jong-un would continue its military-first economic policy.

(2) Production of Basic Raw Materials

One of the main reasons why North Korea has not been able to recover its industrial production is due to shortages in basic raw and subsidiary materials. In fact, the production of these materials plummeted in the 1990s and has never recovered to its normal level. The origin of the problem, however, lies in the shortage of power, as plant operations had to be suspended due to insufficient energy. A decline in power supply reduced the production of steel, cement, chemical, fertilizer, and other basic industrial output, which in turn hampered the production of manufacturing intermediary goods. Eventually, North Korea also experienced a drop in production of finished consumer goods.

The production of basic raw materials in North Korea can be inferred from the supply of several key materials as shown in Table 5-3. It can be observed that supplies of iron ore, nonferrous metal, steel, cement, fertilizer and other key materials had continued to decline since the 1990s. There was slow recovery in the early 2000s, but this fell back to stagnation or negative growth since 2009.

Table 5–3 Trends in Production of Key Basic Materials

(Unit : 10,000 ton)

Type	1991	1993	1996	1998	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Iron Ore	816.8	476.3	344.0	289.0	420.8	407.8	443.3	457.9	491.3	504.1	512.6	531.6	495.5	509.3
Nonferrous Metals	22.7	16.4	11.6	9.7	9.2	8.7	9.4	9.8	10.7	8.6	9.2	9.4	9.1	9.2
Steel	316.8	185.9	120.8	94.5	106.2	103.8	109.3	106.8	116.8	118.1	122.9	127.1	125.5	127.9
Cement	516.9	398.0	379.0	315.0	516.0	532.0	554.3	563.2	593.0	615.5	612.9	641.5	612.6	627.9
Fertilizer	108.1	121.2	72.1	52.7	54.6	50.3	41.6	43.4	45.0	45.4	40.5	47.9	46.6	45.9

Source : The Bank of Korea, *The Results of Estimating North Korea's Economic Growth Rates*, each year

In detail, the production of iron ore registered a constant growth of 3.3 percent on average from 2003 to 2008, but soon dipped 6.7 percent year-on-year in 2009. Production bounced back with a 2.8 percent growth in 2010, but this was still below the 2008 level. It has been reported that North Korea's production rise since 2003 was due to China. China, at that time, experienced a rise in raw materials and was able to supply the North with industrial equipment, machine parts, and even transportation, all things urgently needed for production. It has been observed that this, in turn, led to higher iron ore output in North Korea.

In the case of steel, signs of recovery have been difficult to observe due to shortages of coke, decrepit facilities, and lack of modern equipment. Unlike other sectors, steel production belatedly displayed a brief increase from 2005 to 2008, but this dropped to 1.2 percent year-on-year in 2009, followed by a sharp upturn of 9.4 percent in 2010. It is presumed that production of steel was able to recover its 2008 level partly because the '*juche* steel production process' had been introduced to the *Chollima* Steel Complex and Kimchaek Iron and Steel Complex.

When the economic troubles of the 1990s dealt a serious blow to steel production in North Korea, the regime focused its efforts on improving technology in major steel mills and modernizing outdated facilities. But when alternative investment became difficult due to a

lack of capital, North Korea introduced the ‘*juche* steel production process’ to normalize and facilitate the steel production sector. This newly applied process uses anthracite coal to produce steel, but like vinalon manufacturing technology, this too, has been in decline worldwide since the 1970s.

North Korea first introduced this process technology to the *Chollima* Steel Complex, and it is now being applied to other facilities including the Kimchaek Steel and Iron Complex and Hwanghae Steel Complex. Yet, restoring steel production to normal levels will not be easy, and it would definitely be hard to recover the early 1990s level since intensive consumption of power is essential. In February 2010, Kim Jong-il emphasized the importance of using domestic raw materials to produce ‘*juche* steel’ during his spot guidance at the Kimchaek steel mill, and North Korean media reported that he instructed state-level investment to modernize manufacturing facilities. This implies that introducing the equipment needed for this technological process is proving difficult due to insufficient capital.

The cement industry, on the other hand, is the only area of production that showed an increase after 2001. By 2001, cement production had already surpassed the early 1990s level, but a continued downturn has been registered since 2008. In 2010, a 2.1 percent dip was observed compared to 2008. As for nonferrous metals, total production reached 200,000 tons in the late 1980s, but has since remained at less than 90,000 tons throughout the 2000s without any signs of improvement. Poor infrastructure, obsolete facilities and shortage of electricity are cited as impediments to its production capacity.

The production of fertilizer also dropped sharply from 1 million tons in the late 1980s to remain at around 400,000 tons throughout the 2000s. Subsequently, North Korean authorities followed Kim Jong-il’s instructions and introduced the ‘anthracite gasification technology,’

also known as the ‘*juche* steel production process,’ in the Namhung Youth Chemical Complex in 2010 and Hungnam Fertilizer Complex in 2011, in an attempt to normalize production of fertilizer. Nonetheless, no substantial rise has been seen in fertilizer production due to various factors, including shortage of electricity, low-quality coal, and shortcomings in production facilities.²⁷

In short, besides cement, production of North Korea’s raw materials including iron ore, non-ferrous metals, steel, and fertilizer still remain below the respective levels of the early 1990s. The production of iron ore in 2010, for instance, was only 62.4 percent of the amount produced in 1991; non-ferrous metal was only 40.5 percent; steel was 40.4 percent; and fertilizer, 42.5 percent. It can be inferred, therefore, that North Korea has registered negative production growth since 2009 and been unable to promote its inter-industry linkages due to key reasons of stagnation and meager increases in yields.

Most industrial facilities found in North Korea’s raw material sector were built as projects of economic cooperation with the Soviet Union. But because they were not repaired or replaced after the mid-1980s, it is understood that many were either demolished or need to be replaced. Since the official launch of the Kim Jong-il regime in 1998, North Korea channeled investment to the areas of science and technology, emphasizing the importance of technology improvement and modernization. In reality, however, shortages of power and funds limited efforts to mere repair and maintenance.

Since 2008, North Korea has imported equipment and materials from China to construct new facilities. But efforts to normalize the overall production process will be hard to achieve, as such attempts have so far been limited to a few facilities. There are also problems with using locally produced anthracite coal to normalize production of raw materials, as the process consumes a lot of energy and is technologically unstable. Therefore, unless North Korea addresses the

²⁷ KINU, *General Evaluation of North Korean Economy 2010 and Outlook for 2012* (Seoul: KINU, January 2011), p.24

energy shortage and lack of foreign capital confronting its production structure, recovering its production capacity for raw materials will continue to prove difficult.

2. Production of Energy and Food

(1) Energy Production

North Korea's energy shortage is considered to be the direct cause of reductions in industrial production, and a main impediment to economic recovery along with shortages in food. Even into the 2000s, the North's overall supply of energy could not meet half of its consumption demand, making it difficult for North Korea to recover its industrial production to the levels it had enjoyed in the 1980s. Table 5-4 shows the fluctuations in North Korea's energy supply.

Table 5-4 Trends in Energy Supply

Type	(Units : 10,000 tons, 1,000 barrels, 100 million kwh, %)													
	1989	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Coal	3,508 6.3	3,315 -5.5	2,920 -7.1	2,540 -6.3	2,100 -11.4	1,860 -9.7	2,250 6.1	2,190 -5.2	2,280 2.2	2,468 2.6	2,410 -2.3	2,506 4.0	2,550 1.7	2,500 -1.9
Imported Crude Oil	-	18,472 -	11,142 -19.5	6,670 -31.0	6,861 -14.1	3,694 -0.4	2,851 22.6	4,376 3.1	3,900 7.3	3,841 0.2	3,834 0.2	3,878 1.2	3,795 -2.1	3,871 -1.8
Power Generated	294 4.2	277 -5.8	247 -6.1	231 4.5	213 -7.4	170 -11.9	194 4.3	190 -5.9	206 5.1	225 4.7	237 5.3	255 7.6	235 -7.8	230 -2.1

Note : Percentage at the bottom of each item refers to changes from the previous year

Source : National Statistics Bureau, *Key Statistics on North Korea*, each year

According to Table 5-4, which shows the shifts in energy supply throughout the 2000s, provision of coal declined in 1998 to 56 percent of the 1990 level, though by 2010 it had bounced back to 75 percent of the 1990 level. Electricity, meanwhile, dropped to 61 percent of the 1990 level in 1998 and recovered to 83 percent of the same level by 2010. On the other hand, the import of crude oil in 2010 was no more than 21 percent of the 1990 level and its annual imported amount has

remained around 3 million barrels since the late 1990s.

North Korea has not been able to increase its import of crude oil to the level it had enjoyed in the late 1980s, because no other country could fill the role that had been played by the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union supplied about 80 percent of the North's total import of crude oil in the form of barter trade, with a price metric for socialist partners much lower than the international market. After the USSR's collapse, however, North Korea could no longer import at this price level and had to pay international prices in hard currency, which it lacked. As a result, its crude oil imports dropped substantially.

From the 1990s, North Korea mostly relied on China for crude oil. Since China too began demanding payments in hard currency in 1992, North Korea has purchased only a minimal level. The current 3 million barrels of crude oil brought into North Korea are believed to be used to supply industries and basic industry sectors related to the military economy, along with transport and transportation sectors and thermoelectric power plants that utilize coal. The amount used for heating and cooking in general households is perceived to be extremely small.

Faced with these challenges to the import of crude oil, North Korea has striven to normalize its coal production to promote inter-industry linkages and restore its economy to normal levels. To this end, coal has been emphasized as 'food for industry and a lifeline of the people's economy.' Nonetheless, Table 5-4 shows that coal output in North Korea has seen only an 11 percent increase for the last decade since 2000. This is due to a structural problem in the coal production sector that cannot be easily resolved. Since the early days of socialist industrialization, North Korea adopted an industrial energy policy which places greater emphasis on coal over oil, in compliance with the self-rehabilitation policy. In other words, its industrial production system was built on coal energy. Consequently, North Korea was

already suffering from resource exhaustion in the 1980s, and the superannuation of mining equipment, shortage of new facilities, and insufficient supply of materials have led to a gradual reduction in coal production since the late 1980s. In addition, three consecutive years of massive floods in the mid-1980s destroyed many coal mines located along the west coast region; most of them have not yet recovered their former production levels. Table 5-4 shows an incremental increase in coal production after 2003, thanks to partial mine recovery and Chinese investment in mining facilities. This investment is known to have caused the sudden surge in North Korea's anthracite coal export to China since 2010.

This sharp drop in crude oil imports and coal production naturally led to a serious shortage of electricity, which became a direct cause for the collapse of North Korea's industrial basis. In fact, power generation in the North has barely recovered late 1980's levels. As shown in Table 5-4, North Korea's energy production increased by an annual average of 5 percent from 2003 to 2008, but declined sharply for two consecutive years thereafter.

Convinced that a recovery in power generation is pivotal to building a strong and prosperous nation for 2012, North Korea replaced trouble-ridden small and medium hydroelectric power plants with larger ones, completing their construction as quickly as possible. Consequently, the Wonsan Youth Power Plants no.3 to no.5 were built in Gangwon province, along with Samsu Power Plant in Yanggang province, Taechon Power Plant no.4 in North Pyongan province, and Yesong River Power Plant no.2. North Korea, however, did not have enough construction materials and had resorted to using gravel, clay, sand, and so forth. As a result, it is reported that many plants have not been able to maintain normal operations since their completion.

As a symbolic contribution to the 'strong and prosperous nation' campaign, the North is undertaking a project to build a 300,000kw

class power plant in Huichon, Chagang province.²⁸ In the mid-1980s, North Korea's energy shortage had already worsened to the point that a public campaign of 'one lamp per household' needed to be launched. And because the operation of power plants was only at around 40 percent of full capacity in the late 1980s, restoring North Korea's power generation to 1980s level would still not be enough to invigorate the industry. In 2010, the rate of power plant operation barely reached 30 percent of full capacity.

At the onset of the 2000s, North Korean authorities buckled down to promote economic revival, at the same time making various efforts to overcome the energy crisis. To this end, the regime formulated the 'Three-year Plan for Energy Resolution' (2003-2005), which set forth measures to replace and repair obsolete equipment in key coal-based thermoelectric power plants, such as those in Bukchang and Pyongyang; allocate limited resources including capital, labor, and transportation to improve mining technology and modernize equipment; and search for methods to utilize alternative energy sources such as methane, wind, solar, and tides. However, these are considered to be stopgap measures that are unlikely to provide a fundamental solution to North Korea's energy problem. Nor are hydroelectric power plants able to guarantee a stable supply of energy to meet industrial demand, though they are heavily relied upon. The facilities are easily affected by heavy rainfall, and most run on self-manufactured equipment that displays low efficiency in power generation. It is considered, therefore, that the only solution to North Korea's power shortage is for the country to cooperate with the international community. But as long as North Korea holds on to its nuclear program, this energy crisis is likely to remain an intractable issue.

²⁸ North Korea initially expected to complete the construction of the Huichon power plant in 2022, but is currently trying to finish it by 2012, ten years earlier than it was originally scheduled. To this end, it has been urging all city and provincial people's committees, ministries of the cabinet, and even the Women's Union to donate the fund and mobilize workforce for the construction. North Korea boasts that more than 80 percent of the construction will be completed as of December 2011.

(2) Food Production

North Korea's food crisis was triggered around the mid-1980s due to the failure of the '*juche* method of farming' that had been introduced in the mid-1970s, along with the stagnation in agricultural production under the socialist system of collective farms. Throughout the 1980s, food production in North Korea remained at a mere 4.15 million tons per year on average, which resulted in more than a 2 million-ton shortfall each year for the rationing system. Accordingly, North Korea reduced the average amount of public rations per person by 22 percent, from 700g to 546g. Yet, there was no serious food shortage during this time thanks to various reasons, including food aid from the Soviet Union and other socialist states and measures enabling limited activities for individuals to supplement their income.

In the 1990s, however, North Korea's food production plunged below 4 million tons per year, resulting in a serious famine. This was due to the reduction of aid from socialist countries and barter trade, decline in raw materials for agriculture due to economic hardship, and a series of natural disasters. Table 5-5 shows that from 1995 to 1997, the worst years of the famine, food production barely reached 3.54 million tons on average. This decline in yield resulted in a shortfall of an average of 1.64 million tons to the amount needed for the already-reduced ration system.

Table 5–5 Trends in Food Supply and Demand

(Unit : 10,000 ton)

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Food Consumption	534	529	530	495	504	518	524	536	542	548	545	560	543	540	548	546	534
Last Year's Production	413	345	369	349	389	422	359	395	413	425	431	454	448	401	431	411	425
Amount of Shortage	121	184	161	146	115	96	165	141	129	123	114	106	95	139	117	135	109

Note :

- 1) Demand for food from 1995–2009 is estimated based on the reduced ration (546g per day for a male adult).
- 2) Demand for food in 2010 is 4.6 million tons at minimum (based on the minimum amount of 458g per day for a male adult as recommended by the FAO) and 5.4 million tons at maximum (based on North Korea's reduced ration of 546g per day for a male adult).

Source : The Rural Development Administration (1995–2010), FAO (2011)

From 2003 to 2010, North Korea's food production increased to an average of 4.24 million tons a year, thanks to various factors operating in the first half of the 2000s. These included favorable weather conditions, a continuous supply of fertilizer by South Korea, agricultural assistance from the international community, along with domestic policies promoting food production. In 2011, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and World Food Program (WFP) reported that North Korea's food production has increased by around 8.5 percent year-on-year, thanks to increments of fertilizer and diesel fuel supplied to the agricultural sector (Nov. 2011 data). Accordingly, the average food production is not likely to have been substantially different in 2011. However, even producing such 4.24 million tons of food would imply a shortfall of around 1.2 million tons a year to the already reduced ration system, which provides for only 546g per person. The UN makes its estimations based on a per capita ration of 458g, but even according to these figures, North Korea suffers from a food shortage in the amount of about 600,000 tons every year.

North Korea witnessed a chronic food shortage throughout the 2000s, but it did not result in famine as it had in the mid-1990s. This was owing to a combination of factors: South Korea and the

international community provided food aid, there was an increase in private farmland, and markets for food exchange grew. In particular, great amounts of food smuggled across the North Korea-China border and the nationwide emergence of small markets are two key elements that have prevented another massive famine even since South Korea and the rest of the world suspended almost all aid to North Korea in 2008. According to some humanitarian aid NGOs and North Korean refugees, certain regions and social classes in North Korea, even including rank-and-file soldiers, are suffering from shortages of food. The main cause is considered to be the regime's attempt to abolish general markets by introducing a currency reform on November 30, 2009. This currency reform resulted in less money possessed by North Koreans and inflation, thus making it difficult for the poor to purchase their food.

Since the 1990s, the regime in Pyongyang has implemented several measures on its own to cope with this chronic food shortage. These include efforts to reclaim 200,000 hectares (or *jeongbo*) of land (1999-2005), modification of the *juche* agriculture system by focusing on food grain and high density planting, and the expansion of agriculture expenditures through a 'Three-year Plan for Basic Industries and Agriculture' (2006-2008). When the July 1 Measures were implemented, the regime introduced new initiatives, including the partial decentralization of collective farms, an increase in the allowed amount of private farmland up to 1,300 square meters (or 400 *pyeong*), the pilot launch of a 'field responsibility system' allowing collective farming among 3 to 4 people, and the 'six-month farming system,' under which collective farms lease parts of their land for cultivation by other institutions and enterprises. But in October 2005 the North Korean regime retracted the July 1 Measures, returning to traditional economic policies

The Subgroup Management System

was introduced to all cooperative farms in 1966. Under the new system, basic working units of subgroups (10 to 25 farmers) were provided with certain areas of farmland and production tools. These subgroups are assigned with target amounts of yield per unit area of land (or *jeongbo*) and distribution is conducted according to their achieved target. When food shortages worsened in 1996, North Korean authorities tried to induce an increase in grain production by reducing the size of subgroups to 7 to 8 people and allowing them the right to dispose any surplus yield exceeding their individual target amount.



Terraced fields in North Korea |

under which the regime obtains the entire harvest including yields from private farmlands. This was because the regime had come to regard even a small experimental deviation from the traditional form of collective farming as a threat.

The measures adopted by North Korea to overcome its food shortages focus on improving efficiency in agriculture technology and production, while remaining true to the principles of collective farming and central planning. They may be thus insufficient to provide fundamental solutions to the food crisis. In the New Year's joint editorial released in 2012, the regime declared a resolution of the food crisis as the most urgent task in building a strong and prosperous nation. Responsibility for this task was assigned to party workers, whose revolutionary faith, it said, would be demonstrated by how well they fulfilled it. Yet, North Korea need to bear in mind that China was able to fully overcome its food problem in the mid-1980s by dismantling the people's communes and introducing the Agriculture Production Responsibility System. North Korea must understand, therefore, that its only way out of the food crisis is to respect the autonomy of individual farmers in producing and selling their harvest.

3. Trade Volume and Budget Size

(1) Trade Volume

North Korea's dependence on external trade had long remained under 10 percent of its total GDP due to its development policy of self-reliance and its practice of engaging in barter trade with the Soviet Union for the import of strategic materials such as crude oil. The largest trade volume of North Korea, registered in 1990 just before

its economic crisis, was a mere \$4.7 billion. But this external trade structure faced a crisis when the socialist economic bloc collapsed in the 1990s. In the absence of socialist trade partners, establishing trade relations with the capitalist economic bloc became essential for the import of needed raw materials. This, however, posed a predicament for North Korea, as it had nothing but primary products to export. Moreover, because it resisted policies of reform and liberalization, there was a limit to how far North Korea could expand its foreign trade. Its trade partners were thus naturally restricted to its immediate neighbors, China and South Korea.

Figure 5-2 shows that from 1990, North Korea's external trade plummeted by an annual rate of 11 percent to reach a level of \$1.44 billion in 1998. This was 2.6 times the annual 4.1 percent drop in the North's gross national income (GNI), clearly demonstrating the gravity of the situation. In particular, North Korea's imports fell at an annual rate of 11.8 percent, which was greater than the 10.2 percent rate of its decline in exports.

When North Korea's GNI began to record positive growth in 1999, signs of recovery were also observed in its external trade. Its trade volume between 2000 and 2010 displayed an annual growth rate of 11 percent unlike economic fluctuations. Trade statistics are estimated by the South Korea Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), based on information regarding various trade volumes North Korea has with countries not including South Korea. If inter-Korean trade is included in these figures, North Korea's total foreign trade registered an annual growth rate of 24.4 percent during the same period.

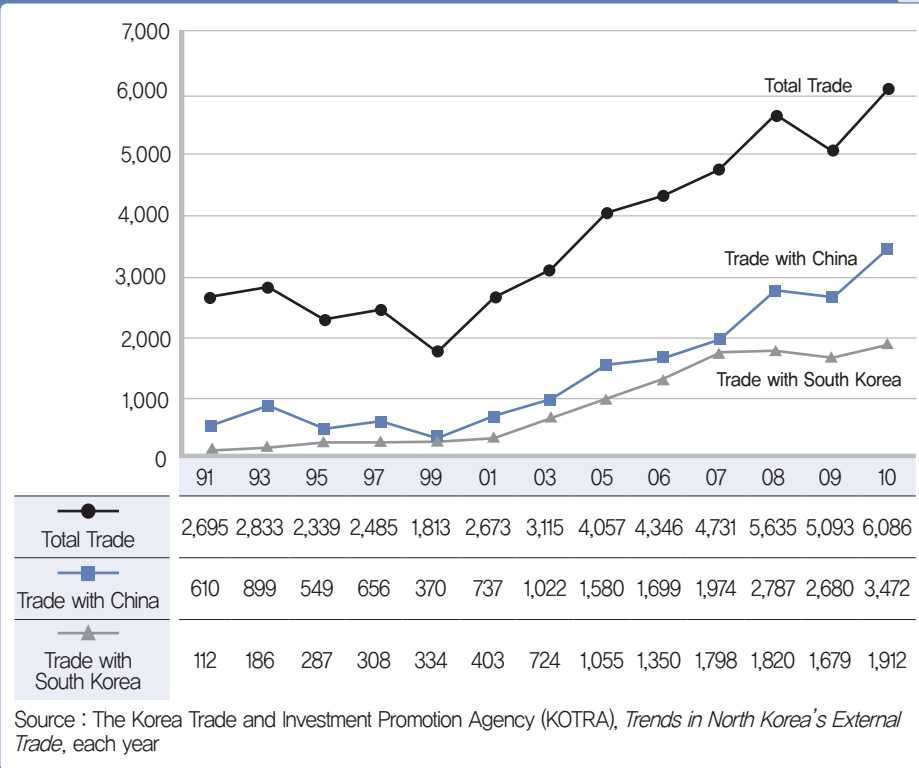
This rise in the North's foreign trade is astonishing, compared to the annual GNI growth rate of 2 percent during 2000-2010, especially considering that economic growth turned negative from 2006 to 2007. Figure 5-2 shows that although the volume of North Korea's external trade briefly declined to \$3 billion from 2006 to 2007, but

bounced back to \$3.82 billion in 2008. In 2009, external trade shrank temporarily by 10.5 percent compared to the previous year due to the aftermath of a long-range missile launch, the second nuclear test, and currency reform, but it came close to exceeding a record-high \$4 billion mark in 2010. With the expansion of economic cooperation with China, North Korea's external trade reached a record-high. If \$1.91 billion of inter-Korean trade is factored in, North Korea's external trade totals \$6.08 billion, far exceeding the amount reached in the latter half of the 1980s.

A closer look, however, reveals that this quantitative expansion throughout the 2000s was based not on the recovery of economic productivity, but rather on increased trade dependence on China, and a trade structure similar to that of underdeveloped countries. A careful consideration of North Korea's external trade discloses the following:

First, it exhibits a simultaneous expansion of trade volume and trade deficit. The North's trade deficit has more than doubled from an average of \$490 million in 1990-1999 to \$1.04 billion in 2000-2010, due to a widened gap between exports and imports; imports expanded substantially in response to the slight economic recovery while exports lagged behind due to overdependence on primary resources. North Korea recorded an average deficit of \$1.2 billion from 2005 to 2010.

Figure 5-2 Trends in North Korea's External Trade (Including Trade with South Korea)



Second, North Korea's trade deficit has expanded as its dependence on South Korea and particularly China rapidly increased. In 1999, the combined total of trade with China and South Korea accounted for 49.4 percent of North Korea's total foreign trade. This, however, increased to 88 percent (North Korea-China trade 56.9 percent and inter-Korean trade 31.4 percent) in 2010.

In short, the quantitative increase in North Korea's external trade observed throughout the 2000s was propelled entirely by trade with South Korea and China. North Korea has long enjoyed a trade surplus with South Korea, while suffering from a chronic deficit in trade with China. This may imply that the foreign currency earnings from inter-Korean trade have been an important pillar supporting the expansion in trade between North Korea and China. Today, more than 90 percent of inter-Korean trade is conducted through the Gaeseong Industrial Complex.

As shown in Figure 5-2, North Korea's economic dependence on China has quickly increased because since 2008 its trade with China has expanded more rapidly than inter-Korean trade. North Korea's trade with China accounted for merely 25 percent of its total external trade in 1999 but reached 83 percent in 2010. It is thus no exaggeration to say that North Korea relies on China for most of its legal trade.

Table 5-6 The Share of Trade with China in North Korea's Total External Trade

Year	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Share(%)	25.0	32.5	32.7	42.8	48.5	52.6	56.7	67.1	73.0	78.5	83

Source : Korea Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), *Trends in North Korea's External Trade*, each year

There are four key factors that might have contributed to a rapid expansion in trade between North Korea and China since the mid 2000s:

1. As its demand for raw materials started to expand, China increased its investment in North Korea's mineral resources since 2005. Accordingly, North Korea's export of mineral resources rapidly grew.
2. As North Korea undertook the improvement of obsolete industrial facilities, its demand on import of Chinese factory equipment and raw materials increased.
3. An expansion of markets in North Korea led to a more extensive dominance of Chinese industrial products in those markets.
4. Reinforced international sanctions on North Korea following its provocations created an environment in which Pyongyang had no other option but to concentrate external trade on its sole trade partner. In response, China also implemented a policy to invigorate its trade with North Korea.

Third, while industrial productivity is making a slow recovery, North

Korea's external trade has gradually retarded into a mode of trade typical for underdeveloped countries, in which its imports consist mainly of basic raw materials, finished industrial products, energy and food, while its exports lean toward primary resources such as mineral resources, animal products and marine products, and goods processed on a commission basis. Such a trend becomes evident when one takes a close look at the changes in the composition of North Korea's export to China. Table 5-7 shows that mineral resources, including mineral and non-metal products, accounted for less than 50 percent of exports to China in 2000, but occupy 72.6 percent of it in 2010. When agricultural and marine products are taken into account, the primary resources make up as much as 79 percent of it.

Textile and leather products are mostly those processed on a commission basis. Therefore, industrial products with high added value make for only a negligible portion of exports. In contrast, North Korea's imports from China in 2010 ranged evenly from primary resources to industrial products, and to electronic goods with high added value: 33 percent of it was crude oil, various petroleum products, and food and other grain; 26.2 percent was machineries, electric and electronic products, and transportation-related goods; 13.7 percent was textile products; and 11.6 percent was plastic and chemical products. This structure of imports is quite rigid; every year North Korea has met one third of its total need for crude oil, petroleum products and food with imports from China. It has also imported from China all manufactured products it needed.

Table 5-7 Composition of North Korea's Export to China

Type	Mineral Products	Non-Metal Products	Agricultural, Forestry & Fishery Products	Textile & Leather	Lumber, Pulp & Paper	Machinery, Electrical & Electronic Equipment	Chemical, Rubber, & Plastic Products
2000	16,5	26,9	15,6	7,2	26,8	2,5	4,6
2002	7,9	11,1	58,8	16,1	3,5	2,3	0,3
2004	19,5	19,9	47,3	9,5	2,6	0,8	0,3
2005	41,7	18,3	21,6	13,5	3,1	1,0	0,9
2006	48,6	12,7	13,3	15,6	5,7	1,1	0,9
2007	59,4	13,5	7,7	12,4	3,6	1,5	0,6
2008	58,3	15,5	7,6	12,1	1,0	1,5	1,3
2009	60,5	13,8	7,5	12,6	0,0	1,0	2,7
2010	57,1	15,5	6,5	16,0	0,0	1,8	1,6

Source : The Korea International Trade Association (KITA), *Trends in Trade between North Korea and China*, each year.

Because of structural reasons North Korea has to import a considerable amount of food and energy every year. At the same time, due to the destruction of its industrial productivity, its demand for imported industrial products and consumer goods as well as machineries, equipment, and raw materials needed for economic recovery is bound to expand. Therefore, unless North Korea aggressively promotes its export industry, overdependence on trade with China, an underdeveloped trade mode, and a chronic trade deficit will continue to haunt the North Korean economy in the future.

(2) Size of Government Budget

The key functions of North Korea's government budget can be summed up as the allocation of resources for management of planned economy, control over various actors, and the redistribution of income. Up to date, North Korea's government budget has accounted for a much larger portion of the gross national income than those in capitalist countries. This is because in the case of socialist countries like North Korea, the state is responsible for operation costs as well as

the formation of capital and investment for state-run corporations. In addition, it has to fully bear even the costs for “social consumption,” including medical care, education, and housing. In the case of North Korea, the portion is unusually high even compared to other socialist countries. As Kim Jong-il mentioned in his statement on October 3, 2001, the so-called “socialist freebies” accounted for almost two-thirds of public expenditures. And from 1993 to 1994, when the country was in a serious economic crisis, it made up as much as 91 percent of total expenditures.

Table 5-8 shows that North Korea’s government budget had expanded for decades to reach \$19.17 billion in 1994, when a serious famine broke out. It diminished thereafter until hitting a low point in 2003, whereupon it began to bounce back. Table 5-8 demonstrates that the size of the budget fluctuated so much that it was not made public in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 2002. The government could have failed to make a report from 1995 to 1997 due to a paralysis in the planned economy during those years, when North Korea was devastated by a serious food shortage and massive floods, along with the idling of factories all over the country. The decision not to release the budget in 2002 could have been caused by the regime’s need to adjust its finances following the introduction of the July 1 measures.

One may see on Table 5-8 that, in a simple comparison, the size of the North Korean budget in 2011 was about \$5.73 billion, only about 30 percent of that in 1994, the year in which it had reached a peak. According to the North Korean-currency figures released by Pyongyang, it increased by almost 14 times since 1994, but when the adjusted exchange rate at the time of the July 1 announcement is taken into account, it becomes clear that the budget shrunk to half its size in the early 1990s. The exchange rate increased by 67 times from 1994 to 2011. The reduction in the budget constrained the overall functioning of the planned economy. Even in certain sectors where the economy

works, it has created distortions and modifications in some of its functions.

Table 5–8 North Korea's Government Budget

Year	In US Dollars (100 million)	In North Korean Won (100 million)	Exchange Rate (Won/\$)
1990	165.9	355	2.14
1992	184.5	393	2.13
1993	187.0	402	2.15
1994	191.7	414	2.16
1995–1997	–	–	–
1998	90.9	200	2.20
1999	92.2	200	2.17
2000	95.9	210	2.19
2001	98.2	217	2.21
2002	–	–	–
2003	22.3	3,234	145
2004	25.1	3,488	139
2005	29.0	4,057	140
2006	29.7	4,193	141
2007	32.6	4,406	135
2008	34.7	4,510	130
2009	35.9	4,815	134
2010	52.1	5,215	100
2011*	57.3	5,677	99

Notes :

1) The figure for 2011 is the estimated budget while figures for all other years are actual expenditures.

2) Figures are based on official exchange rates

Source : The Ministry of Unification

As a financial crisis continued, North Korea introduced the July 1 measures in 2002 and simultaneously reformed the government budget, which effectively ceased to be oriented toward socialist expenditures and the distribution of wealth. In other words, with the introduction of the July 1 measures, North Korea switched its financial management from an expenditure-oriented to an income-oriented system, and adjusted its budget structure to reflect the reality.

Expenditures on such “social demands” as compensation for price differences or subsidies for businesses were either substantially reduced or completely abolished. A new tax system was introduced to those economic sectors where some market functions were allowed. All these were aimed at easing a financial crisis caused by economic difficulties. A set of new taxes was created, including a real-estate use tax, a land-use tax, a market-use tax and a tax on income from property sales. In May 2003, the North Korean government tried to overcome its financial difficulties by issuing, for the first time in its history, lottery-type people’s living bonds with maturities of ten years. Introduced in 2006 was a system requiring businesses to pay 7 percent of profits as social insurance premiums. Thanks to such efforts, the government budget expanded by an annual nominal rate of 9.4 percent from 2003 to 2010, greater than the rate of economic growth during the same period.

Nonetheless, it is reported that North Korea’s financial difficulties are still not resolved. The government is barely compensating for various public services and social demands with the various quasi-taxes it collects from the public.²⁹ Some of the activities financed by the government include the operation of various levels of schools, the supply of daily necessities for the People’s Army, the construction of roads and public buildings in cities and counties, the construction of high-rise apartments for 100,000 households in Pyongyang, the supply of food for workers mobilized in the construction of Huichon power plant and other public projects in the ‘strong and prosperous nation’ campaign.

²⁹ According to a survey taken over North Korean refugees, these quasi-taxes cost each North Korean household 10,000 to 30,000 North Korean won per month on average, several times their average monthly wage of 2,000 to 3,000 won as announced at the time when the July 1 economic improvement measures were introduced.

Section 3

Economic Policy: Changes and Outlook

As described in the previous section, North Korea's economic crisis in the 1990s diminished production in every sector of its economy. Therefore, the North Korean government set a goal in the late 2000s of bringing industrial productivity back to late-1980s' levels at least by 2012. Accordingly, it has concentrated its efforts on promoting an economic recovery. While still adhering to military-first principles as the basis for its economic policy, the government utilized market functions during the first half of the 2000s, but during the second half it regulated them while mobilizing all citizens. In addition, North Korea has promoted partial liberalization as long as it does not undermine the basis of military-first economic construction. It has also switched its policy focus from inter-Korean economic cooperation to opening up vis-à-vis China.

1. Utilization of Market Functions and Control over Market

(1) Military–first Economic Policy and the July 1 Measures

North Korea's centrally planned economy has remained paralyzed since the mid-1990s. Since that time, therefore, state-run enterprises have carried out their business activities in accordance with their own economic indicators instead of centrally-planned targets. Also, black markets proliferated across the country. From the beginning of the 2000s, the authorities have actively looked for ways to decentralize the functions of the planned economy and partially utilize market functions in an attempt to promote an economic recovery based on the military-first policy. There were several reasons why they have made efforts in this direction. First, because of the financial crisis, North Korea had no other choice but to concentrate the state's resources on the defense industry, heavy industry and other related industries. The remaining industries were inevitably left to the mercy of self-help or market economic principles. Second, to promote first the development of the defense industry, North Korea needs to transfer surplus values from other economic sectors to that industry. To this end, however, it needs to increase productivity and invigorate the economy through the partial introduction of market functions. Third, markets have sprung up across the country since the 1990s in response to the paralysis of the public distribution system. No longer able to condone these markets, the authorities resolved to manage them through institutions and central planning.

Accordingly, in 2002, North Korea introduced the July 1 measures to improve economic management by allowing room for some market functions. In other words, it has promoted a pragmatic socialist line according to which it has expressed an intention to keep the munitions production sector under state control and central planning, while at

the same time invigorating the civilian production sector through the introduction of decentralization measures and some market functions. This line deems it important to assure maximum benefits in economic activities while adhering to socialist principles. The July 1 measures can be set forth as follows:

1. Decentralization in economic activities carried out by individual economic units, such as state enterprises and collective farms;
2. Modification of economic indicators based on earned income;
3. Adjustment of state prices to better reflect market prices;
4. Reduction of the size of working units in collective farms and the enlargement of private plots;
5. Permission of raw material trade between public enterprises; and
6. Introduction of material incentives.

North Korea experimented with these and supplementary measures until October 2005. Nonetheless, the measures could not fulfill their original purpose of “partially permitting markets within the framework of planned management.” Eventually, they contributed to an expansion of markets and gradually created cracks in the inner workings of the North Korean system. Accordingly, the authorities retracted the July 1 measures after October 2005, once again revising the people’s economic planning law in the direction of reinforcing the central planning system.

(2) Expansion of Markets and Tightening of Control

The history of markets in North Korea can be traced back almost 20 years to the day the socialist economic bloc collapsed. In the ensuing economic crisis, farmers’ markets that had been held every 10 days since around 1993 started to transform into *jangmadang* or daily markets. These rapidly spread across the country as the food shortage worsened. By the late 1990s, reselling and peddling had evolved into a more stable form of trade in more than 300 daily markets across

the county. As market conditions were maturing, the July 1 measures introduced general markets for consumer goods, socialist markets for intermediary goods, and import markets for imported goods, thereby paving the way for the creation of a nationwide distribution network. As shown on Figure 5-3, typical general markets in cities and provinces have grown into massive wholesale markets from which distribution networks extend down to small local towns.



| A street market in the countryside

Figure 5-3 The Best-Known General Markets in North Korea



With the growth in both structure and quality, markets in North Korea have evolved from a mere means of subsistence to a means of accumulating wealth that gave rise to a new middle-income group. As various private economic activities have expanded, such as wage labor, peddling, private farming, private tutoring, bistros, and lodging houses, an increasing number of workers have strayed from the centrally planned economy. The more the planned economy was infringed upon by the market economy, the more dependence on the latter increased.

At the same time, privileged economic sectors such as the party and military economy accounted for an increasing part of the planned economy. And taking advantage of their power, some privileged economic institutions illegally accumulated wealth under the pretext of legitimacy. This led to an extreme polarization of the economy and widespread corruption in society. Most North Koreans had to rely on street markets to make a living.

Regarding the expansion of markets as a serious threat to the regime, authorities started tightening control over them, retracting the July 1 measures and gradually implementing various new regulations. At first, they placed a limit on business hours for general markets and the age of merchants allowed in the markets. They also cracked down on so-called “grasshopper vendors” who did not own a fixed stand in the market. Since 2008, however, they have taken steps to abolish all general markets for good. Nonetheless, markets have already become such an irreversible part of the North Korean economy that these measures have encountered strong public resistance. Most North Koreans’ official wages are so low as to be insignificant, so that they must make their living through private business activities involving the use of markets. In addition, even the planned economic sector has to rely on a “modified” system of supplying raw materials based on the markets because the continuing financial crisis has made the recovery of the old system to its former health practically impossible. Subsequently, with the closing of the Pyongsong Market in 2009, the best known wholesale market, the authorities began abolishing markets by force.

2. National Mobilization and Currency Reform

At the end of 2007, North Korea held its first ‘national conference of intellectuals’ in fifteen years, along with its first ‘convention of communist party cell members’ in fourteen years. At these two events, the regime introduced its goal of opening the door to a strong and prosperous nation in 2012. In 2008, commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the communist regime was taken as an opportunity to declare the year as a turning point and to start a national mobilization campaign. Realizing that there were only five years left before the targeted year of 2012, North Korea seemed to have concluded that the goal could not be reached without old-style mass mobilization. Accordingly, it introduced three guidelines for economic policies in building the ‘strong and prosperous nation’ by 2012:

1. Reinforcement of *juche* or self-reliance in people’s economy
2. Modernization of the economy based on state-of-art science and technologies
3. Exaltation of the superiority of a self-reliant national economy

In other words, it has put forward two principles in pursuing economic development: to improve the people’s economy by capitalizing on the peculiar features of North Korean economy and to expand external economic cooperation only after internal resources are first fully utilized. Those two principles sum up what North Korea has been emphasizing in its efforts to build a powerful economic nation: reinforcement of a *juche* economy, the introduction of computerized numerical control (CNC) in economy, and expansion of economic cooperation with other countries. This shows that North Korea had already set the directions of its economic policy as early as in 2008.

However, North Korea’s economic development plans suffered a setback due to the changing external situation, changes of government in South Korea and the United States, and its own unilateral

suspension of the Six-Party Talks. Accordingly, it launched a couple of massive national mobilization drives in 2009, in the form of one 150-day and one 100-day ‘battle.’ These ‘battles’ were ways of channeling workers and resources into key construction work. (North Korea had already made ample use of this method while developing its economy in the 1970s and 1980s.) However, economic development aided by mass mobilization ended up dwarfing less important economic sectors, thereby worsening an imbalance in industry, wasting resources, and distorting resource distribution. This in turn impeded economic development. Lack of funds also played a part in preventing these mass mobilization drives from enhancing productivity. Subsequently, the North Korean authorities resorted to imposing a currency reform on November 30, 2009, in an effort to mobilize monetary assets held by the private sector.

Table 5–9 Currency Reform of 2009

- The old currency was exchanged to a new one at the rate of 1:100 (Savings were exchanged at the rate of 1:10.)
 - Each household was allowed to exchange up to 100,000 won, but later the ceiling was known to be raised to 500,000.
- Measures taken simultaneously with the currency reform:
 1. Closing of general markets and their forced conversion into farmers markets
 - Goods and currencies possessed by merchants were either transferred to state shops or paid to state agencies.
 2. Prohibition of foreign currency
 - Individuals were prohibited to use foreign currencies in transaction and forced to donate all foreign currencies to the authorities.
 - All enterprises and trading companies were required to deposit their foreign currency income in the bank within 24 hours.
 3. Workers and farmers paid the same wages as before.
 - 500 won of special care allowance was paid to each person and 150,000 won of cash was distributed to each farming family.

As summarized in the table above, the currency reform called for a sudden exchange of currencies. Had the North Korean authorities merely exchanged old currency for new, the measure would, like currency reforms in other countries, have been viewed as a way of controlling inflation. Along with such a measure, however, North Korea set a ceiling of 100,000 (later raised to 500,000) North Korean won per household on the amount of currency that could be exchanged; at the

same time it closed down general markets and prohibited the use of foreign currencies in all transactions. This suggests that the currency reform was part of an effort to restore the centrally planned economy.

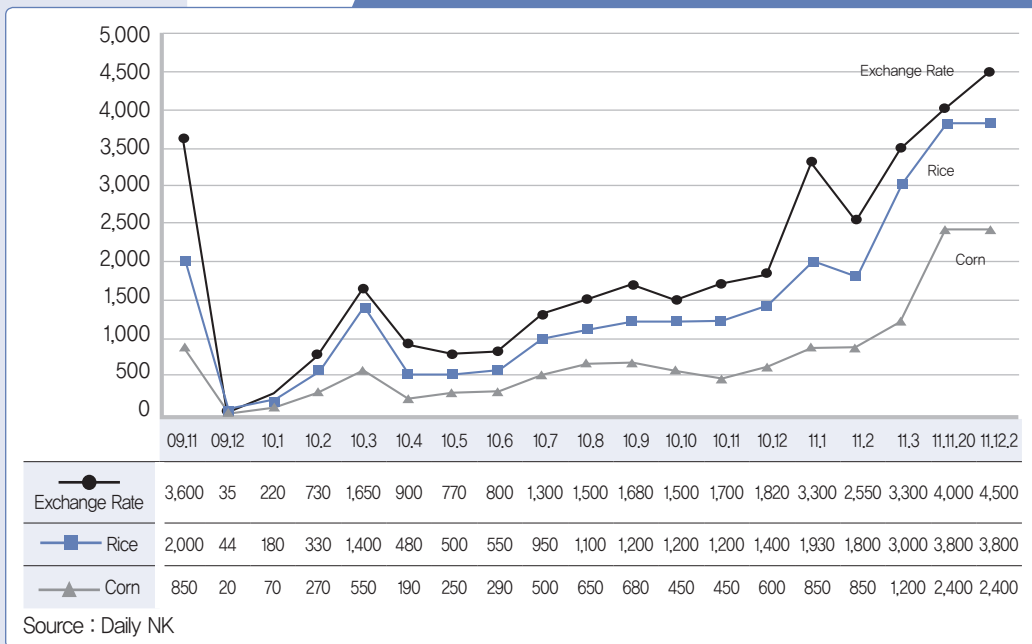
Furthermore, the authorities also sought to recover their ability to issue legal tender and expand government finance by retrieving all currencies circulated in the private sector, and allowing only the use of new currencies issued by the state. In addition, they wanted to prevent trading companies from inundating the military and party economy as well as to keep such privileged economic agencies under control by keeping them from accumulating untraceable foreign currencies. In short, through the currency reform, the North Korean authorities aimed to disrupt the expansion of markets and secure funds for the realization of the 'strong and prosperous nation' campaign. And, at the same time, they wanted to restore the regime to the relative financial health of the 1980s in order to lay the strong material foundation needed to ensure the successful completion of the hereditary power succession.

Immediately upon its imposition, however, the currency reform created confusion in the North Korean economy. It resulted in a serious deadlock in many policies the authorities had implemented since 2008 as part of the 'strong and prosperous nation' campaign. First of all, the value of North Korean currency plunged, accelerating the economy's dependency on Chinese and US currency. It has become known that North Korean citizens strongly prefer Chinese yuan over North Korean won; transactions are often made in the Chinese currency. The devaluation of North Korea's currency substantially weakened its function as a means of storing value. Second, as shown on Figure 5-4, market prices in North Korea fluctuated violently before skyrocketing in 2010. By the end of November 2010, within a year of the currency reform, prices had already recovered to pre-reform levels and continued to rise thereafter. According to a private media source,

for instance, the exchange rate between the North Korean won and the US dollar in Pyongyang at the beginning of December 2011 was 4,500:1, between the North Korean won and the Chinese 720:1, while one had to pay 3,800 won for 1 kg of rice.

Third, although the currency reform might have helped the North Korean authorities to expand their financial capability, it eventually had an adverse effect on them too, by causing a recession in the street-market economy and a setback in economic activities even for state enterprises and other parts of the planned economy that had been muddling along. It has since been reported that the North Korean authorities are now compelling contributions to the “strong and prosperous nation” campaign, in order to improve the government’s finances.

Figure 5-4 Trends in Market Prices after the Currency Reform



Although the reform was imposed to put a halt to market expansion and restore the planned economy, it was bound to fail because in the current economic reality it could not be backed up by strong supply. Instead, it served to confirm that when markets are restricted, the

economy will suffer from serious side effects. Although the state-run distribution network could never be restored due to the collapse of the public distribution system for raw materials in the 1990s, the authorities had underestimated the consequence this would cause. General markets seem to have been slowly recovering since around May 2010, but North Korean citizens are undergoing the most severe economic difficulties seen since the 2000s due to being deprived of all currencies in their possession and facing rapidly rising prices. Many households that once enjoyed a middle-class life have fallen below the poverty line. Since the currency reform, they no longer trust any policy promoted by the authorities and their dissatisfaction with the regime has grown.

Finally, North Korean Prime Minister Kim Yong-il had to admit errors in the implementation of the currency reform at the end of January 2010. The following February, authorities had no choice but to allow general markets and transactions in foreign currencies as well as activities of trading companies affiliated with specially privileged agencies. It seems that with the currency reform, the authorities could have partially accomplished their goals of expanding government finance and constricting those who had accumulated wealth through markets. Ironically, however, the adverse effects of the currency reform have neutralized the market control policy they had maintained since October 2005, and created an environment in which it will be difficult for them to impose regulations on actively promoted regulations over markets.

3. Limited Liberalization and Expanding Open-door to China Policy

With the beginning of the 2000s, North Korea evidently began to realize that it needed to break from its ‘mosquito-net policy’ of the 1990s and pursue more of an open-door policy. When the July 1 Measures were imposed, the regime designated Sinuiju, Gaeseong, and Mt. Geumgang as new special economic districts. The last two in particular were to be developed exclusively with South Korean capital. Plans to build a Sinuiju special administrative region, however, did not take off due to China’s unwillingness to cooperate, while visits to Mt. Geumgang have been suspended since 2008, when a South Korean tourist was shot dead by a North Korean sentry. The Gaeseong Industrial Complex is thus the only remaining zone for the promotion of inter-Korean business activities. Even the Gaeseong Industrial Complex, however, faces an uncertain future due to North Korea’s continued pursuit of nuclear capabilities and repeated provocations against South Korea. This is unlike China, which has expanded economic cooperation in its cross-strait relations with Taiwan based on market economy principles and active reform and liberalization policies. North Korea has pursued inter-Korean economic cooperation with the sole intention of earning foreign currency, while refusing to implement any Chinese-style reform and open-door policies. There are thus limits as to how much these special districts can accomplish.

Experiencing the after-effects of a botched currency reform amid stronger international sanctions, the regime shifted its economic policy towards further opening to China, in order to obtain the foreign currency required to build a ‘strong and prosperous nation.’ Accordingly, the regime has newly designated Hwanggumpyong and Wihwa Island as well as the Rason Economic and Trade Zone (which had showed scant progress since its launch in 1991) as special economic zones, in an effort to jointly develop these border regions

with China. To this end, the North has agreed to connect infrastructures such as bridges, roads, and railroads in its northern border region with China's three northeastern provinces.

Further steps followed, and in January 2010, North Korea declared Rason a 'special city,' revised the Rason Special Economic Zone Act, and established the State General Bureau for Economic Development. The North also created a Joint Investment Committee in July 2010 and signed a MOU with China on the joint development of Rajin and Hwanggumpyong in December 2010. A groundbreaking ceremony for the same districts was conducted in June 2011, and laws governing them were enacted the following December. In addition, the regime has undertaken projects to construct a second bridge over the Yalu River as well as to repair and expand the roads that lie between the Wonjong-ri customs house and Rajin port.

Political reasons may lie behind North Korea's joint development of the special economic zones with China, but internal economic reasons may play the greater part. First, Beijing had already announced its eleventh five-year plan for economic development for 2005-2010, which identified three northeastern provinces as the driver for China's economic progress. To this end, China desperately needed to develop the border regions in connection with Mongolia, Russia and North Korea. It was particularly imperative for China to secure an East Sea route via North Korea's Rajin port in order to construct its 'Changjitu Development and Opening-up Pilot Area,' which was identified as a national strategy in September 2009. Therefore, it can be said that China's economic needs coincided with North Korea's necessity to build a strong and prosperous nation, creating an environment favorable for the joint development of the border regions.

This joint development across the border region may help encourage the North to open its doors. However, as long as international sanctions continue and Pyongyang shies away from market principles, China

will not be able to make large investments in North Korea. The special economic zones in Rason, Hwanggumpyong, and Wihwa Islands are thus expected to make slow progress. The success of these special economic zones depends on how much reform North Korea chooses to undertake. This is because in order to attract foreign capital and create synergies in economic growth, North Korea would need to create close links between its external and internal economy, something that inevitably requires market reform.

4. Future Outlook and Task

It can be inferred from the macroeconomic conditions described in Section 2 that North Korea is producing 60 percent on average of what it had been capable of producing in the late 1980s. This shows that despite the regime's active efforts to revive the economy, restoring the inter-industry linkages that collapsed in the 1990s back to late-1980s levels is no easy task. This is because North Korea has pursued reform policies on a restrictive basis, all the while maintaining its military-first policy, which prioritizes national defense in resource allocation. Another reason is because the regime reverted to controlling the general markets, even though it knew how they had improved the economy in the early 2000s.

Under Kim Jong-il's rule, North Korea had advocated 2012 as the year of 'opening the door to a strong and prosperous nation.' Once it realized this goal was unattainable, the regime began backpedaling in the beginning of 2011, from 'strong and prosperous great nation' to merely 'strong and prosperous nation.' Moreover, the New Year's joint editorial in 2012 used the expression 'concept of building a strong nation,' to indicate that this objective was a long term one. Instead of referring back to the specific targets on production volume including coal, food, steel, and fertilizer that had been proposed

in 2008, the regime has been touting several symbolic landmarks of economic development as evidence that the goal has at least been partially achieved. These include: implementation of *juche* production technology in steel, fertilizer and textile enterprises; application of computerized numerical control (CNC) in machinery, facilities, etc; construction of the Huichon power plant in Chagang province; construction of 100,000 high-rise apartments, renovation of Pyongyang, etc. But because many projects were aimed more at regime preservation than at improving people's livelihood, the economic polarization has, if anything, grown worse. North Korean refugees attest that by invoking Kim Il-sung's wish that 'white rice and beef soup' become daily fare across the country, the 'strong and prosperous nation' campaign had led the populace to expect it would eat better by 2012. In other words, the ostensible focus of the campaign had been on the food supply, engendering hopes that the regime would emulate steps once undertaken by China to remedy its own food shortages.

In what direction has Kim Jong-un taken the North Korean economy since coming to power? First of all, the National Defense Commission, which has pledged its allegiance to him, declared that "no changes should be expected." The 2012 New Year's joint editorial announcing the beginning of the Kim Jong-un era made clear that North Korea would continue to uphold the military-first policy. This indicates that North Korea is likely to continue prioritizing national defense in investment while alternately loosening and tightening control over the general markets. For all that these markets may endanger the regime, they also play a crucial role in ensuring its survival. The authorities may therefore make a show of regulating the markets, but turn a blind eye to them in practice. This could result in the parallel coexistence of the planned economy and the unofficial market economy. Over time, their inter-dependence is projected to grow stronger, which in turn could exacerbate social polarization and prevent average North Koreans from escaping from their 'poverty trap.'

In the meantime, the depletion of North Korea's domestic resources may compel the regime to lift some limits on its liberalization policy and open the door to the outside world a little wider. Closer economic ties with China may also result, but in the absence of serious market reform it would be difficult even for China to invest large amounts of capital in North Korea. For the time being, then, it appears more likely that economic cooperation between the two will center around the joint development of the special economic zones established in 2011. To secure the foreign currency urgently needed to consolidate Kim Jong-un's rule, North Korea may also continue to encourage Chinese investment and development of material resources inside the country proper.

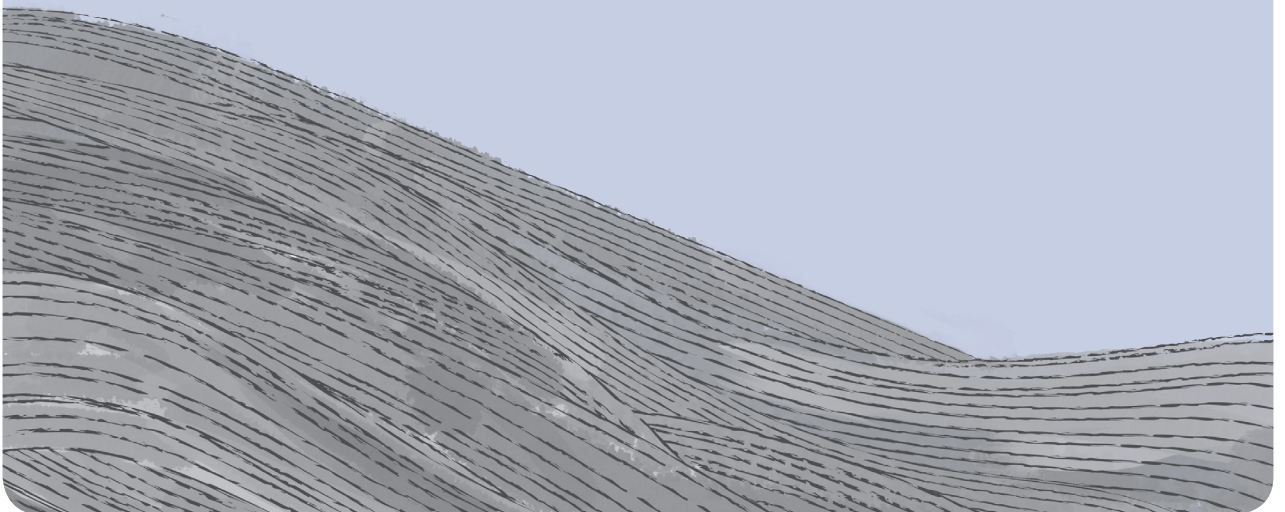
Yet, these measures alone will not be able to resolve North Korea's chronic and structural crisis afflicting the entire economy, let alone suffice to lay the material basis for the consolidation of Kim Jong-un's rule. In the long run, the regime will inevitably face pressure to engage in reform or liberalization, whether Chinese or North Korean style. After all, today's North Korean economy operates under conditions and in an environment quite different from what the Kim Jong-il regime faced in the latter half of the 1990s. It is also uncertain how much hardship can still be borne by the North Korean people. All the same, demand for change poses a dilemma for North Korea. Any kind of reform or liberalization would entail changes in resource distribution, which in turn could lead to conflicts in the ruling elite. This would be detrimental to the regime's ongoing effort to legitimize the hereditary succession of power.

6

Education, Literature and Art

Section 1. Education

Section 2. Literature and Art



Key Point

01

Although North Korea claims to provide 11 years of free compulsory education, the reality is very different. Free education exists in name only; school materials, for example, must be purchased by the students themselves. As witnessed by damaged equipment and tools, outdated school facilities and low class attendance, the education system is facing a severe crisis.

02

Rather than providing for personal development, education in the North is aimed at molding the young into revolutionaries, members of the working class, and communists. This is in accordance with the overall objective of carrying out a socialist revolution, building a socialist nation, and nurturing loyal and obedient subjects of Kim Jong-un.

03

The core curriculum in North Korean education consists of politics and ideology, science and technology, and physical education. Political and ideological instruction focuses on the revolutionary history and achievements of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, while education in science and technology offers classes in general science and other specialized skills. Physical education, on the other hand, shapes students for labor and national defense. Of these three basic constituent groups, political and ideological education is emphasized the most.

04

Literature and art in North Korea does not manifest the creativity and free will of individuals, but is used as a propaganda conduit for the official ideology. Being under the complete control of the state, the North's writers and artists advocate not beauty, but loyalty to the party, people and working class.

Section 1

Education

1. Education Policy and School System

(1) Education Objectives

Education is one of the major tools used to preserve and reproduce social systems. Based on this insight, North Korea has from the start emphasized the importance of education to the socialist system, and developed its educational system accordingly. This has resulted in an education policy that prescribes a pre-school curriculum and eleven years of free schooling. These policies are touted as representative of the superiority of the regime.

Since the North's economic crisis, however, this system of free compulsory education has survived in name only. Though there are no tuition fees, students need to pay for school necessities such as textbooks, school supplies and uniforms. They even bear the costs

required to maintain schools including educational equipment, fuel, and so forth. As a result of the economic crisis, various forms of illegality and corruption became endemic in education as in the rest of society. This resulted in illicit admissions, grade tampering, and other irregularities.

Unable to carry out its purpose and function, therefore, the North Korean education system faces overall crisis entailing damaged equipment, obsolete facilities, low attendance, the diminishing authority of teachers, and so on. The regime has reinforced political and ideological education in an effort to prevent the further deterioration of public education and to reverse the general weakening of ideological morale across society. It has also implemented new programs aimed at schooling young talents in the scientific and technological skills needed for economic revival.

Education in North Korea places top priority on fostering young elites necessary for the preservation of the socialist system. This objective is clearly stated in the regime's *Theses of Socialist Education*, a compilation of basic policies and guidelines in the education field. It is also expressed in Chapter 1, Article 3 of the Education Law, which states that education is to "raise young talents of strong physical strength with sound ideological consciousness and deep knowledge of science and technology." This model student is described in greater detail in *Theses of Socialist Education*:

"The objective of socialist education is to train people into revolutionary elites equipped with independent mind and creativity... The basic principle of socialist pedagogy is... to arm people with communist ideology and help develop their deep scientific knowledge and healthy body."

North Korea thus strives to foster talented young people who equip themselves with revolutionary philosophy and good physical training to serve the struggle for socialism and communism. Meanwhile, the

most emphasized merit required for ideal communists in North Korean education is revolutionary thought.

Key contents of revolutionary philosophy include the *juche* ideology, WPK policies, revolutionary traditions, communist conviction and revolutionary optimism. Meanwhile, education in science and technology focuses on allowing students to experience achievements of advanced science and technology. The objective of physical education is to physically train for duties in labor and national defense.

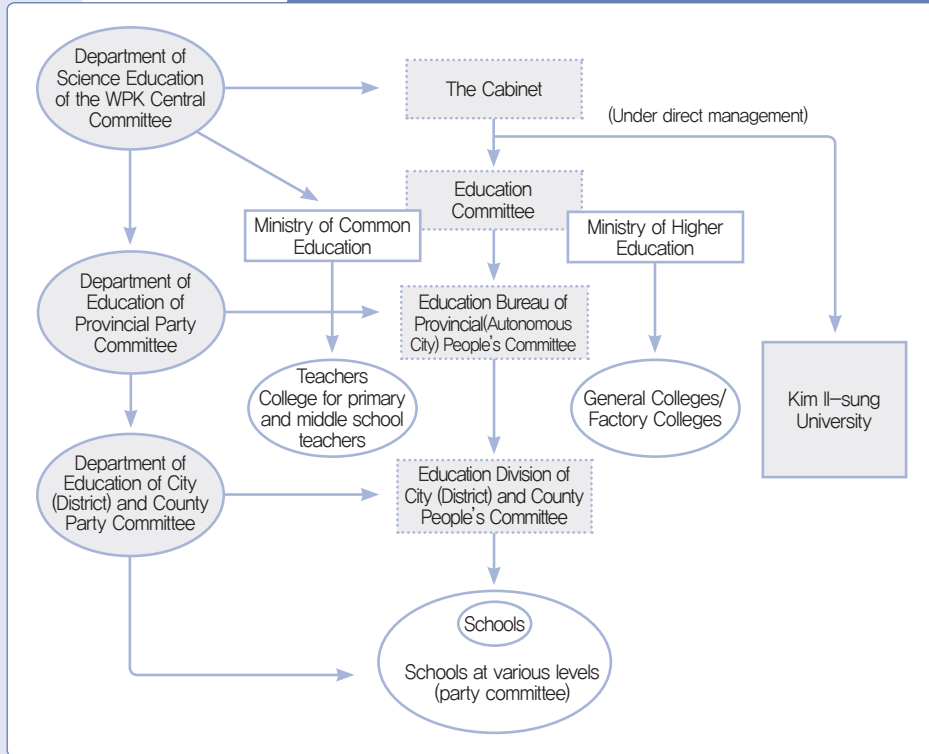
In short, the goal of education in North Korea is to develop talented young communists who, armed with communist ideology and revolutionary optimism, labor for Kim Jong-un in the construction of a communist nation. In such an educational system there is little room for personal development

(2) Educational Administration System

Education is administered under the guidance of the WPK, which in the North's party-state socialist system has the highest authority over all state apparatus and social organizations. State and social institutions have devolved into mere tools for the enforcement of party lines and policies. Accordingly, the Central Committee's Science and Education Department is responsible for policy development and general guidance, whereas the Education Commission within the Cabinet is in charge of policy implementation and overall educational administration. Educational institutions at various levels provide education for students under the guidance of the WPK and Cabinet.

In short, North Korea's educational administration evinces a tripod structure comprised of the WPK, Cabinet and schools: the party instructs and supervises, the Cabinet complies with the WPK to administer specific educational policies, and schools deliver education for students. The relationship between these entities is described in Figure 6-1.

Figure 6-1 Educational Administration System in North Korea



A. Workers' Party of Korea

The Central Committee makes decisions on education which are then passed down to lower party committees. One of the peculiarities of the North Korean system is that the WPK has overriding authority over the Cabinet and local schools in dealing with personnel and education issues. The principal of each school may appear to be responsible for school administration and finances, but real authority is vested in vice principals, who also assume the chairmanship of local committees. These vice principals are sent to schools to oversee organizational activities of faculty members and to administer their ideological and cultural education.

B. The Cabinet

Educational administration and working-level tasks are dealt with by the Education Commission of the Cabinet. Under the commission

are the Ministry of Common Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. The former oversees education in kindergartens, primary and middle schools, and teachers' training colleges, while the latter ministry is responsible for general universities and colleges of education. Educational guidelines devised by the education ministries are delivered to the educational bureaus of each municipal and provincial people's committee, which in turn convey them to the people's education division in corresponding cities, counties and districts. Only when they finally reach local schools at various levels are these guidelines put into practice.

C. Schools

Schools educate students under the guidance and control of the WPK and Cabinet. The administrative system of these learning institutions is conducted by principals, vice principals (who also chair the primary party committees established at each school unit), heads of departments, and accounting office managers. The departments established at this level are distinguished by subject in middle schools and by grade in primary schools. Moreover, a party committee exists in each school, under which are social and political organizations for teachers and students.

Under this party-dominant system, the WPK's authority is exercised in all aspects of school management. This means that the chairman of each party committee often has greater authority than the school principal. North Korea's educational administration system is thus of a particular type that has institutionalized the party's intervention in education.

(3) School System

As described in Figure 6-2, North Korea's school system is built on a 4-6-4 basis, which is to say, 4 years of primary school, 6 years of middle school, and 4 to 6 years of college.³⁰ Apart from this basic

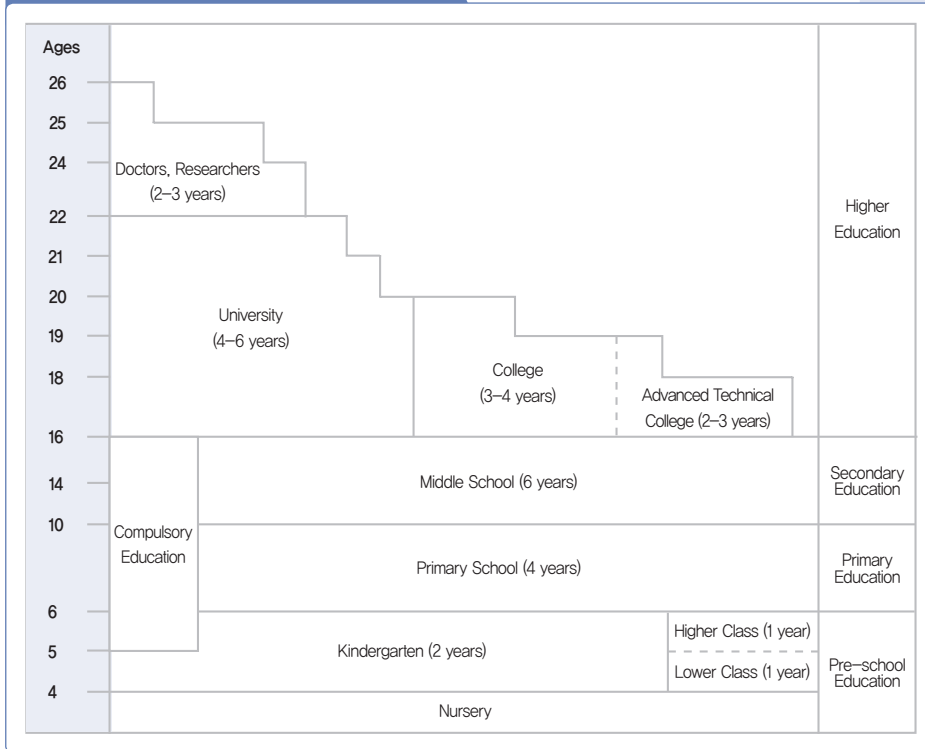
³⁰ At the 6th session of the 12th SPA held on September 25, 2012, Northern authorities decided to revise its compulsory education period to 12 years, which includes kindergarten (1 year), primary school (5 years), junior middle school (3 years), and senior middle school (3 years).

school system, there are various types of institutions for special education, including schools for gifted students, foreign language schools, learning institutions specialized in sports and art, and so-called revolutionary academies for children from privileged families.

Special and higher education have a wide range of systems in place depending on the type of school and department. For instance, the teacher's colleges and junior colleges offer three-year undergraduate programs, while general colleges and universities provide four to six years depending on the department. In the case of Kim Il-sung University, the faculty of humanities is a four-year program, while the faculties of social sciences and natural sciences are five-year and six-year programs respectively. Recently, the minimum years required to graduate from the faculty of natural sciences is known to have been curtailed by one or two years.

Since 1969, North Korea's school semester had started on September 1, but in 1996, the first day of school was revised to April 1. Students enjoy school vacations in the summer (August 1-31), winter (January 1-February 16), and spring (1 week at the end of March). Final exams take place in March.

Figure 6–2 North Korea’s School System



A. Common Education

Upon national liberation, North Korea enacted a ‘Law on Measures to Implement North Korean School Education,’ in accordance with which institutions of primary education were renamed from ‘national school’ to ‘people’s school,’ the ostensible goal being to eliminate vestiges of Japanese colonial rule. The new state then embarked on a six-year program of public education including one-year of preparatory courses.

Several changes were made thereafter, and present-day education in North Korea offers eleven years of compulsory schooling comprised of upper kindergarten level, four years of primary school, and six years of middle school. The North claims that “compulsory education is implemented to provide holistic education that moulds all members of society into communist men,” adding that “this is achievable only in socialist societies.”

North Korea's compulsory education, therefore, is aimed at the systematic study of communist revolutionary ideology needed to foster communist members of society. Organized and systematic education from a young age is emphasized in order to maximize the inculcation of communist values.

The regime's much-touted claim to provide free education is of little real significance, since the state owns and distributes all resources and production goods. Students are in any case mobilized to various construction projects as a means of combining education and production labor. Such mobilization is an integral and formal part of the regular curriculum. This has eclipsed the merits of free education.

In the case of primary schools, students engage in school-related labor but also lend a helping hand during the busy farming season. Meanwhile, middle school students are sent to various farms during the busy seasons to work from four weeks (in the case of students from grade 1 to 4) to ten weeks (in the case of students in grades 5 and 6); they are also mobilized for construction projects. Student mobilization for 'weeding battle' activities is particularly intense during the whole month of July. In early May, 20 to 30 days are set aside for the 'spring battle' of rice planting. The 'fall battle' of harvesting takes place at the end of September. Students also shoulder various costs incurred from maintaining schools such as textbooks, equipment and repair. This financial burden has grown since the economic crisis, so that more and more students from poor families are effectively excluded from the institutional system of education. This in turn has led to a rise in absenteeism and a drop in enrollment.

North Korea used to base its education system on egalitarian principles, but these gave way in the 1990s to the harsh new economic realities. Schools began emphasizing practical education such as foreign languages and computers, even at primary level, as well as offering special courses for gifted students. Regional differences were reflected

in middle school curriculums, with mathematics and physics being taught to students in urban and industrial districts and biology and chemistry to those in rural regions. Not being immune to the world trends of globalization and informatization, North Korea developed institutions to train elites in the area of information and technology since mid-1980s. Such measures were expanded to other cities and counties in the 1990s. Presumably, the introduction of this sort of specialized education was dictated by the economic hardship that had left the regime short of resources. This approach, however, is creating greater polarization in the education system. Only students from the privileged class in certain regions receive opportunities to learn computer skills, foreign languages, and an advanced curriculum, while most students are left to face poor educational environments and mismanaged schools. Student mobilization for labor and the increasing tax burden play their own part in further excluding students from the educational system.

B. Higher Education

Higher education was first introduced on September 1, 1946, with the decision of the Provincial People's Committee of North Korea to establish Kim Il-sung University in Pyongyang. Thereafter, colleges for political and economic studies were built during the post-Korean War period of reconstruction (1954 to 1956). Starting in 1957, a five-year planning period was carried out, during which teachers' training colleges and colleges of education were opened to implement compulsory education in middle schools.

In 1960, the North moved to open factory and evening colleges, having perceived the necessity to secure a steady supply of engineers to implement its economic plans. Factory colleges were later expanded throughout North Korea's first seven-year economic plan (1961 to 1970), and further expansions and additions of factory colleges, telecommunications colleges and junior colleges ensued during the

second seven-year economic plan (1978 to 1984) in order to meet the shortage of schools at various levels. As a result, institutions for higher education include three universities – Kim Il-sung University, Kim Chaek University of Technology, and Koryo Songgyungwan University – and general colleges, along with on-site colleges of different industries such as agriculture, fishery and industrial plants.

Gaining admission to college involves a different process and procedure from those required for common education. (Since common education is compulsory, students do not take entrance exams to complete their middle-school education.) Students aspiring to college follow certain procedures including preliminary exams to receive recommendations, and an entrance examination conducted by individual colleges in each province.

The Education Commission of the Cabinet provides each province with the number of candidates for the entrance exams of individual colleges. Based on this allotment, students who pass the preliminary exam are notified by the college recruitment division of each people's committee.

The number of students recommended to college is about 20 percent of the total middle school graduates in any given year. Among them, those who enroll in college immediately upon passing the entrance examination are only 10 percent a year on average. They are the so-called “direct track students,” because they have not only done well at school but also come from good family backgrounds. Boys who fail the examination join the army, while the girls are assigned to a workplace. Students are not given a second chance, but after they are assigned to army or work they can reapply for college as adult members of the society.

Eligibility to colleges and universities is determined by the score the student receives on the preliminary examination. Yet, the schools also place importance on the applicant's character and talents, so that a

special admission is also offered to those who are considered qualified. Being conscious of academic discrepancies among secondary schools, colleges and universities also apply a ranking system that adjusts qualifications according to the applicant's middle school or region. As economic difficulties have worsened, the number of students admitted to colleges and universities illegally, i.e., through bribing or grade tampering, has increased. Successful applicants must thus have not only good grades and a good family background but also the financial ability to bear the cost of textbooks, uniform, room and board as well as the operation costs of repairing and maintaining school facilities. Consequently, it has become common for applicants with rich and powerful parents (such as high-ranking party and government officials or supervisors of external trade businesses) to gain admission to top-notch institutions of higher education through illicit means.

C. Special Education

In North Korea, special education is provided to students with special status or talents. The most famous institutions for special education are the First Middle School, Pyongyang Foreign Language Institute and the Mangyongdae Revolutionary Institute. In addition, there are several top-notch institutions for students with extraordinary talents in dance, music, plastic arts, sports and circus. These include the Kumsong Institute, Pyongyang Music School, the Nampo Central Athletic Institute, and the Kim Jong-il Art Institute.

Having realized the need for elites in science and technology to resolve the delay in economic growth, Kim Jong-il issued an instruction to “select student with extraordinary aptitude and talents and provide them with systematic training.” North Korea thus opened the First Middle School in Pyongyang in 1984. Such schools spread to special cities and cities where provincial capitals are located, including Nampo, Gaeseong, Chongjin, and Hyesan. Since a further expansion in 1999 there is now a First Middle School in every cities, counties, and

districts across the country. These schools mainly provide education needed to foster scientists in the fields of natural sciences. Therefore, successful applicants to these schools are required to have superb academic grades in mathematics and sciences, as well as a good family background. Using a set of special textbooks different from those used in average middle schools, students at these first middle schools study natural sciences, computer science, and English. Upon graduation, they are admitted to Kim Il-sung University and Kim Chaek University of Technology, where they are trained under a one-to-one mentor system. They also enjoy exemption from rural community support activities and military service while in university. After graduation they work in key areas of science and technology.

North Korea had since the 1980s attempted to train talented manpower in science and technology through the establishment of schools for the gifted. The efforts were reinforced in the late 1990s under a political slogan promoting a vision for a ‘strong and prosperous nation.’ The reinforcement of special education was thus initiated by a strategy to simultaneously promote economic development and nation building by fostering highly skilled manpower in advanced science and technology. The authorities believed that, “In the age of information industry, science and technology has become a powerful element determining the rise and fall of a nation and a people.” Accordingly, even though its general school system has remained crippled by the prolonged economic crisis, North Korea has continued to emphasize the importance of special education to train manpower in the fields of science and technology and information.

Special education in English is provided by the Pyongyang Foreign Language Institute and by foreign language institutes in other cities and provinces. The Pyongyang Foreign Language Institute offers a six-year middle school curriculum and intensive training in eight different languages, including English, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian.

Admission is offered to those among the recipients of the title of hero and to deceased revolutionaries' or decorated soldiers' children who have completed primary education and display a talent in foreign language.

The revolutionary institutes were established to take the children of those who made distinguished contributions to the nation and raise them into men and women who would serve it in like manner. They include the Mangyongdae Revolutionary Institute, the Kang Ban-sok Memorial Children's College, the Nampo Revolutionary Institute, and the Saenal Revolutionary Institute. The Mangyongdae Revolutionary Institute, a special school providing eight years of education, was established in October 1947 under the Ministry of People's Armed Forces. Children of deceased revolutionaries or high-ranking party and military officials are qualified to apply. They are admitted upon graduation from primary school, whereupon they must reside in the dormitory and receive education under a strict military organization. Upon graduation, they are assigned to key military or other special posts, where they receive the best treatment under privileged conditions.

2. Educational Curriculum and Methods

(1) Educational Curriculum

According to *Theses of Socialist Education*, the important parts of curriculum in school education are political thought, science and technology, and physical education. Political thought classes teach Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's revolutionary history and activities, while science and technology classes provide education in general sciences and professional skills. Physical education aims at improving students' physical conditions to meet the need in public labor and national defense.

As described in Table 6-1, primary education requires that students complete 13 subjects, including Korean language, during four years of study in the primary school. In particular, since September 2008, primary schools have provided English and computer training classes for students in the third grade and above. The primary school curriculum is made up of six subject areas: political thought, science and technology, physical education, music, arts and crafts, national defense, and foreign language.

Weekly class hours for these subjects can be listed as follows, in decreasing order: Korean language, mathematics, natural science, physical education, music, and arts and crafts. Korean language accounts for one-third of total class hours, while mathematics makes up a quarter of them. These two subjects account for 57 percent of the total hours.

Table 6-1 Education Curriculum for Primary Schools

	Subject	Class Hours Per Week For Each Grade			
		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
1	Childhood of Dear Leader Grand Marshal Kim Il-sung	1	1	1	2
2	Childhood of Great Leader Kim Jong-il	1	1	1	2
3	Childhood of Anti-Japanese Heroine Kim Jong-suk				1
4	Socialist Morality	2	2	1	1
5	Mathematics	6	6	6	6
6	Korean	6	6	7	8
7	Science	2	2	2	2
8	Health				1
9	Music	2	2	2	2
10	PE	2	2	2	2
11	Drawing & Crafts	2	2	1	1
12	English			1	1
13	Computer			1	1

Note :

1. The above table was produced based on the curriculum proposed by the North Korean Ministry of Education and supplemented by changes confirmed. Nonetheless, some discrepancies may exist, because North Korea does not disclose information on its educational system.
2. Students have a 16-week summer vacation after the first term and 18-week winter vacation after the second term. In addition, there is a one-week spring break at the end of March.

In the case of secondary education, as described on Table 6-2, students are required to take 23 subjects during their six year study in the middle school. Except for certain details, the middle school curriculum is generally similar to that of primary schools.

North Korea has recently reinforced education in political thought and emphasized the importance of practical education. Keeping pace with international trends of globalization and informatization, it has also started to reinforce education in foreign languages as well as science and technology.

By 2000, English and Chinese had become the two most popular foreign languages, replacing Russian as North Korea's first foreign language. The popularity of English in particular is so high that most middle schools now offer English classes. In the meantime, the Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies has substantially increased the maximum number of students who can major in English. It even requires those who major in other languages to take English as a mandatory class.

Table 6-2 Education Curriculum for Middle Schools

	Subject	Class Hours Per Week For Each Grade					
		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
1	Revolutionary Activities of Dear Leader Grand Marshal Kim Il-sung	1	1	1			
2	Revolutionary History of Dear Leader Grand Marshal Kim Il-sung				2	2	2
3	Revolutionary Activities of Great Leader Kim Jong-il	1	1	1			
4	Revolutionary History of Great Leader Kim Jong-il				2	2	2
5	Revolutionary History of Anti-Japanese Heroine Kim Jong-suk				1		
6	Socialist Morality	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Present Party Policies				1 week	1 week	1 week
8	Korean	5	5	4			
9	Literature				4	3	2
10	Chinese Characters	2	2	1	1	1	1
11	Foreign Language	4	3	3	3	3	3
12	History	1	1	2	2	2	2
13	Geography	2	2	2	2	2	
14	Mathematics	7	7	6	6	6	6
15	Physics		2	3	4	4	4
16	Chemistry			2	3	3	4
17	Biology		2	2	2	3	3
18	PE	2	2	2	1	1	1
19	Music	1	1	1	1	1	1
20	Art	1	1	1			
21	Drafting				1	1	
22	Computer				2	2	2
23	Practice (Boys/Girls)	1 week	1 week	1 week	1 week	1 week	1 week

Note :

1. The above table was produced based on a curriculum proposed by the North Korean Ministry of Education and supplemented by changes confirmed. Nonetheless, some discrepancies may exist, because North Korea does not disclose information on its educational system.
2. Students in Grade 1-3 go to school 50 weeks a year while those in Grade 4-6 go to school 40 weeks a year.

With the reinforcement of English education, the focus of foreign language training has shifted from grammar to conversation in order to improve students' practical language ability and conversation skills. To this end, some colleges have adopted untranslated foreign books as standard textbooks for major subjects, and hold a foreign language contest among the faculty members in the natural science area in order to promote lecturing in foreign languages. Such attempts are aimed at improving the national economy through training of diplomats and managers for external trade.



| Computer class at Kumsong First Middle School

Reinforcement of computer training began at the end of the 1990s. In 2001, computer classes were newly created in such places as Mangyongdae Student and Children's Palace, Pyongyang Student and Children's Palace, and Kumsong First and Second Middle School. A small group of gifted students selected among primary school graduates are provided with computer training in these classes.

In North Korea, where the state and party manages and controls the entire area of education, neither individual schools nor individual students had the right to choose subjects to study. But with the beginning of a new school term on April 1, 2001, an elective curriculum was introduced to North Korea's secondary education for the first time in its history. Under this system, individual schools are allowed to choose those curriculums that fit the character of their local community. For instance, schools in a rural community can now focus on agricultural education, while those in a fishing community can choose fishery-related curriculum and those in the light industry district can specialize in education on such an industry. With the introduction of the elective system, six different sets of textbooks are published in the fields of mining, machineries, forestry, food, garment, and communication engineering.

Although it varies depending on school and major field, college and university curricula are generally divided into five areas: political thought, general subjects, introductory general subjects, major subjects, and introductory major subjects. All students are required to take political thought and general subjects such as foreign language and physical education regardless of their major. Introductory general subjects are divided into two groups, those that are selected to meet the needs of each major field and those that are common to all majors. Introductory major subjects are designed to prepare students for particular major fields, and their composition is determined by each major. Major subjects, too, are divided into two categories: mandatory and elective.

As demonstrated by the establishment of the school of law in Kim Il-sung University, North Korea has recently reinforced the research and study of law. The school of law consists of three departments: law, international law, and political science. In the country where Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's instructions precede all types of law, law remained part of the history or philosophy department until the 1970s.

In the meantime, North Korea tried to reinforce political and ideological education in order to reverse the ideological relaxation across its society caused by economic difficulties. The objective of political and ideological education was to foster loyalty to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. Accordingly, students in the primary and middle schools were compelled to take subjects idolizing the 'Three Generals of Baekdu Mountain', i.e., Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Il-sung's first wife Kim Jong-suk. The classes based on this cult of personality included the childhood and revolutionary activities of the three supreme leaders. In colleges and universities, all students, regardless of their major, are required to take classes on *juche* ideology, revolutionary history, and *juche* political economics. Though the key objective of political and ideological education in North Korea is to foster

loyalty to the supreme leader, the inculcation of such forms of class consciousness as anti-Americanism and spirits for struggle was added to it in response to the influx of capitalist elements after the economic crisis, as well as in response to escalating tension between Pyongyang and Washington over North Korea's nuclear and missile development. North Korea's hostility against the United States continues to inform the education system. Anti-Americanism is whipped up to warn against the infiltration of imperialist thoughts and culture as well as to encourage young people and students to join the army.

In the light of its composition and contents, North Korea's educational curriculum can be summed up with several features. First, the reinforcement of ideological education implies that education is a critical tool in accomplishing an ideological revolution, so that politics and education must be closely linked. Second, education is directly combined with production activities, as demonstrated by the inclusion of basic skills education, on-the-job training, and productive labor in the curriculum. Third, the contents and methods of education are standardized and issued down by the state, so that the students have no right to choose their curriculum.³¹

(2) Teaching Methods

Education in North Korea is based on the five teaching methods in socialist education described in *Theses of Socialist Education*.³² The first method is education by enlightening. By helping students to understand the contents of class through their mental activities, this method focuses on the development of a creative mind. The teaching techniques in this area include education by exposition, debate and argument, question and answer, intuition, realia, and affirmation and influence.

Education by exposition works in the form of discourse. Education by debate and argument allows the students to develop a wide range

³¹ Cho Jung-ah, *Education in North Korea: System and Culture*, collection of papers published at the Korean Association of North Korea Studies academic conference summer 2005, pp.330–32

³² Kim Il-sung, 'The Thesis on Socialist Education,' *Kim Il-sung's Collected Writings* 32, pp.389–98

of views through an exchange of opinions with teachers. The question and answer technique encourages question and answer between classmates sitting around the same table. In particular, if teachers compile sample questions for various examinations and distribute them to students in advance, it is thought to help them considerably in working together to study for the examinations.

Education by intuition and realia helps the students understand the contents of class by utilizing various practical tools, with an emphasis on a harmony between theory and practice. For instance, field trips to factories are to help them learn by experience what they have learned from textbooks. Education by affirmation and influence provides education on political thoughts and encourages students to present exemplary cases of implementing them in their daily life, so that they can reflect on themselves and make greater efforts to advance. A good example of such a method, and one of the most typical ways of mobilizing the public, is to make students “emulate” a role model.

The second teaching method combines theory with practice and education with productive labor. This method is thought necessary in training students into communist revolutionaries. It helps students expand their knowledge in real life through the encouragement of study tours to historic battlefields and revolutionary places and participation in productive labor.

The third method reinforces students’ organizational life and social and political activities. These activities are aimed at training the students politically and ideologically, and infusing them with the spirit of revolution. Accordingly, in North Korea students are required to join a student’s and children’s corps or youth league and participate in supporting various social campaigns such as afforestation and socialist construction.

The fourth method combines school education with social education. Education is carried out not only at schools but also through social

relations. Therefore, education for future generations must be a comprehensive social project. Accordingly, education is provided through various forms of small group activities such as lectures on political thought and debates and presentations on science using such venues as the students' and children's palaces and halls, the children's corps campgrounds, and libraries in addition to schools.

The fifth method advances pre-school, school, and adult education side by side. This method is based on an assumption that a man's thought and personality are formed during his childhood and consolidated throughout his life. The advocates of this theory argue that a comprehensive and continuous education must thus be provided to all members of society throughout their life. North Korea claims that it has a well-established continuing educational system under which all its members can receive a full range of education from pre-school to adult education tailored to each member's level.

As discussed above, the objective of North Korean education is to train the kind of people required by the regime, which is something quite different from fostering individuals who can actively cope with rapidly changing domestic and international environments in the era of informatization and globalization.

North Korea has recently emphasized the importance of intelligence education to improve intellectual capacity and ways of questing for knowledge as opposed to merely acquiring it. To this end, it has switched from memory-based education to a kind that reinforces creative thinking. Examinations are no longer given in the form of a memory test. The new ones are rather based on practical skills. At the same time, education based on field training using computers is also being expanded. For the sake of so-called intelligence education that improves one's ability to think, every school has compiled intelligence questions in each subject, written short papers, hosted intelligence problem solving contests, developed multimedia materials, provided

lessons on teaching techniques, held presentations on teaching experience in each subject, and had discussions on teaching methods.

In addition, to encourage teachers to study efficient teaching methods and develop teaching materials, North Korea has awarded those who have developed a new teaching method a certificate of registration of a new teaching technique, and bestowed the title of October 8 Exemplary Teacher to outstanding teachers. This title was created in commemoration of Kim Jong-il's on-the-spot guidance to Mubong Middle School on October 8, 2003.

Nevertheless, these efforts to improve the quality of education are unlikely to achieve the desired goals so long as the basic objective of North Korean education lies in fostering the faithful members of society that the North Korean regime demands.

3. School Life

(1) Classes and Extracurricular Activities

In North Korea, school hours vary from school to school. The average school hours for primary schools are five hours a day. In principle, each class lasts 45 minutes, and there is a ten-minute break between classes. Daily school hours for middle schools is six for the first to third year students and seven for the fourth to sixth year students. College and university students take four lectures a day, each of which lasts 90 minutes.

Classes usually start at 8:00 am. In primary schools, the first period begins at 8:00 and the fifth ends at 12:35 pm. There are 20 minutes of stretching exercise between the third and fifth period and one and a half hour of lunch break after the fifth period. Middle schools are different from primary schools in that there are one or two additional periods in the afternoon following the lunch break. The rest of their

curriculum is similar to those for primary schools.

In the case of colleges, there is a half-hour long recitation when students arrive at school, which is then followed by an inspection before classes start at 8:30 am. There are three lectures in the morning before lunch break starts at 1:30 pm. Afternoon classes begin at 4:00 pm, and all regular lectures end by 5:30 pm. In case any class is cancelled due to support activities for rural villages or voluntary labor, an additional lecture may be given until as late as 7:00 pm.

In general, North Korean students do not receive private tutoring after school. Some high-ranking officials invite a college student or schoolteacher to their house and ask him to teach their child on an irregular basis. Yet, this is not a common practice. The nearest thing to South Korea's after-school program is small group activities, i.e., supplementary lessons students receive from their teacher after school. These often focus on particular subjects and last two to three hours every day. The most popular subjects for small group activities include mathematics, foreign language, art and physical education

For North Korean students, the most distinctive forms of extracurricular activities are voluntary labor and organizational life. As mentioned earlier, education is combined with productive activity in which every student has to participate. Labor has been required from students as part of regular education since 1959. Primary school students are required to perform 2 to 4 weeks of voluntary labor a year while middle and senior school students have to contribute 4 to 10 weeks and advanced technical college students, 10 weeks a year. College and university students are required to participate in labor for 12 to 14 weeks. The length of mobilization increases as students move to a higher institution.

All North Korean citizens are required to take part in organizational life. When a student moves to the second grade in primary school, he has to join the Pioneer Corp. When they become fifth graders, students



An initiation into the Pioneer Corp |

leave the Corp and join the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League. Instead of a red scarf, a famous symbol for the members of the Pioneer Corp, they wear the Youth League button on their left breast. Upon becoming members of the Youth League, they also join the Red Youth Guard, a military organization on campus.

Military education and training is mandatory for both male and female students. Upon entering college, students receive six months of military training in a para-military organization known as the College Training Unit. Without a certificate of completion issued by the Unit, one cannot graduate from the college. North Korean colleges are organized like military units. For instance, although there may be some differences depending on their sizes, colleges are organized like regiments, schools are like battalions, departments resemble companies, and each class is equivalent to a platoon.

(2) Student's Deviations and Punishments

Although North Korean students are under strict control by school regulations and organizational life in the Pioneer Corp and the Youth League, they, too, occasionally buck the rules and break away from their daily routine in various ways. Their deviations often take the form of missing classes, violating various school rules, breaking school dress codes, smoking and drinking, and entering dating relationships. Since the economic crisis, two new features have emerged in students' deviation: violation of regulations such as theft, drug use and dealing and emulating capitalist culture known as "liberalism" or "yellow wind," including long hair, tight pants, and shirts with foreign characters. Such violations of school regulations quickly became a serious phenomenon following the economic difficulties in the 1990s, perhaps due to disintegration of families and the general relaxation of

control across society.

The authority to punish students who have violated school regulations lies in the hand of the Youth League. Of course, a teacher can punish those students who are chatting during the class or those who have not done their homework, but the Pioneer Corp and the Youth League have the right to punish them outside the classroom. The violators are often required to attend a self-criticism session after or during school. Serious violators are sometimes forced to attend a collective session provided at the city, county, or district level.

(3) Teaching Staff

A collective name for schoolteachers and college professors in North Korea is the “teaching staff.” The General teaching staff are paid wages similar to those for upper level laborers. The college teaching staff are paid wages almost similar to those paid to army generals. Both groups of teachers are respected and treated well by students and parents, and their social status is considerable in North Korean society. Since the economic crisis broke out, however, there has been a considerable reduction in the benefits the state provides to them. At the same time, a substantial portion of responsibilities in school management as well as paying for their operation costs was transferred to the parents. Subsequently, public perception as well as treatment of teachers has deteriorated.

In the meantime, schoolteachers started to grow disenchanted with their profession because of endless work and hardship caused by the suspension of rationing. Since schoolteachers are viewed as professional revolutionaries, theirs is a profession that requires a high standard of social responsibility and morality. Accordingly, they cannot back out freely from organizational life or start a business or retire for good. As economic difficulties grew larger, they were barely able to make ends meet with their paltry wages. Subsequently, teaching has become one

of the least popular occupations.

Wives of most of the male teaching staff in urban areas engage in business to make ends meet. In rural areas, they barely manage to stay alive by growing crops in their kitchen garden. Single female teachers take a leave of absence from their work under the pretext of illness to start a business. Married female teachers, too, are staying away from work to engage in business. Subsequently, classes often cannot be taught properly. Furthermore, unbeknownst to the city or county party department of education, teachers divide themselves into several groups and take turns every seven to ten days, leaving work to engage in business to find food while the remaining teach several additional classes to fill in for the absentees. In the meantime, a few teachers are known to supplement their income through such illegal activities as tampering with academic records, helping students cheat on the college entrance exam, or secretly providing private lessons. Occasionally, these illegal activities have received attention as serious social issues. For this reason, it is known that among the graduates of teachers' training colleges, those with a good family background are assigned to the State Security Department, the National Security Agency, city and county education agencies, or county party guidance bureaus, while those with a poor family background are mostly appointed as schoolteachers.

To become a teaching staff, one must graduate from a teachers' training institute. There are two kinds of teachers' training institutes in North Korea: college of education and teachers' college. There are one or two such institutions in each province. The college of education is a four-year college training middle school teachers while the teachers' college is a three-year college training primary school and kindergarten teachers. To supply the teaching staff, these colleges provide online and evening classes, as well as offer various reeducation programs for practicing teachers. Major teachers training institutes in North Korea

include Kim Hyong-jik University of Education and Kim Jong-suk University of Education.

The teachers' key task is of course teaching students. They also provide extra lessons after school for underachieving students or those with outstanding talents. In addition to teaching classes, they have to attend a self-criticism session every Monday and subgroup discussions every Tuesday and Thursday. The rest of the week is spent on preparing teaching materials. During subgroup discussions, middle school teachers prepare and debate the contents of their classes; Teachers are often divided into nine subgroups depending on subject areas, including revolutionary history and state history and geography. Furthermore, teachers are also mobilized to various types of worksite, mobilized for labor on various seasonal occasions including constructing railroads, assisting neighborhood farms, planting trees, and redesigning the landscape. Teachers are also mobilized to school-initiated campaigns in every spring and fall.

Section 2

Literature and Art

1. Literary Art Policy

(1) Objectives

In North Korea, the term “literary art” covers all genres of art, including literature, music, fine art, and the performing arts. Based on a utilitarian view of literature and art, North Korea defines literary art as “a means to edify the working masses politically and ideologically” as well as “a means serving [us] in revolutionizing the whole of society and turning all of its members into a working class.” Accordingly, North Korea’s policy on literary art does not emphasize its artistic value, so much as its role as a means to convey the official ideology. In other words, North Korea puts greater emphasis on the functions of literature and art in promoting public relations and propaganda to preserve the regime rather than on creativity in which individual’s free will is manifested. Subsequently, while artistic values reflecting

individual creativity – values appreciated in free countries – are denied, literary art has degenerated into a mere political tool.

Through the promotion of literature and art, the authorities aim at accomplishing several goals: to motivate people to participate in socialist revolution and construction, to legitimize its supreme leader and secure people's loyalty to him, and to obtain justification for national unification under North Korea's banner.

First, since the country was liberated from the Japanese colonial rule, literature and art in North Korea have provided the justifications for the foundation of the socialist regime. At the same time, they were used as a means to facilitate people's active participation in regime foundation. In the post-liberation period, writers and artists complied with the WPK lines to produce and distribute works reflecting the success of socialist construction. Their works, for example, praised the land reform in the early days of the regime and intensively played up the "Heroes of *Chollima* Movement" later in the 1950s.

Amid economic difficulties in the 1980s, North Korean writers and artists focused on producing works that discovered and glorified those 'hidden heroes' who had been faithfully devoted to the party and the supreme leader. In the 1990s, when the socialist bloc was undergoing rapid changes with the collapse of the Soviet Union and transition of East European countries, they produced various works aimed at uniting North Korean people ideologically and advocating the justification for socialism. The major works published during this period include: *Let Us Guard Socialism*, *Mother is with a Red Flag*, and *In the Spirit of the Arduous March*.

Second, North Korea's literary art policy aims at securing justifications for its supreme leader or *suryŏng* and bolstering people's loyalty to him. By the end of the 1960s, Kim Il-song's sole ruling system had been consolidated. During this period, the former **KAPF** members

The Korea Artista Proleta Federatio (KAPF) or the Korea Proletarian Artist Federation was a left-wing literary organization organized by such writers and artists as Park Young-ryol, Ahn Suk-young, and Kim Ki-jin in the 1920s when communist theory was first introduced to Korean society. The members of KAPF were faithful to socialist realism and displayed a strong nationalist tendency at the same time.

who had been pursuing aesthetic values in their own ways were mostly purged, and only works built on a theme of Kim Il-sung's anti-imperialist, anti-Japanese struggle were considered legitimate. The works thus created were so-called five masterpieces of revolutionary opera – *The Sea of Blood*, *A True Daughter of the Party*, *The Flower Girl*, *Tell O' the Forest!*, and *The Song of Mt. Geumgang* – and five revolutionary plays – *The Shrine for a Tutelary Deity*, *Resentment at the World Conference*, *A Letter from a Daughter*, and *Three Men One Party*. The *Immortal History* series of historical novels was also published during this period.

In the early 1980s, as the succession of power to Kim Jong-il became official, North Korea started to actively promote his personality cult. A new *Immortal Leader* series of novels and other literary works known as the “embodiment of the leadership” were published during this period. The publication of works focused on justifying his rule further increased in the 1990s, as the regime struggled with continuing economic difficulties. Some of the well-known eulogies to the succession of power by Kim Jong-il published during this decade include *I am the First Generation*, *Please Accept People's Acclamation*, and *We Have Waited for This Day*. In the 2000s, complying with Kim Jong-il's instruction, North Korea has promoted “military-first revolutionary literary art,” which reflected the military-first politics advocated since his inauguration and praised the accomplishments of his military-first leadership. Kim Jong-il stated, “Literary art works ought to suit the spirit of the times and embody the breath of the age.”

In the meantime, subject and themes for literary art have begun to diversify since the late 1980s. A lyrical trend started to emerge in North Korea's poetic literature at that time. Literary art started to describe a wide variety of real life issues including conflicts between urban and rural communities, those between generations, women's

issues and love affairs.

Lastly, another objective North Korea wants to accomplish through literary art is to secure a justification for “revolutionizing South Korea.” Since the 1980s, North Korea’s literary art works have criticized the reality in South Korea and advocated anti-capitalist ideology in earnest. In fact, the trend began with Kim Il-sung’s criticism that “literary art works have not given much attention to people’s lives and struggles in the southern half of the Korean peninsula.” “Our literary art works... should assist the struggle of the entire Korean people to accomplish a revolution in South Korea and reunify the fatherland,” he argued. Since then, North Korean literary art works have concentrated entirely on addressing the corruption in the South Korean society and maladies of American and Japanese imperialism, particularly those of US forces in South Korea.

As described above, the top objective of North Korea’s literary art policy lies in agitprop. Aiming at “establishing public, revolutionary and socialist national culture,” North Korea pursues the development of revolutionary literature and art that contributes to the socialist revolution centered around its leader.

(2) Literary Theory

Having succeeded the KAPF-line literature, North Korea placed emphasis on creative techniques based on socialist realism. According to North Korea’s *Grand Korean Dictionary*, socialist realism is “a creative technique of revolutionary literature and art that embodies principle socialist contents in national conventions.” Rather than pure art, socialist realism aims at reflecting the realities of society through a close linkage with the real world. In other words, its creative forms are firmly based on realism while its contents emphasize the importance of such socialist tendencies as party loyalty, class consciousness and the spirit of people.

North Korea's literary policy is directly related to three important theories: the theory of *juče* literature and art, the 'seed theory' and theory of mass art. In addition, it is also influenced by the theories of speed battle, exemplarization, eternal life and popularization. As a theory based on Kim Il-sung's *juče* ideology, the *juče* literature and art finds the view of socialist realism, basic ideology, creative techniques and all other basic principles of all literary art in the *juče* ideology. Because the essence of monolithic ideology lies in justifying the single ruling system of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un, the basic principles and techniques of literary art based on such a ground should create exemplars based on unquestioned loyalty to the leaders.

All literary works must satisfy three elements: party loyalty, class consciousness and the spirit of people. This implies that all literary and art works must struggle for the implementation of *juče* ideology on the basis of Kim Il-sung's revolutionary philosophy, reflect the working class' interests from a perspective of revolutionary struggle, and be equipped with revolutionary thought to suit the popular masses' sensibilities. Recently, however, mass appeal has become another necessary condition in the consideration of public response as well as popularity among people.

The other key element in North Korea's literary policy is the 'seed theory,' a kind of creed of conduct requiring artists to make their creative works on the basis of the theory of *juče*. According to the *North Korean Literature and Art Dictionary*, it is a "new concept of literary theory ingeniously discovered by the Workers' Party during a process of practicing Kim Il-sung's self-reliant (*juče*) literary philosophy in creative works." The dictionary also stipulates that "the seed, which forms the core of any literary and art work, is a fundamental element that determines the value of the work and the authors and artists must hold the seed straight in order to convey clearly of his thoughts and

aesthetic intention and assure the philosophical value of their work.”

The dictionary defines that the seed is the foundation and core of the work that unites its subject matters, theme and idea into one in a close correlation. It prescribes that the most important factors in selecting a seed are “the *suryōng*’s teachings and demand by the Workers’ Party policies, which are embodiment of his teachings.” In addition, “the core of a seed lies in complying with the *suryōng*’s teachings and the demand of the party’s policy, which is an embodiment of his teachings.” Accordingly, North Korean literary and art works based on such an idea are a significant means to realize the leader’s teachings as well as the party’s policies.

The theory of mass art emphasizes that the principal agents of creative activities are people or groups and encourages public participation in them. Kim Il-sung said, “The process of constructing communist literature and art is a process of raising the level of working people to that of professional writers and artists, and upgrading mass literature and art to professional levels.” “We should raise our guard against the tendency to promote literary activities focusing on professional writers and artists, while smashing mysticism and encouraging the widespread advancement of literary art among the public,” he insisted.

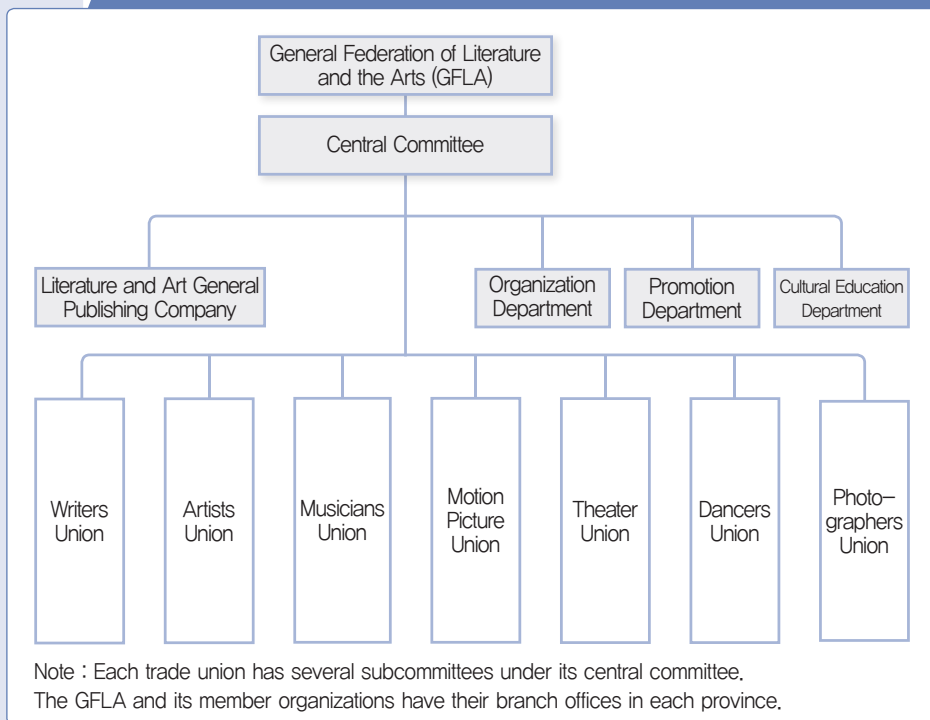
(3) System for Creative Works

To match its collective society, North Korea promotes group efforts even in the creation of literary art works. Collective creation has been promoted under a “trinity” system; the idea was introduced by Kim Il-sung and its implementation initiated by Kim Jong-il. This refers to a system under which the Workers’ Party, administrative agency and writers and artists or their organization jointly participate in the creative process.

The party oversees the contents of the work and artists’ activities

while administrative agencies such as the Ministry of Culture play the role of creating a favorable environment for creative activities, in which writers and artists as the members of the General Federation of Literature and the Arts (GFLA) create works. In other words, instead of creating their works voluntarily and independently, the writers and artists create them as members of the GFLA. They are thus subordinate to the political agencies and have to comply with party instructions issued to them through the Ministry of Culture and unions affiliated to the GFLA. The party is involved in the entire process of creative activity, ranging from the conception of an artistic work to the selection of subjects and themes, from the determination of duration and amount of work to the evaluation of it.

Figure 6-3 Organization of the General Federation of Literature and the Arts (GFLA)



The GFLA is an organization representing collective creation. All North Korean writers and artists must join the union in order to be treated as ones. As shown in Figure 6-3, under the GFLA are a number of member organizations representing different groups of writers and

artists, including the writers' union, artists' union, and musicians' union.

In North Korea, art teams are established at every factory, enterprise and cooperative group and working people's artistic activities are promoted through them. Art teams are peoples' groups independent of the GFLA, but their members can publish their works in the unions' publications. Some team members are selected as associate members by various unions. After a probation period of a certain length, they become full members and start their career as professional writers or artists. Others may enter prize contests and start their career in art by winning prizes. About 40 percent of full-time North Korean writers were literary correspondents who used to be ordinary workers before they won prizes in literary contests and became professional writers.

2. Current Conditions in Each Area

(1) Literature

In North Korea, literature is considered as the basis for all other genres of art. This is because literature creates stories, which form the basis for all other genres. North Korea explains that literature “instills revolutionary optimism and collectivist heroism in the minds of people, arms the party members and workers with monolithic ideology in line with each stage of revolutionary development, and contributes to revolutionizing the entire society and transforming all of its members into a working class.” Subsequently, literature is not a product of creativity originated from individuals' free will, but merely a means to sustain the North Korean system and defend its regime. Instead of its artistic value, the literary value of works is evaluated based on how much it contributes to the attainment of these two objectives.

Since the early 1970s when the theory of *juche* literary art emerged,

many works said to have been originally performed as plays during the period when anti-Japanese resistance were adopted into full-length novels. These included *The Sea of Blood*, *The Flower Girl* and *The Fate of a Self-Defense Corps Man*.

In the late 1970s, North Korean writers focused on depicting new types of desirable human character in various fields such as flag bearers of the three-revolution movement, members of three-revolution teams and other unsung heroes. This implied that with the emergence of improving productivity as a key issue, the old dichotomy of categorizing people into good and evil was replaced by the idealization of “Labor Hero” as an exemplary and positive man.

The subjects and themes in North Korean literature have changed since the 1980s. Up to then, at the dictation of the “Party Central Committee (or Kim Jong-il),” North Korean literary works had mostly been devoted to promoting unilateral allegiance to the leader using Kim Il-sung’s family tree as their main subject and theme. However, changes started to appear in the works published in the late 1980s. The main theme was still loyalty to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il as well as to the Workers’ Party, but the story was built around such new plots as love affairs. Nam Dae-hyon’s *Ode to Youth* (1987) would be the most famous work from this period.

In the late 1990s, four new literary concepts appeared in North Korean literature: cherishment, *Tangun*, the Race of the Sun and military-first revolution. Memorial literature commemorated Kim Il-sung’s death. An example would be Kim Man-yong’s epic poem *The Great Leader is Always With Us*. *Tangun* literature emerged in the 1990s during the process of excavating and reconstructing King *Tangun*’s tomb and aimed at reinforcing North Korean people’s superiority and national legitimacy.

The “Race of the Sun” literature was a literary concept introduced in 1995 when Kim Jong-il was described as the “Sun of *Juche*.” It is a

concept that embody the so-called greatness of the “Three Generals of Baekdu Mountain” - Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-suk - in an ideological and artistic realm, aimed at reflecting Kim Jong-il’s achievement in facilitating the military-first revolution in literary works. Accordingly, literary works following this trend played up comradeship, or argued, in order to legitimize the military-first policy, that the military must lead the construction of a strong and prosperous nation. In addition to the novels *The Hot Blast of Ranam* and *The Song of Korea* contained in the series *Immortal Leader*, an epic poem *Even If One Hundred Years Are Passed or One Thousand Years Are Passed* and a lyric poem *I Talk to the Juche Idea Tower* are the most well-known works from this area. Two exemplary models of military-first literature embodying the greatness of the three Generals of Baekdu Mountain were published in 2009 as part of the *Immortal History* series, namely the novels *The Age of Prosperity and Daebak Mountain Ridge*. More recently, easy readings written on a theme of not only individual daily life and humor but also sexual love have also appeared. Good examples of stories written on North Korean daily life are Kim Sung-uk’s *My Chic Style* and *At the Edge of Kindergarten Ground*. Various works of humor are found in the humor section of periodicals such as *Chosun Art*. In the meantime, Hong Sok-jung’s *Hwangjini* contains explicit descriptions of sexual love.

(2) Music

In North Korea, music serves a strong functional role as a means of cultural education, and propaganda and agitation to enhance people’s class consciousness and communist revolutionary spirit. Accordingly, North Korean music consists mostly of epic opera, vocal music, realist music, folk music and simple part music.

Unlike Western countries, North Korea does not distinguish between popular and serious music. Half of the songbooks published in North Korea present songs with melodies resembling those of Russian and

Chinese folk songs. Many North Korean songs focus on lyrics and melody rather than chord and rhythm. Their chords are so simple and constant that they are easy for the general public to learn. North Koreans often use a nasal voice in their unique singing style.

There are several types of pop songs in North Korea: songs for advocating party policies, lyrical songs, revolutionary songs and Korean folk songs. Hymns praising Kim Il-sung and his son make up a large part of North Korean songs. For instance, 52 out of 76 (or 68 percent) of the songs included in the *Choson Literature and Art Almanac 1998*, most of which were composed by major music groups such as the Pochonbo Electronic Ensemble, the Wangjaesan Light Music Band, the KPA Concert Troupe and the Mansudae Art Troupe, are pieces praising Kim Il-sung and his son. In addition, these groups play their music with modern Western instruments, as well as instruments modified from traditional Korean ones, thus displaying a strong tendency to combine traditional and Western music.

While apolitical songs have recently been on the increase, many of those meeting the demand of the military-first policy have also been introduced. In particular, pieces have been composed that emphasize nationalism while unearthing traditional folk melodies. The songs introduced in 2003, including *The Hwanghaesan Song*, *The Bird's Song* and *The Sluggard's Song*, fall under this category. Since the Arduous March of the mid-1990s, the North Korean Musicians Union has started to discover and compile such songs. In 2000, it published a *Book of Songs from the Enlightenment Period*, which contained over 190 pieces of songs. North Korea claimed, "Songs are an echo of an age. The songs from the Enlightenment Period give people a great inspiration." Arguing that "the sufferings Korean people had been through during that period played a certain role in their emotional life," North Korea wrote new arrangements of songs that were popular during the Japanese colonial period and distributed them to the public.

These included *Spring of My Hometown*, *Half Moon*, and *Duman (or Tumen) River Drenched with Tears*.

As emphasis was placed on the concepts of military-first politics and a strong and prosperous nation, relevant musical pieces were created. Two of the most famous songs composed during this period were a folk song-style *Powerful and Revival Arirang* and *The Path of Songun (Military-first) Long March*, which depicted the process from the death of Kim Il-sung, through the Arduous March to the realization of military-first politics. In addition, when tension with the United States intensified over North Korea's nuclear program, songs with patriotic themes became popular among the people. Good examples of such wartime songs are *Blue Sky of My Country* and *The Day of a Decisive War*.

Songs popular among North Koreans in their twenties these days are known to be *I Knew*, *Blue Sky of My Country*, and *I Sing My Fatherland that Serves Dear suryŏng*. *I Knew* is the theme song of the war movie *Wolmi Island* and the theme of *Blue Sky of My Country* is the military-first policy while *I Sing My Fatherland that Serves Dear suryŏng* is often heard at major commemorative events.

(3) Dance

North Korea has long regarded dancing as a mere part of operetta. Accordingly, compared to other fields of arts, dancing has a weak independent identity and is inserted in small parts of musical programs accompanied only by music or gags. Subsequently, children's dances make up the bulk of dancing in North Korea.

Traditional dance moves form the basis of North Korean dancing. In its form however, North Korean dancing shows off strength, scale, and organization rather than physical and rhythmical beauty or poetic messages. Dancers often use guns or workers' tools to aid their



North Korean children practicing for the Arirang Festival

performance. North Korean dancing thus has a strong tendency to emphasize militant and sensational moves.

Since the end of the 1970s, North Korea has focused on creating and discovering traditional folk dances such as *Clinking Dance* and *Sword Dance*. It has also started to emphasize the importance of moves, tunes, and steps. Nonetheless, four masterpiece dances North Koreans are proud of are all modern ones known as revolutionary dances. They include *It's Snowing*, *Azalea of the Fatherland*, *Winnowing Basket Dance*, and *Good Harvest for Apples*.

In addition, North Korea has transformed so-called mass games into a form of artistic performance. During a national holiday or welcoming ceremony for a state guest, North Korea mobilizes tens of thousands of people to perform for them as an extravagant form of collective art. The most grandiose of them all is the grand mass-gymnastics and artistic performance *Arirang* which was performed seven times from 2002 to 2011. *Arirang* was first designed to rally people around the regime on the occasion of Kim Il-sung's 90th birthday in 2002. It was presented in the Rungrado May Day Stadium from April 14 to August 15. This mass performance features music and dance and various other artistic elements, including mass games, card stunts, gymnastics, and circus performed by up to ten thousand participants, and allegedly consists of an opening act, four main acts with ten scenes and a final act. In particular, the *Arirang* presented in August 2010 was made up of seven acts and fourteen scenes, including a new fifth act titled "Friendship *Arirang*" commemorating the Korean War and the 60th anniversary of the Chinese volunteer army's participation in it. In 2011, one act and five scenes were further added, expanding it to a total of 8 acts 19 scenes. The new additions focused on justifying the hereditary succession of power over three generations by displaying a three-dimensional image of Mt. Baekdu and such images as fruit trees and carps to boast of advances in the people's economic sector.

The *Arirang* performance is used as a means to tout the superiority of North Korean system and simultaneously pursue practical economic profits by including foreigners as well as locals in the audience. In particular, mass performances are promoted as a way of mobilizing the public to enhance Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's personality cult. However, it has also been criticized as a form of human rights abuse, because young students are forced to participate and endure months of harsh training to prepare for it.

(4) Art

In North Korea, traditional art is repudiated while art that praise the anti-Japanese revolution allegedly led by Kim Il-sung is recognized as true art. North Korea argues that traditional art reflects only the ideas and tastes of the exploiting class, and thus does not resolve the problem of class struggle in an artistic way. Meanwhile, it claims that anti-Japanese revolutionary art is a genuine form of people's art since it realizes the principles of party loyalty, class consciousness, and people's nature. Kim Il-sung argued, "Art must be true people's art, agreeable to people's lives, feelings, and sentiments. It should also become revolutionary art serving the interests of the party and the revolution."

For this reason, there are many works of art in North Korea that have gained the title of "monumental work." These works depict laborers working with hammers in their hands or farmers beaming with smiles while holding ears of rice. One can hardly find an abstract painting or free-form of sculpture in the Northern half of the peninsula because North Koreans believe that "Abstraction is death."

Furthermore, art in North Korea is categorized into painting, sculpture, and crafts according to materials and techniques used. North Korean painting includes Korean painting (*chosonhwa*), oil painting, murals, and illustrations for books. Korean painting carries on the legacy of traditional art while combining it with Western-style

coloring and techniques.

Sculptural processes include carving, relief, and bratticing. North Korea advertises that people sculptures that adorn the graves for patriotic and revolutionary martyrs are masterpieces of realism vividly reflecting the martyrs' rage, anguish and fighting spirit. There are various forms of crafts made of metal, wood, and mother-of-pearl. North Korea is also proud of its unique form of craft known as "paintings that last for ten thousand years (*mannyeonhwa*)."

This is a kind of shellwork that decorates everyday objects with a mosaic of seashells. It has often been used in producing sculptures related to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. *The 216 Peaks of Heaven Lake (Chonji) in Baekdu Mountain*, an artistic work resembling a gigantic folding screen, was produced by the Mansudae Art Studio in 2004 to play up Kim Jong-il's alleged greatness.

(5) Cinema, Plays, and TV Series

North Korea treats cinema as the most important artistic genre. It ascribes such importance to cinema that a *Cinema Almanac* was published separately from the *North Korea (Choson) Central Almanac*. In February 2009, the supreme People's Assembly passed an ordinance to establish a National Cinema Committee for a more effective and systematic management of movie-related businesses. Lying behind these measures was the view that as a genre of total art that combines music, fine art, and theater, cinema has a strong appeal to the public and far-reaching power. It was also affected considerably by Kim Jong-il's personal interest in cinema. Kim Jong-il once argued: "Cinema is a strong tool in educating political thoughts and a powerful weapon in enhancing cultural education. We should provide ideological as well as cultural education to the workers through cinema."

According to Kim Jong-il's work *On the Art of Cinema* (1973), which all North Korean movie producers follow as basic guidelines of film

making, “Based on the *juche* ideology, films must emphasize an in-depth description of general masses’ typical daily life. The directors must focus on stimulating people’s emotions rather than on the logical connection of the events, and lay emphasis on collective creation based on unity and cooperation among a large number of people.” Accordingly, actors are required to play out the role of working-class artists reproducing communist ideas, emotions, and life experiences on the screen with their aesthetic and creative talents instead of being mere performers.

Most North Korean films have a similar plot that presents a struggle between the protagonist and antagonist, with the final victory always going to the former. Villains are often American soldiers, Japanese imperialists, anti-party elements, landlords, and capitalists. Complying with Kim Jong-il’s emphasis on “influence by positive example,” recent films also introduce stories where characters rectify their mistakes under the influence of the positive protagonist

North Korea has concentrated on producing blockbuster films since the *Chollima* Movement in the 1960s. Some of the films were made in a series of up to 20 parts. However, when these series did not attract attention in international film festivals, North Korea in 1984 began reducing the scale of the films and reinforcing lyricism and realism. For instance, *The Assurance*, produced in 1987, broke the existing mold of North Korean films by depicting widespread corruption and authoritarianism among party and government officials as well as discrimination based on family background. One may say that it was such efforts to make changes that helped *Sogum* (*Salt*), directed by Shin Sang-ok, win a prize at the 14th Moscow International Film Festival in 1985.

When the socialist bloc disintegrated in the early 1990s, North Korea emphasized the importance of maintaining independence and the decadence of capitalist society. At the same time, it began shooting

the *Nation and Destiny* series of so-called art films in 1992 in order to vaunt Kim Jong-il's benevolent and all-embracing politics. North Korea initially planned to produce the series in ten parts, but later increased it to 50 parts at Kim Jong-il's order, and eventually to 100 parts in 2002. By 2006, North Korea had already produced as many as 70 parts of the series.

Recent North Korean films often reflect military-first politics, complying with guidelines proposed in *On Literature and Art of Military-First Revolution*. Most of them are military-themed movies. The most typical one produced in 2003 was *Genuine Life Goes On*, which depicted the son of a North Korean soldier killed during the seizure of the US Navy spy ship USS Pueblo in 1968 and people around him growing up socially. Other representative films of 2003 included *They were Dispatched Soldiers* and *Memoirs of a Female Soldier*.

In 2004 and 2005, films were produced which depicted exemplary soldiers who embody revolutionary military spirit in accordance with the military-first policy. The most well-known films in this period were *He was a Senior Colonel* and *Young Brigade Commander*. In 2006, films like *School Girl's Diary* were produced as a means of reinforcing ideological education. They dealt with the relaxation of ideological firmness due to the influx of capitalist elements that had followed the economic crisis.

In 2009, North Korea produced a series of documentary films on Kim Jong-il's life story as a form of tribute to his achievements in promoting a military-first revolution. *The Military-First Sun Shining over the World* is a series consisting of three parts: *Bringing Honor to Korea* (Part I), *Bringing Honor to the Revolutionary Tradition* (Part II), and *Realizing Juche Ideology in the Entire Society* (Part III). The production of documentary films about Kim Jong-il's life, along with such works as *Bringing Honor to Thousands of Years of History*, Part 21 of *The Great History* series, which eulogizes the so-called Generals of Baekdu

Mountain – Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-suk – is closely related to the ongoing process of legitimizing the hereditary succession over three generations. These films emphasize unswerving loyalty to the leader “through successive generations.”

Among various films shown in North Korea to date, ones that were popular among the public included *Sogum (Salt)*, *Love, Love, My Love*, *The Emissary Who Did Not Return* and four other pieces produced by the abducted South Korean film director Shin Sang-ok and his ex-wife Choi Eun-hee. Other popular films were based on the scenarios written by Lee Hun-gu. They include *Nunseok of Spring Day*, *Traces of Life*, and *Ask Yourself*. Their popularity seems to be based on the fact that they are realistic and display a liberal coloring with less of an explicitly political and ideological message.

In North Korea, plays remain obscure, because a greater emphasis is placed on operas. North Korean plays resemble a kind of operetta with dance and songs. Starting in the 1980s, North Korea has focused on staging such canonical works as *The Shrine for a Tutelary Deity*, *Resentment at the World Conference*, *A Letter from a Daughter*, and *Three Men One Party*. All these are so-called “revolutionary plays” with Kim Il-sung’s anti-Japanese guerilla period as a backdrop.

Since June 1978, following Kim Jong-il’s instruction to add music and dance to the play *The Shrine for a Tutelary Deity* and re-create it to fit a larger stage, North Korea has developed revolutionary plays in such a style. *Chosik* and *Mother and Son*, for example, combined a majestic and glamorous stage with music and dance and, at the same time, deepened the theme and philosophy of the work based on the fundamental principles of the *juche* ideology.

Nonetheless, the most popular form of theater among North Korean people these days is light comedy, such as one-act plays. Comedies are designed to counter the depressed social mood and bring laughter to the people, and for this reason, they are actively performed. The most

typical of all is *We*, a comic play produced by the April 25 Film Studio of the Korean People's Army to inspire a collectivist spirit in the public.

Recently, TV soap operas have become more popular than films in North Korea. North Korean TV dramas are comprised of TV novels, novel series, play series, and one-act plays. In the meantime, TV movies are films produced especially for TV view. Compared to general art films, they have fewer characters and a shorter running time. In many cases, they are made in a series.

The main theme of North Korean TV drama is the depiction of how the leader, his family and their fellow veterans of the anti-Japanese struggle carry out the socialist revolution. Recently, however, a new type of soap opera is being produced in which the theme is combined with episodes from daily life such as a marital discord or generational conflict. *Don't Wake Up Mother* (2002), a three-part soap opera dealing with a working couple's conflicts, and *The Family* (2001), a nine-part soap opera dealing with marital conflict and divorce, are works displaying a distinctively different trend from conventional TV dramas. Such production of TV series dealing with North Korean daily life has continued and the number of TV dramas is constantly on the increase. Two good examples of such works are the two-part series *Our Warm Home* (2004) and eight-part series *The Class Continues* (2006).

7

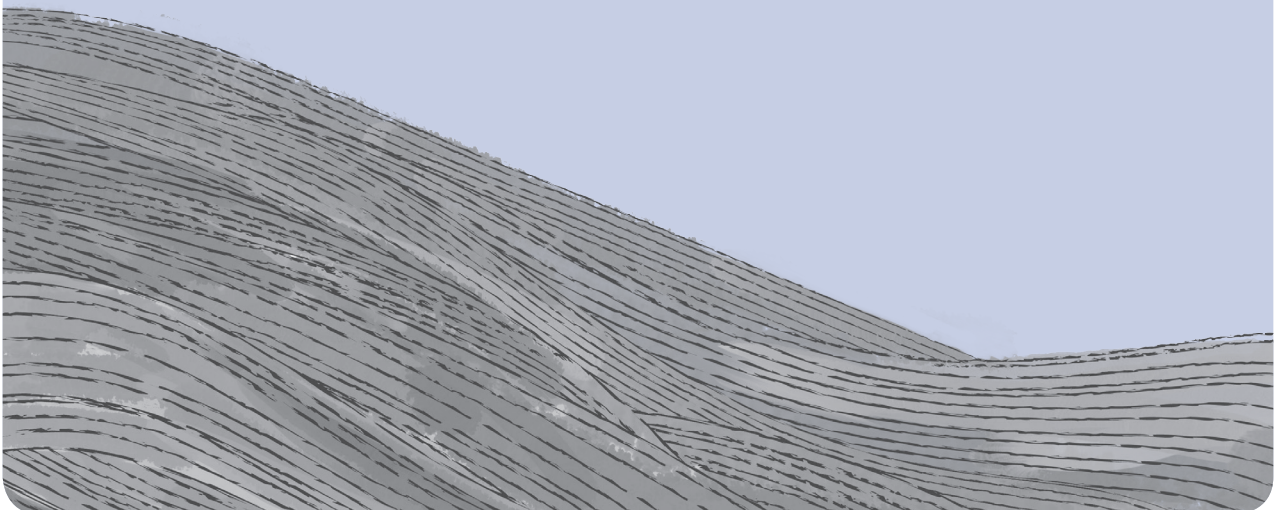
Social Structure and Life

Section 1. Human Rights in North Korea

Section 2. Class Structure

Section 3. Value System and Everyday Life

Section 4. Deviations and Social Control



Key Point

01

As far as human rights are concerned, North Korea is an underdeveloped country where not only civic and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights are systematically violated. North Korea denies the universal value of human rights and has refused to heed the international community's call to improve conditions, arguing that human rights are already guaranteed for all its citizens.

02

North Korea's social structure is based on three classes - core, wavering, and hostile - and 51 categories. One's social category is determined based on family background and loyalty to the WPK. It is a closed, inequitable system where there is practically no mobility between the categories. Gender inequality is also institutionalized, so that women are seriously discriminated against, both inside and outside the home.

03

North Koreans are forced to uphold the values of egalitarianism, collectivism, uniformity, and *suryŏng*-centrism. In actual life, however, they display a double-sided approach by pursuing the values that coincide with their own interest. North Koreans' lives and routines can be described as extremely uniform. In principle, at least, they rely on the central distribution system for food, clothing, and shelter.

04

As North Korea's social order has relaxed over the last decade, social deviation and crime increased in frequency and diversified into many forms. The authorities have made attempts to encourage voluntary conformity by means of group studies and organizational activities, while the military and other interventions have been applied to strengthen social control.

Section 1

Human Rights in North Korea

Human rights today are recognized as universal rights for all humankind. As prescribed in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” each and every individual is entitled to inalienable human rights without unwarranted interference or discrimination from the state. This includes civic and political rights of life, liberty, freedom of expression, and equality before the law, in addition to economic, social, and cultural rights that ensure rights to participate in cultural activities, receive respect and dignity, to work, and to receive education.

North Korea is considered an underdeveloped nation in rights terms, given that it neglects to meet minimum human rights standards required from UN members. As a *suryŏng*-centered one-party system, the North suppresses people from political participation, and its collectivism and planned economy deny individual rights to autonomy and choice. Moreover, it undertakes discriminatory policies against

various groups of people in accordance with an artificial social caste (or *songbun*) system. In short, it is no overstatement to say that North Korea's totalitarian society, in which social diversity is denied, violates an extensive array of human rights.

1. Violation of Civic and Political Rights

Civil and political rights consist of diverse entitlements, such as rights to life, freedom of movement, freedom of press and publication, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of thought and religion, and the prohibition of torture. Based on the human rights standards prescribed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), North Korea infringes on human rights in almost all areas. Violations receiving particular international attention include: public executions, the operation of gulags for political prisoners, restrictions on freedom of movement, on freedom of press, publication and assembly, religious oppression, discriminatory *songbun* policies, demanding the forced repatriations of refugees, etc.

North Korea's right to life is violated through public executions, illegal executions of repatriated refugees, unlawful detention and arrest, torture and human rights abuse in prison, kidnapping and disappearances, and unfair trial. Meanwhile, infringements of equality rights that draw global concern include discrimination against the so-called hostile class and against religious people and families of defectors to South Korea, in addition to gender inequality and sequestration of the handicapped. In the case of freedom infringement, the international points at issue are restrictions on freedom of residence, movement, and information and communications technology, on top of limited freedom of press, publication, assembly and association. As for violations of political rights in North Korea, limitations on political activities and problems in voting methods are cited as concerns.

(1) Public Execution

The act most typical of the regime's disregard for the sanctity of life is public execution. Although such executions took place even in times of social stability, their frequency has increased since the food shortage worsened in the 1990s. In 1995, for instance, seven actors and film executives were executed in front of 300,000 onlookers in the Hyongjesan District of Pyongyang under charges of making pornography. In Shinuiju in 1997, a citizen who had stolen electric and telephone wires made of copper were publicly executed. The WPK secretary for agricultural affairs Seo Kwan-hee was also publically executed in the same year.³³

Public executions continued into the 2000s.³⁴ They were carried out on those who committed such trivial crimes as selling to the Chinese 'slogan bearing trees' of revolutionary significance, selling pornographic video recordings, slaughtering a cow for food, and stealing corn from a labor training camp. Drug smugglers and dealers, embezzlers of state exports, and timber smugglers have also been executed in public. This shows that public executions in North Korea have been carried out for a wide range of reasons.

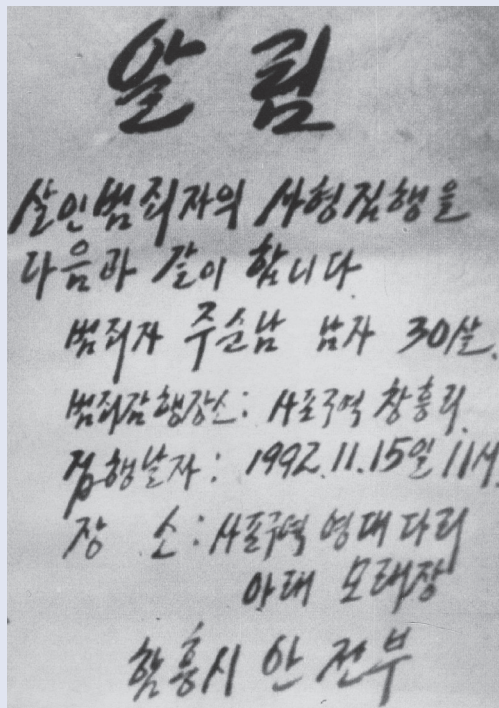
In general, they take place in front of large crowds. Schools, enterprises, farms and other institutions are notified in advance of when the execution will take place. Once people are assembled, the convicted are identified and their crimes disclosed, whereupon a summary public trial takes place. Once a verdict is reached, the death sentence is immediately carried out.

Public execution is not only inhumane, but also a clear violation of North Korea's own laws.³⁵ First, North Korean criminal law clearly stipulates the crimes that are subject to death penalty. The authorities, however, conduct public executions even for general crimes, thereby infringing on the right to life. Second, public execution in North Korea violates the code of criminal procedure. According to the code, the

³³ Kim Byong-ro, *North Korean Human Rights and International Cooperation* (Seoul: KINU, 1997), pp.57-58

³⁴ KINU, *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2011* (Seoul: KINU, 2011), pp.62-85

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.63



A notice of public execution |

death penalty must be carried out by the execution agency with a public prosecutor present, subsequent to receiving certified copies of the written order of supervision and ruling. The execution must also be approved by the Supreme People's Assembly. Nonetheless, such procedures are often ignored.

(2) Prison Camps

Prison camps, or so-called 'management centers,' are typical examples of human rights infringement in North Korea. Starting in 1956, the North accused political prisoners of being anti-revolutionaries and either imprisoned or executed them, or banished them to remote mountainous regions. Since April 1966, however, North Korean authorities started confining political prisoners in concentration camps

located in certain regions. Especially beginning in 1973, when the Three Revolutionary Teams Movement was launched to establish Kim Jong-il's hereditary succession, and up until the official introduction of the heir at the sixth Party Congress in 1980, all critics and political rivals of this new leadership were ferreted out and sent to prison camps with their families.

North Korea is known to have confined around 154,000 political prisoners in six gulags nationwide (Kaechon and Bukchang in South Pyongan province, Yodok in South Hamgyong province, Hwasong, Hoeryong, and Chongjin in North Hamgyong province.)³⁶ Most prisoners in these camps are accused of having conspired against the state, violated the monolithic ideological system, or attempted to escape from North Korea. Some of the imprisoned also include abductees from South Korea, anti-revolutionaries, members of discredited factions, non-conformists, and offenders against some WPK policy or another.

³⁶_ibid., p.118

Once prisoners arrive at the special detention district, they are deprived of identification cards, stripped of all basic rights, banned from meeting or exchanging letters with family or relatives, and forced to work more than twelve hours a day, only to end the day of labor with over an hour of self-criticism and mind-reforming classes.

The daily routine in these camps varies slightly from district to district. But in general, prisoners awake at 4:00 am and arrive at the workplace by 6:00 am, after finishing up breakfast or seeing to other personal needs. The morning session for work is from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm, and afternoon labor lasts until 9:00 pm. Most work in these prison camps is hard labor such as mining coal and other minerals, logging, and cultivating lands. More importantly, camp life is strictly based on self-sufficiency. Because prisoners are not supplied with food, most suffer from malnourishment and various types of unknown illnesses, and a main source of nourishment is understood to be wild snakes, frogs, rats and birds native to the area.

Also within these prison camps are maximum security areas, where those who violated camp rules, stole from others, engaged in sexual activities, and disobeyed superintendents are detained.³⁷ Escape from this section is almost impossible due to its tightly guarded security. Concentrated in mining areas or mountainous regions near the border with China, they are surrounded by barbed-wire fence 3 to 4 meters high. Mines and various other traps are placed at camp outskirts. Patrol guards with their dogs are also on watch around the clock. Prisoners placed in these camps are detained indefinitely unless granted amnesty.

(3) Violation of Civic and Political Rights

North Korean regime is a *suryōng*-oriented totalitarian society where freedom for individuals is hard to come by. Civic and political freedom is restricted so widely that it is difficult to specify any

³⁷ Kang Chol-hwan, *The Song of Labor Camp* Vol. 1 (The Korean translation of *The Aquariums of Pyongyang*) (Seoul: Sidaejeongsin, 2003), pp.176–189

particular infringement. For instance, although freedom of residence and movement is stipulated in North Korean laws, a lot of restrictions are imposed in practice. Limited cases including changes in jobs are permitted, but since job assignments are decided by the authorities, the scope of this freedom is effectively determined by the regime. In principle, individuals are able to travel freely within a city, district or county. However, to travel beyond set boundaries they need permission from local authorities, ranging from the head of people's neighborhood unit to the head of the people's committee. In particular, to visit border provinces such as North Pyongan, Chagang, Yanggang, and North Hamgyong, North Koreans must have an approval number issued, which is especially hard to get.

North Korea argues that it guarantees religious freedom by law, but in practice this has not been the case. Following Karl Marx's view on religion, North Korea has suppressed religious activities, defining religion as "opium" or regarding it at best as superstition without scientific evidence. Subsequently, all religious facilities and religious people have disappeared in North Korea. Although a few religious facilities including the Bongsu Church and the Changchung Catholic Cathedral remain since the 1980s, they are propaganda facilities maintained to counter international pressure rather than to guarantee the freedom of worship.

Political suffrage is the right to express one's opinion or hold a public office. This entails the freedom to vote for candidates of one's own choice. North Korea claims that, by law, it promotes secret voting based on the principle of general, equal, and direct suffrage. In reality, however, North Korean voters are only allowed to say yes or no to sole candidates nominated by the WPK. Consequently, 100 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in elections, all of whom say yes to the sole candidates.

The freedom of press in North Korea is practically non-existent. The

regime exhaustively regulates the press and media to prohibit any expressions of political views that differ from the authorities. It also controls all means of communication to prevent the inflow of information from outside. When North Koreans obtain radios, TVs, or tape recorders, they are obliged to report them to the authorities within a week and have them 'sealed.' Every radio in North Korea has its frequency fixed on the central broadcasting station. If the seal is found broken, one is deemed to have illegally listened to foreign broadcasting and punished as a political offender.

2. Violation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Economic, social and cultural rights include: the right to survival or to receive basic clothing, food and housing; the right to social security, work, rest, and possession; the right to enjoy a healthy environment, the right to choose a job; and the right to education. In light of the human right standards stipulated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the situation in North Korea is one of the worst in the world.

(1) Violation of the Right to Life

Due to chronic food shortages, North Koreans' basic health and survival are at risk. The food crisis first began in the 1980s, but became known worldwide only in 1995 when the regime openly pleaded to the international community for food aid. It is reported that North Korea's food production increased to a certain extent in the 2000s, but food shortages still continue.



| An SPA election poster

Though it varies year to year, North Korea's food production has remained at around 4 million tons a year. Its annual consumption is estimated to range between 4.6 million and 5.4 million tons. Accordingly, the country has suffered from 600,000 to 1.4 million tons of shortage every year. Nevertheless, North Korea has been reluctant to resolve the food shortage while concentrating its disposable resources on military ends such as developing nuclear materials and missiles.

In North Korea, available food is first distributed to high-ranking party officials, along with members of the National Security Planning Agency, and the military and defense industry. Subsequently, vulnerable members of society suffer from chronic malnutrition or starvation. As witnessed by the 600,000 to 1.1 million people who died from starvation in the late 1990s, North Koreans' right to life is under serious threat.³⁸

In 2002, the July 1 measures were introduced, and the public distribution system was virtually abolished. People subsequently needed to purchase foodstuffs at state-run shops. This measure resulted in a rise in living costs; food prices in markets increased 40 to 50 times. Such circumstances made it practically impossible for North Koreans to make ends meet with average household incomes. A currency reform conducted at the end of November 2009 also deprived North Koreans of the opportunity to accumulate wealth through market activities. High inflation caused by this measure made living conditions more miserable.

Despite these troubles facing North Korea, aid from the United States and the international community has been suspended due to the lack of transparency in the North's distribution system. In response, North Korea has to allow a level of monitoring that meets international standards and make efforts to resolve its food shortage. It is also imperative for the North to take the initiative in assuring the right to life for vulnerable groups in society, including infants, the weak and

³⁸ Lee Suk, *The DPRK Famine of 1994–2002: Outbreak, Shock, and Features* (Seoul: KINU, 2004)

elderly, and pregnant women.

(2) Violation of the Right to Choose Jobs

Although the North Korean constitution affords individuals the right to choose jobs according to their wishes and talents, the reality is different. Jobs are instead assigned based on the WPK's plans for the labor supply. When assigning jobs, the party conducts a review of one's family background and loyalty to the party, rather than considering individual aptitude or ability. Meanwhile, those with parents working in the party, government or military are assigned preferred jobs regardless of their ability. Those with 'bad' family backgrounds are unlikely to get into college and are often assigned to jobs requiring physical labor.

The so-called "group assignment" is clear evidence that there is no freedom to choose occupation in North Korea. This refers to the party-ordered practice of assigning a group of people to workplaces such as factories, mines and various construction sites where an additional supply of labor is needed. This is done without regard to the individual's desire, aptitude or ability. Of course, children of high-ranking officials are given an opportunity to graduate from college as well as the privilege to express their wishes before being given such an assignment.

Those citizens who do not report to work or miss work without notice are punished by forced labor. A day of absence from work or three days of tardiness is punished by a reduction of one day's portion of food rationing. However, this penalty has become meaningless since the suspension of food rationing. Those who do not go to work due to their personal business or agricultural activities are also punished by forced labor. Of course, those who cannot report to work because of starvation are left unpunished. Also, the rich are known to bribe their way out of trouble.

(3) Violation of Other Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

As a way of preserving the system, North Korea has maintained tight control over its people's minds. The regime advocates the *juche* ideology while prohibiting all other political views. The WPK also has complete control over literary, art and other cultural activities. The party exercises direct censorship and control over all publications. These were first used to reinforce Kim Il-sung's power, then to promote the succession by Kim Jong-il, and now to preserve the Kim Jong-un regime. Literary and art activities are controlled by a party-affiliated organization called the General Federation of Literature and Art (GFLA). Every literary and art work produced in North Korea must be censored by the GFLA at every stage, from the selection of theme to the description of contents. Anything that describes South Korea positively is forbidden.

In North Korea, a social security system is applied only to certain privileged groups of society, excluding the general public. When people become ill, hospital treatment is a rare luxury for average citizens. Even if a doctor happens to examine a patient, medicine needs to be purchased on one's own. There are two types of hospitals, one for high-ranking officials and the other for the general public. Even hospitals for average citizens have special rooms for officials.

3. Response to Criticism on Human Rights

The abuse of human rights in North Korea originates from the peculiarities of the regime. North Korea is a totalitarian society with a political system based on a *suryŏng*-centered one-party rule, a centrally planned economy, an institutionally controlled society, and a culture based on the unique philosophy of *juche* ideology. In such a society, basic rights are bound to be restricted.

Nonetheless, North Korea claims that no human rights problem exists because the people were the ones who chose the socialist system in the first place, and that system is in place to serve them in return. The regime insists that “human rights are only guaranteed in socialist systems in which exploitation and oppression are removed, and people are masters of the nation.”³⁹ Meanwhile, it counters international criticism by claiming that North Korea upholds its own type of human rights.

North Korea rebuts international criticism of its human rights record based on two grounds: the relativity of human rights originating from cultural differences, and exclusiveness of human rights based on national sovereignty.⁴⁰ First, North Korea argues that because its “our-style socialism” advocates a socialist system based on principles of collectivism, its human rights conditions cannot be assessed from Western perspectives. It even claims that true rights and freedom are only enjoyed in its people-centered society, where *suryōng*, party and public are united as one.

Second, North Korea asserts that because of their exclusiveness, human rights are internal issues and other countries should not interfere with North Korea’s internal affairs. It also contends that because state sovereignty precedes human rights, which cannot be guaranteed if there is no state, Western countries should not impose their own standards of human rights on other countries. In other words, Pyongyang contends that the international community’s humanitarian intervention harbors the political aim of overthrowing the regime rather than the goal of protecting and improving North Korean lives.

However, North Korea’s view on human rights denies the universal values of humanity. As a result people’s civic and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights are seriously violated there. The international community has thus continually urged North Korea to

³⁹ Social Science Institute Language Research Center, *Grand Korean Dictionary* (Pyongyang: Social Science Institute, 1992)

⁴⁰ KINU, *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2011* (Seoul: KINU, 2011), pp.44–47

rectify its human rights conditions. Since 2003 the UN has repeatedly adopted resolutions on North Korean human rights in the UN Commission on Human Rights and General Assembly. In particular, the UN in 2004 appointed Vitit Muntarbhorn as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Working exclusively on North Korean human rights, he submitted a comprehensive report to the 63rd UN General Assembly in 2008. It concluded that human rights situation in North Korea is serious based on six grounds: unequal distribution of profits from development, discrimination in access to food and other necessities, the instability of rights and freedom, serious violations of the human rights of North Korean refugees, unequal treatment of women, children and other vulnerable groups, and impunity for human rights violations. The Special Rapporteur reported to the tenth UN Human Rights Council in 2009 that the human rights situation in North Korea was "still miserable and despairing."

The South Korean government has also expressed its interest in North Korean human rights issues. The Lee Myung-bak administration set up the resolution of humanitarian problems, including an improvement of North Korean human rights as one of its 100 key tasks and expressed an active desire for improvement. In particular, South Korea has jointly proposed a North Korean human rights resolution since the 63rd UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 2008. The North Korean human rights resolution submitted to the 64th UN General Assembly in 2009 expressed concern over organized and serious violation of human rights in the country, and suggested that North Korea cooperate with the Special Rapporteur's activities, urging it to respect human rights and basic freedom. In 2010, a few more points were added to the resolution, including a requested increase in the size and frequency of reunions of separated families of South and North Korea and the expression of regret over the lack of implementation of recommendations proposed by the UN Human Rights Commission

in its universal and regular human rights review in December 2009. The resolution adopted in the UN General Assembly in 2011 criticized widespread human rights violations in North Korea, including torture and execution based on political or religious reasons, and urged North Korea to improve its human rights situation.

As external interest in its human rights problem has increased, North Korea has promoted a human right policy condignly mixing two criteria, the security of the regime and practical needs.⁴¹ From the perspective of regime security, North Korea dismissed external interest in its human rights situation as a “human rights offensive” and “commotion over human rights,” summarily rejecting the recommendations of the international community. For instance, North Korea argued that the resolutions adopted by the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly were initiated only with an ulterior political intention to pressure its regime, and that Western countries are simply taking advantage of them to “isolate and crush the regime to death,” thereby damaging the UN’s claim to fairness. Accordingly, North Korea has refused to recognize the authority of the UN Special Rapporteur and repeatedly denied his requests to visit the country.

North Korea has also taken a strong stance against South Korea’s call for an improvement in human rights, calling it a “blatant challenge to our national dignity and regime.” For instance, Pyongyang criticized South Korea’s co-sponsoring of the 2008 UN resolution on North Korean human rights as a complete denial of the June 15, 2000 joint statement and October 4, 2007 declaration between the two Koreas, threatening that the South would “pay dearly.”

Nonetheless, as its isolation in the international community deepened, North Korea started to recognize the external concern to a certain extent. While trying to improve relations with the European Union, North Korea partially accepted its demand for bilateral talks on human rights issues. In addition, North Korea submitted the results

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.52–55

of implementing the provisions of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, of which it is also a member. Pyongyang submitted a state report out of practical reasoning that it needed to reduce international pressure by making a show of guaranteeing human rights.

In response to such external pressure, North Korea has revised relevant laws and made efforts to improve its human rights situation, though such efforts have remained merely perfunctory. In 1998, it stipulated the freedom of residence and movement as well as the freedom of religion in its constitution. The criminal law and code of criminal procedure were also revised in 2004 and 2005, respectively, and the regime introduced the principles of *nullum crimen sine lege* and the prohibition of analogical interpretation. Furthermore, the constitution revised in 2009 stipulated that human rights should be “respected and protected.” This is a desirable result, but how well the revised provision will be enforced still remains in question.

In short, North Korea does not consider human rights as universal values of mankind and downplays their importance due to characteristics peculiar to its regime. In fact, North Korea is one of the most underdeveloped countries in human rights terms, for not only civic and political rights but economic, social and cultural rights are also seriously violated. Despite international concern, the North argues for the relativity and exclusiveness of human rights and remains reluctant to improve its situation.

Section 2

Class Structure

A social structure is a standardized order emerging from interactions among the members of society. When daily interactions take place regularly and repeatedly, these interactions form a certain pattern and create a predictable order. A social order may originate naturally in accordance with the values and lifestyle shared among the members of society. In the case of North Korea, however, it was greatly influenced by the country's institutional objectives. There, the class structure is the typical institution that determines the social order.

The presence of social classes implies institutionalized inequality in society because there exists discrimination in the provision of physical or symbolic compensations in accordance with a particular set of criteria. Although the term “class” is often used to describe such criteria, there is no clear consensus on its definition. Nonetheless, following Max Weber's concepts of class, it is common to categorize the economic dimension (income and wealth) as “class,” the political

dimension (influence) as “power” and the social dimension (education and occupation) as “status.”

1. Social Classes in North Korea

(1) Categorization of Classes by Family Background

Upon completion of post-war reconstruction at the end of the 1950s, North Korea rushed to strengthen its socialist institutions in earnest. The first action it took to this end was a survey of the entire population’s family backgrounds and social activities. The purpose was to establish a North Korean-style caste system in order to exert control by studying every citizen’s political inclinations. Table 7-1 shows the summary of the procedure in the family background survey.

Table 7-1 Surveys on North Korean Citizens' Family Background

Title of Project	Period	Contents
Central Party's Intensive Guidance	Dec. 1958 –Dec. 1960	Tracking down, punishment, and deportation of rebellious elements
Re-registration of Residents	Apr. 1966 –Mar. 1967	Categorization of residents to unite one million Worker and Peasant Red Guards under one ideology(The authorities carried out an internal investigation into three generations of direct descendents, up to second cousins on the maternal side.)
Categorization into 3 Classes, 51 Subgroups	Apr. 1967 –Jun. 1970	Based on the results of resident's re-registration, all citizens are divided into three classes — core, agitating, and hostile— and further into 51 subgroups.
Survey on Residents	Feb. 1972 –1974	With the opening of inter-Korean dialogue, the North Korean authorities investigated and grasped citizens' movements and classified all citizens into three categories: core, wavering, and hostile
Inspection of Resident's Card	Jan. 1980 –Dec. 1980	At Kim Jong-il's order, the North Korean authorities hunted down rebellious elements through check and renewal of citizen's cards and reinforced control over the public.
Survey on Naturalized Citizens and Defectors from the South	Apr. 1980 –Oct. 1980	Defectors from South Korea and others from outside are categorized into 13 subgroups and placed under systemic control.
Survey on Immigrants from Japan	Jan. 1981 –Apr. 1981	Data on immigrants from Japan are produced in detail and used for systemic surveillance over them.
Renewal of Citizen's Card	Nov. 1983 –Mar. 1984	Renewal of citizen's cards and organization of resident's documents
Re-registration of Residents	Oct. 1989 –Dec. 1990	Updating of residents' register and creation of personal information cards for the members of separated families
Adoption of the Citizen Registration Law	Nov. 1997	Birth certificate, citizen's card, and Pyongyang resident's card is issued.
Renewal of Citizen's Card	Feb. 1998 –Oct. 1998	Replacement of pocket book-type cards with vinyl-coated, credit card-type ones
Replacement of Citizen's Card	Apr. 2004	Replacement of vinyl-coated, credit card-type cards with pocket book-type cards

Source : KINU, *North Korea Overview 2009*, p.332

Following the completion of the survey in 1958, North Korea established its official class policy as it started to categorize the public according to family background. The backbone of the North Korean-style class structure was finally established through three stages: as an intense guidance project of the central party from 1958 to the end of 1960; re-registration of citizens from April 1966 to March 1967; and categorization into 3 classes and 51 subgroups from April 1967 to June 1970. The regime has continually made thorough investigations into citizens' family background in various forms since then, including a

public survey, an inspection of resident's identification cards, a survey of naturalized citizens and defectors from South Korea, a survey of immigrants from Japan, and renewal of resident's identification cards.

The discriminatory class policy is implemented under the control of the National Security Planning Agency and the Ministry of People's Security. Most individual North Korean citizens have a rough idea which class or subgroups they belong to, but they have no right to confirm it. There is no procedure to do so either. Only the two security agencies have information on individuals' class affiliation and they reserve the right to adjust it. Since the mid 1990s, a large number of North Korean citizens have violated social norms or regulations by illegally crossing the national border as well as wandering or running away from their place of residence. Subsequently, the regime had to re-categorize the public into three classes and 45 subgroups.⁴²

(2) Classes by Gender

Upon its establishment, the North Korean regime claimed to stand for gender equality and women's liberation. Following national division, North Korea passed and announced a law on equality between men and women in the form of the Temporary People's Committee for North Korea Decision 54 in 1946, and enacted a socialist labor law thereafter. As a result, women's participation in economic activities has constantly increased. Recent economic difficulties have contributed to a further increase in women's participation in the economy. Women's social participation is now taken for granted in North Korea.

An increase in economic participation is only a superficial phenomenon, however. Women are seriously discriminated in entry into and exit from the labor force as well as in regard to the types of jobs they can have and positions they can hold. Their social participation also results from mobilization for such political and economic purposes as "transforming women into self-reliant (or *juche*)

⁴² KINU, *North Korea Overview 2009* (Seoul: KINU, 2009), pp.330–331

communists and members of working class and revolutionizing the family,” rather than ideological causes such as gender equality or women’s liberation. Upon national liberation in 1945, the Democratic Women’s Union was founded, and a large number of women were mobilized in various political and ideological campaigns, including the *Chollima* movement and the Winning the Three-Revolution Red Flag Movement. From an economic perspective, North Korean women have played a role of “industrial reserve” that provided a buffer in the case of a mismatch between labor supply and demand.

When the North Korean economy was doing relatively better in the 1960s and 1970s, a massive entry of women into labor market helped fill a labor shortage. As the economy moved into a recession and demand for labor declined in the 1980s, women were laid off. As the economic situation worsened, some factories expanded cottage industries and moonlight jobs to which a large number of idle female workers were mobilized. In this respect, an expansion of so-called “rice factories” and “side dish factories” or day care centers and nursery schools should be viewed as a system to mobilize women’s labor rather than one for promoting women’s liberation or the protection of mothers.

North Korean women have suffered from the double torture of having to participate in formal labor while being fully responsible for household labor. They are expected to live a life as a “passionate *juche*-style communist revolutionary” in society, while at the same time playing the role of “wife and mother of a revolutionary husband and son” at home. In addition, North Korea is still a patriarchal society. In a culture where wives must be absolutely obedient to her husband, they often suffer from domestic violence.

As women’s contribution to domestic economy has increased recently, their status within the family seems to have also improved to a certain extent. According to refugees, an increasing number of North

Korean husbands, who had been treated “like gods” in the past, have started to cook rice or do the dishes. However, considering that North Korea has long maintained a strict patriarchy, one should not hastily jump to the conclusion that such changes indicate a meaningful improvement in the status of women.

Such observations seem to demonstrate that North Korean women are discriminated against both formally and informally in their society and the extent of discrimination is extremely severe. This is because North Korea uses its gender policy merely as means to exploit women’s labor and to preserve the regime rather than to encourage women’s participation in the society as equal human beings.

2. Social Mobility and Features of Class Structure

Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups from one social status to another. Vertical mobility refers to a rise or descent in status. Horizontal mobility refers to a movement between regions or occupations without a change in status. Social movement among the North Korean populace mostly takes the form of the latter.

In North Korea, horizontal movement does not necessarily involve a meaningful rise in social status. That is because social movement is artificially controlled by the family background policy and the places of residence and occupations are also assigned by the same policy in North Korea.

As private economic activities expanded in the 2000s, social movement took place in some parts of the society. For instance, a member of the “hostile” class could climb to an upper economic class by using his business skills to accumulate wealth. In fact, private economic activities have surged in North Korea since the mid-1990s. With the introduction of measures to improve economic management

in 2002, the North Korean authorities partially recognized markets. This created complications in the class structure because one's economic status also became an important indicator of his or her social position. Nonetheless, it is still difficult to say that social movement through a change in economic status is a widespread phenomenon. Ascension in economic status remains dependent on one's political background, private network, level of skills and desire for a rise in material status, many of which factors are greatly influenced by the existing policy on family background.⁴³

North Korea's class structure has an artificial and closed nature with the following characteristics:

First, classes are artificially structured according to family background and loyalty to the Workers' Party. In general, social classes in a capitalist country are differentiated by objective elements such as the level of income, occupation and the level of education. In the case of North Korea, however, the inequalities in such elements result simply from an artificial policy. In other words, those belonging to a higher class have greater chances to receive higher or special education. Moreover, the higher the class to which one belongs, the greater the chances one will be assigned to a position with higher social status and larger income.

Second, because the North Korean class structure is a closed system based on ascribed status, the chances of an individual obtaining an opportunity for social movement through his or her own efforts are considerably limited. Those who belong to core classes are unlikely to lose their status, which, barring some political offence or felony, is passed down to their offspring. In contrast, those who have a poor family background are not easily allowed to join the upper class. Occasionally, some members of the wavering class are re-categorized into the core class, and those of hostile class into the wavering class. Such changes are determined by political criteria as one's loyalty to the party.

⁴³ Choi Bong-dae, 'Class Structure and Residents' Consciousness,' Chung Young-chul et al, *Change in North Korean Society since the 1990s* (Seoul: Korea Broadcasting Co., 2005), pp.162–229

Finally, North Korea's class structure was established to create, sustain and reinforce its socialist system and tighten control over its society. The landlord class completely disintegrated as a result of the early land reform. Lands were first distributed freely to tenant farmers, impoverished peasants and contract farmers, only to be nationalized a few years later. Clothing, food, housing and other daily necessities have since been distributed under the control of the Workers' Party agencies. Subsequently, the people had to obey the party and faithfully implement its instructions in order to survive.

North Korea's family background policy is the most critical means of social control. It is a policy that protects the vested rights of a few to the detriment of the majority. Since North Korea's class structure was artificially established and expanded for ideological and historical reasons, it is difficult to expect any fundamental change. Former Korean War prisoners who have recently escaped from North Korea testify that they had always been watched over and that their status was passed down to their children. Therefore, a meaningful change in North Korea's class structure is unlikely unless there is a fundamental modification in its political objectives and policy lines.

Section 3

Value System and Everyday Life

In promotion of social development, every society faces a contradictory dilemma of allowing for change while maintaining stability. In general, the ruling class endeavors to maintain stability in society. They try to stabilize the society by recruiting voluntary sympathizers to their cause through the embodiment of institutional norms. In the case of North Korea, a large part of the population enjoys a considerable degree of uniformity in its daily life and leisure. The North Korean authorities use this uniformity in daily life as an effective means to control the society.

1. North Korean Citizens' Values

North Korea has developed political justifications first for the establishment of a socialist regime, then for the reinforcement of Kim Il-sung's power, then for the succession of power by Kim Jong-il and

Kim Jong-un and for overcoming the ongoing crisis. It has also made efforts to spread these justifications to the public through political education. Subsequently, North Korean citizens have developed a set of values either explicitly or implicitly in accordance with the authorities' intention.

In general, the justifications of values developed by North Koreans can be divided into three: justifications for socialist revolution (or construction), justifications for social stability, and justifications for overcoming the crisis. The justifications for socialist revolution criticize the old regime of feudalism and capitalism, a target to be overthrown, and emphasize the importance of the creation of a communist (or socialist) society. According to these justifications, the feudal system is a "rotten" society and the capitalist system an unequal, exploitative one. Both of them are targets for revolution. The communist society, on the other hand, is an egalitarian society without social classes and an ideal society that should be established through the collective efforts of working people.

When Kim Il-sung was consolidating his power at the end of the 1960s, the North Korean regime mostly propagated justifications for social stability. It justified Kim Il-sung's power through the *juche* ideology and demanded the public pay unquestioning loyalty to him. His rule was justified by a revolutionary view of the supreme leader or *suryŏng* as the brain that controls the party (the body) and public (the arms and legs), the theory of a great socialist family comprised of the *suryŏng* (the father), party (the mother) and public (the children), and the theory of socio-political life form that demands unquestioning loyalty to the leader.

When Kim Il-sung finished consolidating his power and confirmed the power transfer to Kim Jong-il, North Korea also developed justifications for the hereditary succession and the creation of the young Kim's personality cult. Although the North Korean authorities

denigrated Confucianism as an exploitative ideology, they adopted its core concepts of loyalty and filial piety as well as patriarchal values. North Korean people were required to show their continuous loyalty and filial piety to the *suryōng* and allegiance to Kim Jong-il through generations. When Kim Jong-il died in December 2011 and his third son Kim Jong-un emerged as the most powerful man in the country, North Korea stepped up justifications for this hereditary succession as well.

As social development stagnated after the mid-1980s and eventually threatened the existence of the regime, North Korea introduced a new theory justifying the legitimacy of its regime. Through the introduction of such new concepts as the Korean people-first policy and scientific socialism, North Korea emphasized the legitimacy of what it calls “our style of socialism.” At the same time, it played up Kim Jong-il as the “Sun of the 21st Century,” who could put Kim Il-sung’s last wishes into practice, and as a figure whom North Koreans must guard to the death, armed as “living bullets and bombs” with the kamikaze spirit of self-sacrifice.

Consequently, North Korean citizens had to develop the values of egalitarianism, collectivism, uniformity and the *suryōng*-centered system. They are considered ideal values in the sense that they coincide with the characteristics of the regime the authorities aspire to. Yet, that does not necessarily mean that citizens have internalized them fully or embodied them in their lives. On the surface, they have accepted values the authorities pursue. Internally, however, they have developed practical values consistent with their own interests. In short, average North Koreans’ behavior patterns represent a compromise between ideal and practical values. For this reason, their values are characterized by a certain duality.

In particular, with the expansion of markets since 2003, North Korean citizens’ consciousness and values have started to change. A

money and interest-centered market economic mindset began taking root among the citizenry. Markets have made possible an active exchange of information from China and South Korea, thereby leading to changes in North Koreans' perception of the outside world.

(1) Egalitarianism and the Sense of Inequality

Having established a socialist regime, North Korea nationalized the means of production such as land, capital and factories and emphasized the importance of egalitarianism. Consequently, North Korean citizens have developed egalitarian values.

However, the concept of equality North Korea proposes is nothing more than a rhetoric justifying a socialist revolution and the concentration of power in one man. In reality, discrimination and a general sense of inequality are rampant in North Korean society. It is a viciously unequal society, a product of artificial policies based on family background. Citizens now take for granted both the abuse of power by high-ranking officials and discrimination against those of politically suspect family backgrounds, women and social minorities. The hereditary succession of power over three generations is a particularly flagrant example of inequality in power.

Although North Korea claims that it is a socialist egalitarian society, in fact it is a society in which inequality is institutionalized. Not only individuals' education and occupation but also their marriage and place of residence are determined by their family background, not their ability. In particular, there is a considerable difference between the members of the privileged class residing in Pyongyang and ordinary citizens living outside the capital in various areas. This difference ranges from conditions of everyday life including the availability of clothing, food, housing and education, the kind of economic activities pursued, and aspects of organizational life such as opportunities for promotion or social advancement.

(2) Collectivism and Social Loafing

North Korea views collectivism, which puts the interest of the group above that of individuals, as a desirable value. Collectivism is the foundation of socialist and communist social life. It is a value pursued in all areas, including political, economic, cultural and moral. The North Korean constitution stipulates the principle of collectivism: “One for all, and all for one.” Competition is not so fierce in a collectivist society that puts camaraderie and fidelity above an individual’s ability and productivity.

Because collectivism is based upon a premise of collective efforts and collective reward, North Korean citizens display a tendency to social loafing in their daily life. Social loafing refers to a phenomenon that as the size of a group increases, each individual’s contribution diminishes proportionally. Although citizens seem to work hard on the surface, their actual achievement is low. Accordingly, the low productivity of the North Korean economy can be attributed directly to social loafing.

(3) Uniformity and Disguised Preference

In the name of revolutionary goals, North Korea restricted the freedom, rights and interests of the individual and required that all citizens pursue a uniform life under a monolithic ideology. To support such uniformity, it has relied on various means of control, including control over thoughts and organizational life as well as physical control by the party, government and military. The fact that all North Korean citizens speak with one voice is a typical indicator of the extent of conformism achieved.

Pressure for uniformity and social control has resulted in a disguised preference in North Koreans’ daily life. In other words, there is a disjunction between individuals’ public and private preferences. Individuals often display ambivalent values by complying with the state’s demand in the public sphere, but pursue their own interests in

the private sphere. Although North Korean society may look united on the surface, internal organization is not so strong. The phenomenon of disguised preference would explain the gap.

(4) *Suryŏng*–Centeredness and Collective Thinking

North Korea is a society under a patriarchal authoritarianism. At the pinnacle of authority is the *suryŏng* or supreme leader. North Koreans are required to be with the *suryŏng* in their daily life. They take the “*suryŏng*’s teachings” or the “leader’s words” as being the highest value. They wear a *suryŏng* badge (or “portrait badge”) on their chest and live with him in all aspects of their daily life, whether at home, at work and in society. Every home and office must have the portraits of Kim Il-sung and his son hanging on the wall and treat them as most valuable items. Every textbook in North Korea presents the “*suryŏng*’s teachings” or the “leader’s words” in each chapter. Teachers give a cult of personality lecture on the two leaders before the class starts. Even in daily reviews, criticisms must be made by quoting the “*suryŏng*’s teachings” or the “leader’s words.”

The *suryŏng*-centeredness eventually resulted in collective thinking. This means that decision-making processes by members of groups are conducted by disregarding any information or alternative that are irrelevant to the original nature of the group. The rigidity of North Korean society derives from the fact that its members raise neither uncomfortable nor controversial issues in order to stay loyal to their *suryŏng* and regime.

2. Daily Life and Life Cycle

(1) Daily Life

Though there might be slight variations depending on age and

occupation, North Koreans in general evince a considerably uniform daily life. They usually wake up at around 6:00 in the morning. Despite the differences existing between social groups, most average people have mixed grain or corn for breakfast. Their typical diet includes a vegetable soup, pickled cabbage and shredded daikon radish. Those who are better off may have an addition of fried egg or sausage.

With slight variations depending on occupation, most North Koreans report to work at 7:00 or 7:30 in the morning. In Pyongyang and other big cities, they commute by subway or trackless trolley while many in the countryside walk 30 to 40 minutes to work.

Upon arriving at work, they have to participate in several political activities including a reading session, announcement of the party guidelines and lecture. During the daily reading session, workers read the *Rodong Sinmun* and discuss various issues for about 30 minutes.

North Koreans generally work 8 hours a day. The regular work hours are from 8:00 to 12:00 in the morning and 14:00 to 18:00 in the afternoon. General workers have a 10 minute break after each hour of work. Farmers, on the other hand, break for 20 minutes after each 100 minutes of work. When the morning session ends at 12:00, they take an hour off for lunch. In general, North Koreans bring a lunch box from home when they come to work in the morning. Many eat their lunch on the spot and some visit their colleague's house near the workplace. Those who live nearby may even go home for lunch. They often have mixed grain or corn for their main meal, but those who are relatively better off might have dried seaweed rolls with stir-fried potato and sausage. A large number of women go home during the lunch hour and prepare foodstuffs they later sell at the street markets. They often prepare rice cakes, steamed bean curd, bread, twisted bread sticks and bootleg liquor. In rural areas, women collect wild herbs,



| Pyongyang residents commuting to work by streetcar

vegetables and greens on their way home and feed them to animals they raise, including dogs, pigs, chickens, goats, rabbits and ducks. They also do chores in their kitchen gardens before reporting back to the collective farms.

After lunch, most office clerks and other types of white-collar workers take an hour's nap between 13:00 and 14:00. The afternoon session of work begins at 14:00 and ends at 18:00. In the case of collective farmers, the nature of their work prevents them from leaving the farm until the day's tasks have been completed.

When the afternoon session is over, North Koreans take part in daily life reviews, with an extra session once a week. These sessions provide time for self-criticism, during which each worker repents his or her mistakes, and time for mutual criticism, allowing participants to criticize the other. Criticism at this time are required to quote the teachings of Kim Il-sung or Kim Jong-il's words, which are used as the basis for critical logic. Workers often have to do additional labor or attend study groups after such daily review sessions, making it difficult for individuals to enjoy any private moment on the weekdays.

Since the mid-1990s, however, the daily lives of North Koreans is known to have changed substantially. Because of a low rate of industrial operation, a considerable number of workers either lounge around or leave work early. Some just punched the clock in the morning and leave the factory to engage in market business. Overtime work has existed in name only and study groups have failed to meet regularly. At some workplaces, daily life reviews are held in the morning.

After work, North Koreans enjoy private time. However, because of the energy shortage, they finish dinner as early as possible. What they have for dinner is similar to what they have for lunch; usually, noodles, potatoes and sweet potatoes are served. After dinner, men often do home repairs or spend time with colleagues while women

do the laundry and clean the house before going out to street markets to engage in business. Farmers weed their kitchen gardens or go to mountains to collect firewood.

(2) Life Cycle

A. Birth

When a child is born, the head of the household must pick up a birth registration form at a local police substation, fill it out, have it certified by the head of the people's neighborhood unit, register the birth with a local town (or *dong*) office, and finally submit it to the police substation. Later, the child's birth registration needs to be confirmed by the city (or district or county) security department and submitted to the person in charge of food rations at the workplace. The certificate of birth registration records the child's name, sex, date and place of birth, and nationality.

B. Early Childhood

Though North Koreans do not celebrate the hundredth day after their child's birth, first birthdays are often days of celebration. In the past, children over three months were sent to nurseries, but many families these days handle child-care at home. At the age of four, children are enrolled for kindergarten and upon turning five, they advance to an upper kindergarten class, which is part of the compulsory education provided by the state.

C. Childhood and Adolescence

When children reach the age of six, they enter primary schools for four years of education. At the age of ten, middle school education is provided for six more years. North Koreans refer to the eleven years of education, from the upper kindergarten level to sixth grade in middle school, as a "period of overall compulsory education." Moreover, young students join the Pioneer Corps in the second year of primary

schooling and the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth Union in the fifth year of middle school.

D. Adulthood

Upon graduating from middle school, one faces three career options: joining the army, going to college or being assigned to a workplace. Most men join the army and women are assigned to work. Only 10 percent of total graduates are so-called “direct-path students,” namely, those who enter college or university immediately after graduating from middle school. Many others enter college upon recommendation from their organizations while working or serving in the army. Individuals are assigned to jobs almost regardless of their own preferences.

E. Marriage

North Korea does not recognize common law marriage. Most North Koreans start a family based on love, but in the countryside the tradition of arranged marriages remains strong. As an individual’s own opinion has become a more important factor in searching for a spouse, greater attention is given to love and economic ability than to family background. The bride is often responsible for preparing home furnishings. There is no separate wedding hall, and wedding ceremonies often take place in public centers or at the groom’s house. After the ceremony, newly wedded couples take commemorative photos in a park or in front of Kim Il-sung’s statue before visiting their relatives. Newlyweds do not go on a honeymoon, but generally spend their first night at the groom’s parents’ house. Though entitled to a week of vacation, they usually report to work after a three-day break.

F. Old Age

As Kim Il-sung advocated the slogan “[Man is] a youth at 60 and [should celebrate his] 60th birthday at 90” in the 1990s, the tradition of celebrating one’s 60th birthday had disappeared in the North

Korean society, until it was revived in the 1970s. Yet, to reduce waste, the North Korean authorities have recommended the streamlining of such events as weddings and 60th and 61st birthdays. Meanwhile, the elderly want to continue working as long as possible, because a reduced ration is provided to those who do not work. When there is no work, they often spend time in parks or look after their grandchildren. The elderly have been one of the groups most affected by the suspension of public rationing.

G. Death

The average life expectancy of North Korean citizens rapidly declined in the late 1990s, but gradually recovered throughout the 2000s to reach around 68 years in 2008. Funerals usually last three days, but with a prolonged economic crisis and increased death rate since the mid-1990s, one or two-day funerals have become common. During the funeral period, men wear black armbands and women wear white ribbons in their hair. The people were forced to cremate the body in the 1970s, but burial has once again become common since the 1980s.

3. Clothing, Food and Housing

(1) Dietary Life

North Koreans obtain food in two ways: through rations or by purchasing it in markets. Rationing has been a traditional and institutional way of supplying food. According to their age and occupation, individual North Koreans are assigned different ration grades, and food is supplied to them accordingly. There are nine different grades in total. Table 7-2 describes the amount of daily ration provided to each grade of people. The people with the lowest grade, grade 9, receive 100g of food a day. This is the amount provided to infants. The group with the highest grade, grade 1, receives 900g a

day. Laborers working in hazardous types of occupation and miners excavating coal and other minerals belong to this group. Nonetheless, due to the food shortage, the ration system has remained practically defunct except for a few privileged groups. Even when rationing is resumed, the standard amount for each grade is barely met.

Table 7-2 Amount of Daily Food Ration by Group Grade

Group Grade	Amount of Ration	Recipients
Grade 1	900g	workers in the hazardous industry, heavy workers
Grade 2	800g	miners & mine workers, heavy equipment operators
Grade 3	700g	ordinary workers
Grade 4	600g	college students, senior men of merit with social security, patients
Grade 5	500g	middle school students
Grade 6	400g	primary school students
Grade 7	300g	Senior men on social security, full-time housewives, kindergarten students
Grade 8	200g	infants aged between 2 and 4, prisoners
Grade 9	100g	infants under age of 1

A food ration voucher is divided into 15 pieces (known as “ration eyes”) altogether. Each piece shows the period (either the first or second half of month) and date of rationing, one’s ration grade (from Grade 1 to 9) and amount of entitled ration (from 100g to 900g). The employer deducts the number of “ration eyes” equivalent to the total number of tardy or absent days of work, and gives the rest to the worker. A day’s ration is deducted for a day of absence without leave or three days of tardiness.

The vouchers for elderly parents with senior citizen’s security, pre-school children, and dependent full-time housewives are distributed to the head of household at his work. In principle, all his dependents are provided with all fifteen-day rations, even when the head of household has his ration reduced due to an absence from his work without leave.

Farmers in collective farms receive a ration once a year through the

“distribution of settlement.” The amount of ration each farmer receives depends on the farm's achievement rate. For instance, if the collective farm has achieved 80 percent of its initial production target, each member would receive 80 percent of the fixed ration. Accordingly, the amount of distribution could vary from one working unit to another, but the members of the same unit receive the same amount of ration.

Of course, food is supplied neither in a fixed amount nor on a fixed day. As early as in the 1980s, authorities took away 10 percent of the ration under the name of “patriotic rice” and an additional 12 percent in the name of “war reserve.” Subsequently, the amount of ration has continually diminished. In addition, although public ration was supposed to be provided twice a month, it had often been distributed once a month or occasionally skipped altogether for one or two months. Finally, at the end of 1995, rationing was suspended except for a few privileged groups.

After its public distribution system broke down in the mid-1990s, North Korea adjusted state-dictated food prices to market prices through the implementation of the July 1 measures to improve economic management. The price of 1 kg rice, for example, rose from 8 *jeon* or cent to 44 North Korean won. These measures transformed the old system of “almost free rationing” to a new system of “distribution based on appropriate prices.” In addition, since March 2004, self-supply of food was reinforced in key institutions and enterprises except for such national security agencies as the military, the National Security Planning Agency and the Ministry of People's Security.

Nonetheless, following a declaration on normalizing food rationing in October 2005, North Korea prohibited private trading of grains in Pyongyang and some other regions, and started to assert a state monopoly on selling food through the food center. Despite its efforts to normalize the food supply, rationing barely recovered for urban laborers and party members, while residents in remote mountainous

regions and farmers had to secure their own food through markets, kitchen gardens or small patches of paddy. In particular, following the currency reform on November 30, 2009, North Korea tried to rebuild the state distribution network as a way of salvaging its planned economy, but rationing has been spotty due to poor preparation. The discrepancy between Pyongyang and elsewhere continues to reflect the instability of the system.

As the food shortage continued and the public distribution collapsed except for the residents of Pyongyang and some military soldiers, most North Korean citizens had to find food on their own. In rural areas, an increasing number of people collected herbs and vegetables in the mountains. Those stealing food from farms also increased. The North Korean authorities did not restrict each household up to 30 *pyeong* (or 99 square meters) of adjacent lots from cultivating for itself. Subsequently, vacant lots next to houses were made into kitchen gardens to grow vegetables and potatoes. The number of farmers raising pigs or goats also increased. The urban dwellers may also have kitchen gardens, but they often buy food from street markets. These markets have sprung up everywhere since the mid 1990s and continue to serve as places for trading most daily necessities. Most are black markets that have abundant various goods, but prices are beyond reach for many.

North Korean citizens faced another difficulty in their dietary life when a currency reform was abruptly implemented at the end of November 2009. Currencies in their pockets turned into mere scraps of paper as their purchasing power quickly declined. When the channel for securing food was virtually closed for the average people, the authorities had no choice but to allow the re-opening of markets that had remained closed since the currency reform. Nonetheless, a rapidly expanding inflation once again caused the deterioration of dietary life in North Korea.

(2) Clothing

Clothing has long been rationed as well. When the system was intact, most people received through their people's neighborhood units a ration voucher, which they could present at shops to buy fabrics and clothes at state prices.

Like food, clothes were also distributed by the state. The authorities distributed clothes to people according to their ration grade. People are divided into two grades: those entitled to central rationing and those entitled to general rationing. The former are provided with luxury woolen clothes. In particular, expensive fabrics and clothes are supplied to the members of special groups such as artists, journalists and teachers, as well as to high-ranking officials in the party and cabinet. However, people in the lower grade receive clothes made of semi-wool or even lower-quality fabrics. Items such as woolen hats, cotton gloves, shirts, blouses, stockings and sneakers are not subject to rationing, but are bought freely by individuals at shops.

During economic difficulties in the 1990s, the supply of clothes was in fact suspended before the supply of food. North Koreans have since become used to buying their own clothes rather than expecting to be supplied from rationing. Occasionally, however, school uniforms are still provided by the state. In the past they had been provided free of charge once every two years, but recently, they are provided at a state-set price. Parents still prefer state-provided uniforms, because the state price is much lower than that of street markets. However, because the supply is limited, parents often have no choice but to buy the uniforms in the markets.

North Koreans' fashion life, too, has changed over time. Until the 1970s, most citizens wore a standardized style of clothes: a Mao suit for men and a traditional white jacket and petticoat for women.

But by the late 1970s, Western-style blouses, jumpers and skirts were

introduced. These clothes became especially popular among residents of large cities such as Pyongyang, Wonsan and Chongjin, that are regularly visited by foreigners and Koreans living abroad. In the 1980s, such clothes appeared in party bulletins and media, and in the 1990s, Western-style also influenced the hairdo and makeup in North Korea.

The 13th World Festival of Youth and Students (commonly known as the Pyongyang Festival) held in Pyongyang in 1989 provided a turning point in North Koreans' fashion history. Foreign visitors' slick, chic and lively outfits and hairdos came as a shock to locals. Many of them started to imitate foreign fashions and hairdos. Their dress became more assertive and colorful. They put on more makeup and started to care more about their appearances. A variety of hairstyles also appeared on the streets of Pyongyang.

Since the 1990s, the North Korean authorities responded by emphasizing the importance of national tradition, and official media praised Korean dresses and other traditional wear. Nonetheless, due to economic hardship, it has not been easy for North Koreans to buy several dresses. Average people often wear jumpers, sweaters, Mao jackets or boiler suits. They tend to wear clothes in dark colors. Young women usually do their hair up and put on light makeup, while old women do not care much.

(3) Housing

In North Korea, houses are collectively owned properties built from the state budget, and private individuals in principle can neither construct nor own them. Accordingly, people live in rental houses assigned to them by the state and pay monthly rent.

People are divided into five groups, from 1 to 4 and the privileged, to which they are assigned according to their occupation and status. For instance, Group



A North Korean newscaster with a perm |

1 is made of lowest-ranking laborers, office clerks and members of collective farms, who are assigned to a public condominium with one to two bedrooms and kitchen, or a modern dwelling in a rural village with two bedrooms and a storage room. Group 2 is made up of school teachers and average workers, who are assigned to ordinary apartments with one or two bedrooms, a living room with wooden floors and a kitchen. Group 3 is made up of managers of enterprises, counselors in central government agencies, and deputy directors at provincial governments and party committees, who are assigned to medium-sized one family dwellings with two bedrooms, kitchen and storage space. Group 4 is made up of directors in the central party departments, director generals in cabinet ministries, college and university professors, and general managers of enterprises, who are assigned to apartments with more than two bedrooms, a bathroom with flush toilet, heating and air conditioning system and veranda. Finally, the Privileged Group is made up of vice directors and higher-ranking officials of central party, directors and higher-ranking officials of cabinet ministries, major general and higher-ranking officials of KPA, who are assigned to luxuries multiple-story houses with its own garden, flush toilets, and heating and air conditioning system. Since the assignment of housing is affected by the distance one has to travel to his work, new housing is assigned upon change of work.



| Modern houses in a rural community

The housing distribution rate among the high-ranking party, government and enterprise officials is almost 100 percent. In particular, athletes who have won gold medals in such international competitions as the Olympic Games or World Championship are provided with a cylindrical apartment in Palgol-dong in the Mangyongdae District of Pyongyang and a private passenger car. In the meantime, the housing distribution rate among average citizens is merely 50 to 60 percent. Usually, individuals have to wait four to five years after applying for housing. These days, people

The Residence Ticket is a certificate stating one's right to move into a particular housing. In North Korea, individuals cannot own a house. Housing is assigned by the state and one has to have a residence ticket to live in a new house.

find it difficult to get housing even after ten years of waiting. Subsequently, even newlyweds have to live with their parents until their **residence ticket** is issued. Subsequently, there are many cases where two households share a single apartment.

One of the problems in North Korean housing is obsolescence. The houses have hardly been renovated or remodeled since the mid-1990s. Neither have they been repainted, creating not only aesthetic problems but also vulnerability to natural disasters.

The North Korean authorities prohibit private ownership and trading of housing, but since the housing shortage worsened in the mid-1980s, houses have been traded under the table. Because it takes too long to get housing with an official residence ticket, people are using various ruses to trade houses. For instance, the potential seller first registers a potential buyer as his housemate, then changes the head of household. To move into this kind of housing, people must secure the current inhabitant's consent, usually for a price. Accordingly, although North Koreans do not have the right to own a house, they can move to better housing as long as they can pay for it.

As for household furniture, North Koreans often say, "A man needs the five viscera and six entrails to live. Likewise, a household must have five cabinets and six electronic appliances." The five cabinets refer to blanket chest, wardrobe, bookshelf, shoe rack and cupboard: the six electric appliances include TV, refrigerator, laundry machine, sewing machine, electric fan and camera or tape recorder. Individuals have to obtain all this on their own. In addition to such furniture and equipment, the rich and powerful have foreign furniture and appliances. Since it is difficult for average people to possess all of the above, brides are often happy to have only two pieces of furniture and three appliances at the beginning of their marriage.

Section 4

Deviations and Social Control

A society can maintain order because most of its members abide by social norms. A considerable number of its members, however, have a tendency to break away from the existing order. Actions deviating from the prevailing social order are called social deviations. Because every society aspires to maintain existing order, it rewards those obedient while imposing sanctions on those who deviate. Efforts to restrain social deviations are known as social control. In North Korea, the greater part of people's daily lives is subject to control through various different means, including the suppression of human rights.

As the country came to a turning point in the 1990s, social deviation and crime rapidly increased while social control was slightly eased. Nonetheless, North Korea has never disclosed information on crime; its TV and newspapers have not said a single word on the issue. Accordingly, it is extremely difficult to find out (let alone quantify) the extent and causes of social deviations and crime in North Korea.

1. Social Deviation and Crime committed by North Koreans

(1) Types of Crime According to North Korea's Criminal Law

North Korea's criminal law is based on the principles of socialist revolution and working class. The specific purpose of its enactment was "to guard the national sovereignty and socialist system and guarantee the people's independent and creative lives through a struggle against crime" as well as to accomplish the socialist revolution "by adhering to the principles of working class in the struggle against crime."

The criminal law was completely revised in 2004 and has been partially modified several times since. The law classifies all crimes into seven categories, including crimes against the state and those against the people. Table 7-3 summarizes the seven categories and specific crime types in each category.

The criminal law revised in 2004 was different in that it included the basic principles of criminal law and a large number of new crimes. The revision introduced the principle of "*nulla poena sine lege*," the prohibition of analogical interpretation, and non-retroactive application of penalty. Accordingly, it has proposed stricter principles on the punishment of criminal acts. Of course, whether these principles are faithfully observed is another matter.

There seems to be several reasons behind the addition of new crime types in the revised criminal law. First, it is possible that the existing types are further broken down and specified into a larger number of categories. In fact, terms like "demonstrations" and "ambush" were newly introduced in the section for crimes against the state. In addition, the provision on narcotics, which was one of the provisions related to crimes of 'infringing on socialist culture,' were further

divided into three provisions, each covering a specific crime, including the illegal cultivation of poppies and production of narcotics, use of illegal drugs, and the smuggling and trafficking of narcotics.

Second, there seems to have been a practical concern that the law should reflect newer forms of crime. In the past, North Korean society was relatively stable and remained under effective social control. Since the 1990s, however, the society has undergone lots of changes and new kinds of crime emerged, particularly economic crimes including tax evasion, engagement in commercial activities, loan sharking and bootlegging, but also crimes violating public order such as prostitution, indecent sexual activities and gambling.

Table 7-3 Types and Names of Offenses Stipulated in the North Korea's Criminal Law

Category	Sub-Category	Name of Offense
Crimes against State & People	Crime against State	subversion, treason against state, espionage, hostility against foreigners
	Crime against People	treason against people, suppression of Korean liberation movement, hostility against Korean people
	Harboring, Misprision & Neglect	harboring or misprision of those who committed a crime against state or people
Economic Infringement	Infringement on State or Social Cooperative Organization's Property	stealing, extortion, blackmailing, deceit, embezzlement, robbery, collaborative greed, purposeful damage to property, accidental damage to property
	Violation of Economic Management	counterfeiting, forgery of security, trading of foreign currency, tax evasion, engagement in private commercial activity, infringement of trademark, smuggling, loan-sharking, illegal earning of foreign currency, failing to guide in accordance with <i>juche</i> farming methods
	Violation of National Land Management and Environment Protection	misuse of land, loss of land, deforestation and illegal felling of trees, illegal cultivation of mountains, accidental setting of forest fire
	Violation of Labor Administration	car accident, dismissal from work, violation of distribution order
Cultural Infringement		import and distribution of decadent culture, listening to hostile broadcasting, illegal excavation of historic remains, drug mugging and trafficking
Violation of Administrative Management Order Violation	Violation of General Administrative Order	group sedition, illegal crossing of border, bribery
	Crime by Managing Official	abuse of authority, negligence of duty
Violation of Public Order		gang fight, prostitution, usurpation of title, impersonation, illegal marriage, failing to distribute gratuities or profits
Infringement on Life & Property	Infringement on Life, Health & Character	murder, infliction of serious injury, assault, abduction, defamation and libel, rape, sex with minors
	Infringement on Personal Property	stealing, extortion, blackmailing, deceit, embezzlement, robbery, destruction

Note : North Korea's criminal law categorizes criminal offenses into 7 categories. The "crime of violating defense management order" is not listed on this table.

Source : DPRK Code: For Public Use (Pyongyang: Law Publishing Co., 2004), pp.784-840

(2) Social Deviation and Crime by North Koreans

North Korea had maintained a stable social order in a relatively efficient way as a highly organized society. But since the second half of the 1980s, crime rates have rapidly increased, resulting in social deviations and crimes becoming a "fact of life" by the mid-1990s. This became a concern for the North Korean authorities as early as

the 1990s. For instance, the authorities responded by designating as “internal maladies” rampant anti-party and counter-revolutionary developments such as the spread of corruption and irregularities among high-ranking officials, the materialism sweeping across the society and the growing number of ideologically vulnerable adolescents. This implies that crimes and social deviations in North Korea are no longer kept secret.

A. Economic Offenses

Economic offenses mainly refer to illegal economic activities carried out for the purpose of earning a living or monetary profits. In North Korean criminal law, those activities that violate the existing economic order such as larceny, smuggling and loan sharking fall under this category. Until the early 1980s, economic offenses did not draw social attention, but their frequencies have increased rapidly since the mid-1990s.

Larceny is a typical economic crime that occurred more frequently during this period. State properties such as grains stored in state granaries, various daily necessities in local distribution centers, parts and materials at factories, crops, telephone and electricity lines and cultural assets are common targets of larceny. Crime against individuals often takes place in street markets, railway stations and trains, with merchants and tourists the most common victims. Almost all items traded in the markets, including bean curd, bean sprouts, sneakers, clothes, factory materials and parts, can also be targeted.

Smuggling across the China-North Korea border is also on the rise. North Korea’s exports to China include primary commodities such as medicinal herbs, wild greens, clams and squid, as well as compact and expensive products of the secondary industry. The latter includes copper extracted from severed electricity and telephone lines, factory parts and illegally excavated antiques. North Korea’s imports, on the other hand, mostly consist of grains such as rice and corn, shoes,

clothes and garments, daily necessities such as salt and toothpaste, glasses, films and other items of personal preference.

Other types of crimes and social deviations committed for economic purposes are also widespread in North Korean society. Blackmailing and fraud, too, have rapidly proliferated across society. Illegal trading has become so rampant that a cycle of crackdown and acquiescence has become part of North Korean life. Bootlegging is so common that people can now readily distinguish between state liquor and moonshine. Some criminals even steal electricity using an electric condenser. Loan sharking is prevalent among some high-ranking officials and the newly rich.

B. Social Offenses

Social offenses in North Korea refer to crimes against life, body and social norms. Typical offenses in this area are crimes against individuals and culture. The former include murder, infliction of injury, assault, abduction, defamation and libel, rape, and sexual assault on children. A typical infringement of culture is the import and dissemination of foreign cultural materials. While the North Korean society was stable, social offense was not a serious issue. However, as the society underwent rapid changes in the 1990s, social offense became diversified and increased in frequency.

In particular, as the social order deteriorated, North Koreans are known to have become more involved in fights. According to refugees who recently fled the country, fights often occur at street markets or as a result of citizens' feelings offended during sessions of people's neighborhood units. Brawls also frequently break out over monetary disputes, occasionally leading to injury and even murder. Human trafficking is another serious crime that makes the North Korean authorities anxious, as it is carried out by a highly organized network of traffickers. Using marriage as bait, the traffickers frequently hand over North Korean women to their Chinese or Korean-Chinese clients

for profit.

Meanwhile, the most representative cultural crimes are importing and disseminating “decadent” cultural materials and listening to external broadcasts. A large number of North Koreans are known to sing along to South Korean songs and watch soap operas from South Korea. North Koreans originally sourced this music through Yanbian, and the TV shows and dramas are accessed by DVDs that are also smuggled from China. According to a survey conducted among refugees, almost half of the respondents acknowledged that they had directly accessed South Korean radio while in the North. In particular, more than half of male defectors replied that they had listened to South Korean broadcasts.⁴⁴

C. Violations of Public Order

Violations of public order are crimes that involve sexual and moral conduct. They include prostitution, gambling, drug addiction, violence under the influence of alcohol, traffic violations, and corruption of public morals. They are sometimes called “victimless crimes,” because it is difficult to stipulate specific victims. According to North Korean criminal law, these offenses also include violation of order in public life, brawl, prostitution, lascivious act, impersonation, gambling, superstitious activities, illegal marriage, and appropriation of compensations or profits.

As North Korean society went through a period of drastic changes in the mid-1990s, prostitution became more rampant, often taking place in street markets or around train stations. In street markets, young women sell themselves to merchants for money. Motels and inns around stations collude in this prostitution business. They are themselves illegal businesses providing board and lodging for those waiting for trains.

One type of relationship between men and women that rapidly

⁴⁴ Sung Sook-hee, *Acceptance of South Korean Broadcasting by North Korean Refugees* (Seoul: Communication Books, 2005), pp.42–44

emerged since the mid-1990s is common law marriage. *De facto* marriage is not recognized by North Korea's family law, as it stipulates that "a couple cannot live a married life without registering their marriage." However, common law marriage has become more common in accordance with an increase in the floating population. The increase in adultery and *de facto* marriage eventually led to an increase in divorce and the dissolution of families.

Gambling and superstitious activities, too, have increased rapidly since the mid-1990s. Gambling is popular among merchants, and organized gambling is also known to be on the increase. Meanwhile, the authorities strictly suppress superstition. Since the mid 1990s, however, the number of people visiting fortunetellers for luck, health and business matters has risen substantially, and even includes those in power.

D. Power Abuse Offenses

Power abuse offenses are crimes committed by those who exploit their power or authority in the process of carrying out their duties. They include bribery, appropriation of materials, and embezzlement of compensation.

Bribery is so widespread that North Koreans say that "there's nothing that can be done without money, and nothing that cannot be done with it." Bribery is received in return for privileges involving various activities; issuing travel permits or medical certificates, accepting admission to higher schools, jobs assignments, promotion at work, assignment of housing, and overlooking illegalities such as black market trade, unauthorized travel, and traffic violations. High-ranking officials in the WPK, National Security Planning Agency, and Ministry of People's Security are surreptitiously involved with smuggling activities at the border, and soldiers often steal crops and daily necessities from farmers. Those with power also appropriate state properties or rations and some even accumulate personal wealth

through loan sharking.

Appropriation of remuneration is another new type of crime in North Korea. Though people are obliged to report all gifts and other types of material compensations they have received from foreigners, a considerable amount of informal monetary compensation is left unreported and misappropriated by individuals.

The prevalence of the corruption of power in North Korean society can be confirmed by media reports. The regime warns that “unprepared officials who have been ideologically spoiled have become isolated from the people and turned into privileged classes,” noting that “this exploitation of power in bureaucracy and these widespread illegalities and corruption are a toxin sapping the people’s confidence in the party.” Such warnings indicate the extent to which these hitherto inconceivable offences have become a serious social issue.

2. Social Control

North Korea has made every effort to maintain effective control of its society. It has done so in the form of encouraging voluntary agreement through the internalization of ideological confirmation of the regime, regulating organizational life, and maintaining physical control over society through the Workers’ Party and other power institutions.

(1) Ideological Confirmation of the Regime

A. Collectivism and Organizational Life

North Korea is a society in which collectivist ideas are fully realized in every aspect of social life, including areas of politics, economy, culture, and morality. Emphasizing the importance of collectivism, Kim Il-sung stated that “while an individualist view on life takes personal objectives and pleasure as first priority, a collectivist view on

life finds true reward and happiness by binding one's fate with that of the group and endeavoring for group objectives.”

On the political and economic front, North Korea's collectivist ideas appear in the form of 'mass line policies,' while 'communist customs' are found in social areas. Public campaigns such as the *Chollima* movement, **Chongsangri Method**, **Speed Battle**, and Three Revolutions Unit movement have been used as a means of mobilizing

the workforce in collective ways, while promoting the socialization and politicization of the masses to preserve social order. In addition, the regime promotes “beautiful” communist customs as a way of exhorting individuals to translate their ideological confirmation of the regime into action. These customs include the adoption of orphans, marriage with disabled veterans, and, for those who have studied abroad, volunteer service in their hometowns.

Collectivist values are studied and promoted throughout one's entire life, starting from his or her childhood and continuing into school and work thereafter. In North Korea, most young children from three months to three years of age are sent to nurseries, so that their lives are even then controlled in accordance with collectivist principles. Table 7-4 demonstrates the extent to which the life of an individual in North Korea is integrated into the collective.

The Chongsangri Method is a basic guideline for economic management proposed by Kim Il-sung during his 'on the spot guidance' at the *Chongsangri* Cooperative Farm in Kangseo County, South Pyongan Province in February 1960. It calls for higher institutions to assist lower organizations in promoting the party lines and policies.

The Speed Battle is a movement that promotes socialist competition in national endeavors. Adopted in 1974, the term “speed” was first introduced with the 'Pyongyang speed' campaign in the 1950s and “vinalon speed” campaign in the 1960s. Afterwards, the competition was promoted in forms of '100-day battle' and '200-day battle,' as well as '1980s speed creation movement' and '1990s speed creation movement.' '150-day battle' and '100-day battle' are campaigns that took place in 2009. The key points in these speed battles are to enhance public allegiance to Kim Il-sung, reject obsolete ideas running counter to the *juche* ideology, apply the concept of lightning and annihilation war, and promote efforts to undertake technological revolution.

Table 7-4 Major Social Organizations in North Korea

Name of Organization	Membership	Size	Qualification & Activities	Foundation Day
Democratic Women's Union	Women with ages between 31 and 60	About 200,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women not affiliated with other organization • A rear line of the WPK • Mobilized for ideology, education, and labor 	Nov. 18, 1945
Union of Agricultural Working People	Members of collective farm with ages between 31 and 65 (60 in case of women)	About 1.3 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laborers in Agriculture • Providing guidance on ideological education and agriculture 	Jan. 31, 1946
General Federation of Trade Union	Laborers and office workers with ages between 31 and 65 (60 in case of women)	About 1.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized at each workplace • Nine trade Unions • Providing guidance on ideological education, technical learning, and work competition 	Nov. 30, 1945

Source : The Board of National Reunification, *North Korea Overview 1995*, p.84; KINU, *North Korea Overview 2009*, p.53

B. *Juche* Ideology and Its Evolution

Collectivism repeatedly indoctrinated in the North Korean society has been systematized in the form of *juche* ideology. Demanding constant loyalty to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, *juche* ideology can be viewed as an ideological means of controlling people's lives.

Upon the proposition that “the principal agents of social movement are the working class, its party, and the *suryŏng*, *juche* ideology has evolved into a binding relationship of the *suryŏng*, party and general masses.⁴⁵ This gives rise to a vertical relationship between the *suryŏng* and the people, demanding unconditional allegiance to the supreme ruler. The people are forced to equip themselves with a kamikaze-type spirit that entails “defending the *suryŏng* to the death,” “becoming bullets and shells for the *suryŏng*,” and “guarding him with suicidal explosions.”

By invoking ‘our-style socialism’ and ‘Korean people-first policy,’ North Korea also endeavors to implant pride in the people and thus maintain stability in society. These efforts have become more necessary due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and East European

⁴⁵ Hwang Jang-yop, *I Have Seen the Truth of the History*, (Seoul: Hanul, 1999), pp. 369–393

socialist regimes. Faced with severe food shortage and economic difficulties, North Koreans developed a defeatist mentality and skepticism in regard to their state's future. In response, the authorities felt the need to bolster indoctrination with regard to the superiority of the system. The regime thus argues that "our style of socialism has been problem-proof in the construction of the nation."

It was in this context that North Korea restored King *Tangun's* tomb, thereby bestowing recognition on what it had once criticized as a 'historical fiction.' It also excavated ruins buried in the Taedong River basin, eventually claiming the existence of a 'Taedong River culture.' In order to claim superiority for North Korea's claim to legitimacy, the regime argues that the Taedong River basin has been "home to Koreans from time immemorial and is a sacred place where earliest human civilization was born." Regardless of the truth, North Korea is using this version of history for propaganda purposes, arguing that it would not collapse like the Soviet Union and East European socialist countries due to the superior strength of its tradition.

Parallel with this effort, the regime began calling North Koreans 'the people of Kim Il-sung,' also introducing the year of Kim Il-sung's birth, 1912 AD, as year one in its new *juche* calendar and marking his birthday, April 15, as the 'Day of the Sun.' Furthermore, the constitution was revised in 1998 and 2009 to recognize it as a 'Kim Il-sung constitution.' WPK rules were revised in 2010 to define the party as 'Kim Il-sung's party. These undertakings imply that North Korea is virtually the personal property of the Kim Il-sung family. These measures too are presumed to have been aimed at underscoring the superiority of the system to any other (whether socialist or capitalist). By using propaganda to posit the 'great' Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-il at the helm of the system, the regime seeks to bolster public allegiance to the Kim family as well as faith in the socialist system. Ultimately, North Korea has sought to preclude any unrest that might have been elicited by the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

(2) Social Control Agencies

Traditionally, the party and administrative agencies, such as the National Security Planning Agency and Ministry of People's Security, had been responsible for maintaining social control in North Korea. However, when social order became less certain and the military-first policy was introduced in the late 1990s, the military took a leading role in maintaining control over society. Eventually, the party, government and military comprised a ternary structure in social control.

A. The Party

Article 11 of the North Korean constitution stipulates: "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea carries out all its activities under the leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea." Accordingly, the WPK is the supreme institution taking precedence over the constitution and a pivotal agency with the power to organize every area of society. The party organs are established in every institution and they follow party instructions in perfect unison. The party has a local committee in each city and county that deals directly with the general public. Lowest in the hierarchy are party cells, each of which has control over 5 to 30 people. Party members are required to report to these party organs of any problems found in administrative agencies and the daily lives of local residents. This gives authority to party members to control the people's public as well as private lives.

B. Administrative Agencies

Political surveillance agencies responsible for monitoring and supervising the movements of North Korean citizens include the National Security Planning Agency, Ministry of People's Security, and Judicial Life Guidance Commission. These agencies watch over people's actions and thoughts and crack down on so-called anti-party and counter-revolutionary forces. The National Security Planning Agency, the highest political surveillance agency operating

independently of the criminal court system, has a right to monitor, detain, arrest, and execute political prisoners at its discretion without legal procedures. It is also responsible for escorting Kim Jong-un, investigating administrative agencies at various levels, watching over social organizations, factories, and enterprises, monitoring repatriated Koreans, inspecting mail, wiretapping telephone and radio communication, managing classified documents, monitoring the movements of soldiers, consolidating the hereditary succession of power and eradicating resistance against various issues that may rise throughout that process. The National Security Planning Agency has its agents everywhere from Pyongyang to local cities, districts, counties, and towns. They are also dispatched to all agencies, enterprises, and company-level army units.

The Ministry of People's Security not only maintains and reinforces public order, but also plays a role in protecting state properties. It monitors the movements of citizens and exposes violations of social order. It also runs security checks on relevant individuals and watches over their private life. The ministry is headquartered in Pyongyang but has a security station in every province, city and district. At the lowest end of its organizational structure are local substations. Agents are drawn from servicemen on active duty and from veterans, while selection is based on the candidate's family background and loyalty to the party.

The Judicial Life Guidance Commission is an agency created in response to a point raised during the 1st meeting of the 6th Supreme People's Assembly held in December 1977 in regard to the need for reinforcing control over citizens. The commission is responsible for encouraging individuals, agencies, and institutions to fully comply with party lines and policies as well as for monitoring and supervising them during the process.

On top of all this, North Korean citizens are placed under layers of

additional surveillance systems, including the five-family system and various study groups. Under the five-family system, entire households are divided into groups of five and assigned one loyal family to each group to monitor and regulate potential misdeeds. This system was operated from July 1958 to 1973, and later was renamed upon Kim Il-sung's order to 'people's neighborhood units' in urban areas and subgroups in rural areas. Each people's neighborhood unit often consists of 20 to 30 households, which are monitored and supervised by the unit chief and instigation agent. They meet twice a month to review their lives. All details become topics for discussion and self-criticism, including daily activities like raising children, mobilization for labor, cleaning, maintaining order in neighborhood parks, preventing accidents, taking baths, and getting haircuts.

C. Military Agencies

Kim Il-sung once said, "Socialism and peace exist on the basis of guns and spears." Accordingly, military agencies had long focused on communizing South Korea under the guidance of the party. However, with economic difficulties and an increase in social aberrations and other elements of a regime in crisis, the military, invoking the military-first policy, began intervening into domestic society to enhance social control. Military agents were dispatched to every administrative unit, enterprise, and cooperative farm. They resided in colleges and universities to keep an eye on the movements of students. Since the end of the 1990s, the Ministry of People's Armed Forces has taken direct action to track down and punish "anti-socialist elements." This reflects the sense of crisis that has gripped authorities while also implying that maintaining an effective control over such elements may no longer be possible.

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NORTH KOREA

2012

Understanding North Korea

Published by the Institute for Unification Education, Ministry of Unification
1307 Hancheon-ro (Suyu-dong), Gangbuk-gu, Seoul 142-715

Tel. +82-2-901-7161~5, Fax. +82-2-901-7088

Published in December 2012

Designed by Neulpum Plus, Inc.

Printed by Neulpum Plus, Inc.

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website at www.uniedu.go.kr