

CHAPTER 5

Kim Chong-il's Erratic Decision-Making and North Korea's Strategic Culture

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Introduction

In the more than 55 years since North Korea was created, the country has had but two leaders. The first, Kim Il-song, was born in a homeland occupied by Japan and spent his youth as a guerilla fighting to restore Korea's independence. Even after the Japanese withdrew in 1945, Kim looked backwards, building a nation which mirrored the preoccupations and operating culture of his guerilla days. This produced a leadership cadre that is still secretive, xenophobic, and convinced that only overwhelming military strength can guarantee the nation's survival.

Kim Chong-il, who succeeded his father and has ruled since 1994, is more intellectually agile and more intrigued by the notion of change. This has helped him to improve relations with China and Russia and to introduce some economic change. Moreover, because he better understands the problems North Korea faces and the strengths that South Korea enjoys, he seems less inclined to initiate a second peninsula war. Even so, North Korea remains a source of danger as the self-centered Kim is vulnerable to misinterpreting the intentions of foreign leaders and often relies on brinkmanship and threats as primary tools of diplomacy. Kim's ruthless personality, meanwhile, suggests that he would not hesitate to use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) if he believed foreign powers posed an imminent threat to either North Korea or him personally.

In late 2002, North Korean diplomats acknowledged that their country had violated a 1994 international agreement by resuming work on a clandestine nuclear weapons program. Clearly, this revelation and its

consequences--a setback to rapprochement with Japan and a cutoff of Western assistance to the energy sector--are outcomes Kim Chong-il would have wished to avoid. Even so, Kim probably counts the secret nuclear program a worthwhile risk, and he may believe that acknowledging it now strengthens his country's deterrence posture. Kim's past behavior suggests that he may also believe that an opportunity exists to accept the imposition of new safeguards in exchange for progress on his own agenda, i.e., negotiating economic aid and realizing high-level talks with the United States.

The Supreme Leader: Kim Chong-il

Kim Chong-il was born in the early 1940s near Khabarovsk, where, under the protection of the Soviet military, Kim Il-song was at that time basing his guerilla operations. In August 1945, with Japan's defeat in World War II and the Soviets' assumption of control over the northern half of the Korean peninsula, Kim Il-song returned to P'yongyang. His wife and children followed a few months later, becoming North Korea's "first family" when the Soviets installed Kim in power in early 1946.

With the exception of two years spent in China at the start of the Korean War, Kim Chong-il grew up and was schooled in P'yongyang, and in 1964 he finished his education at Kim Il-song University, earning a bachelor's degree in political economy.¹ On leaving college, Kim went to work for the Korean Workers' Party (KWP), the main power base of his father. In quick succession he moved into managerial positions at three key departments.

The first and most significant of these appointments in the KWP was to the Organization and Guidance Department. This is not only the country's premier patronage-dispensing platform but also the coordinating body for managing the party's remaining departments and, through them, military, governmental, and economic activities. It was at and through the Organization and Guidance Department that Kim first had the opportunity to develop a comprehensive knowledge of political life in North Korea and the issues involved in running the country. Moreover, the assignment allowed him to begin building a personal power base, as is seen in the fact that many current second-tier leaders were his associates at the department in the 1960s and 1970s.²

Kim Chong-il used his next assignment, to the Propaganda and Agitation Department, to deepen ideological indoctrination. This helped enforce political conformity and justify rule by the Kim family, but it also strengthened a sense of national pride and uniqueness in an era when South Korea was beginning to flourish and North Koreans continued to suffer economic deprivation. Finally, Kim's assignment as head of the Culture and Arts Department of the KWP allowed him to focus on his personal passions--movies, opera, and theater--while making art more clearly serve political ends.

Leader-in-waiting. Changes in North Korean propaganda themes and other written materials indicate that Kim Il-song had decided on a family succession by the early 1970s. According to Han S. Park, the leading scholar of North Korean ideology, Kim Il-song sought to provide a basis not only for stability but also for a "perpetuation of the system characteristics that tend[ed] to be unique and peculiar."³ Scholars agree that Kim Il-song was haunted by both the postmortem denunciations of Stalin and Mao's stumbling efforts to secure the Chinese succession. In these circumstances, the elder Kim turned to the only person he thought willing to preserve his legacy and able to lay claim—through blood ties—to his own legitimacy.

In connection with the succession plan, Kim Chong-il became a KWP secretary in September 1973 and a Politburo member in February 1974, and his authority grew rapidly thereafter. By the end of the decade he had assumed day-to-day control of government, party, and military affairs, even though Kim Il-song remained the final arbiter of policy. Precisely when Kim Chong-il obtained operational authority over the complex intelligence apparatus is not known. However, by 1978 he had at least partial control of covert operations and this allowed him to personally initiate an operation that, while relatively low risk, gained international attention. This was the pair of sequential kidnappings, from Hong Kong in 1978, of Kim's favorite South Korean actress and her movie-director husband.

In October 1980, at the Sixth Party Congress, Kim Chong-il was ranked second in the KWP. Although he was not formally designated his father's successor, in 1981 the media began referring to him by name and chronicling some of his activities.⁴ Kim became first deputy chairman of the National Defense Commission in May 1990 and Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA) in December 1991. He attained the

military rank of marshal in April 1992 and became chairman of the National Defense Commission in April 1993. In July 1994, Kim Il-song—still the general secretary of the KWP and the head of state as President—died of a heart attack. Three years of national mourning followed, after which Kim Chong-il became KWP general secretary. However, instead of assuming the presidency, he rules as chair of the National Defense Commission.

Kim Chong-il's Managerial Style and Personality

Managerial style. Kim Chong-il is less public a figure than his father, as is evident from his behavior and pattern of activities. He does not view public appearances and public speeches as a critical element of his leadership style. North Korean television broadcasts of the 1980s show him to be patently bored at large, formal meetings and abrupt to the point of rudeness in greeting citizens on ceremonial occasions. In addition, Kim is a relatively solitary decision-maker, who, according to defector information, obtains information primarily by reading official reports, the foreign press, and the internet, and by watching foreign television.⁵

Micromanagement also characterizes Kim Chong-il's workstyle. No detail is too small to rivet his attention and no project escapes his decision-making reach. The media treats this managerial pattern as evidence of unparalleled talents and a deep care for the welfare of the people. However, Kim has a strong need for control. This first became clear in the mid-1970s, when he created the Three Revolutions Teams and sent college-age students to every production unit in North Korea. The students were charged with encouraging a greater use of modern technology, but the primary intent of the program was to give Kim Chong-il a means of control and a channel of information collection independent of those used by Kim Il-song.⁶

Personal characteristics. While capable of a studied charm, especially in the presence of foreign visitors, defectors indicate that Kim cares little whether he is liked. Indeed, he clearly prefers dominating by fear, especially when dealing with senior officials. Specific anecdotes related by defectors paint a portrait of a

manipulative individual who controls people through a combination of bribery (i.e., the granting of special privileges), humiliation, and the threat of punishments. The most dire of these punishments is execution, and several defectors have named senior officials said to have been executed on Kim's orders. Even if some of these stories are more urban legend than fact, their widespread currency heightens Kim's ability to instill fear.⁷

Defectors also characterize Kim Chong-il as self-centered and lacking empathy, and they indicate that he tends to view nearly everything and everyone in a utilitarian manner. Kim believes that lesser beings exist to serve him. Kim also takes a utilitarian approach to ideas, according to examples given by defectors. On the negative side, this means that he has no enduring commitments to principles other than that of his own self-interest. On the more positive side, his non-sentimental approach makes him a more flexible thinker than his father. Kim thinks of himself as a highly creative and artistic individual, and he welcomes creative ideas offered by other people as long as they do not clash with his opinions or threaten his control. He especially appreciates novel ideas for earning greater foreign currency, manipulating the appearance of P'yongyang's architecture, and generally acquiring major benefits at minimal cost.

Both Kim's lack of empathy and sense of entitlement are revealed in his indulgent lifestyle, which contrasts with the struggle of most North Koreans to simply feed themselves. Defector reporting indicates that Kim maintains lavish villas in each of North Korea's provinces and has them furnished with imported luxury goods. He is the world's leading importer of high-end cognac, according to a report carried by the *Wall Street Journal* in the mid-1990s, and has squads of beautiful female entertainers maintained for his benefit.

A low regard for others is indicated by Kim's apparent involvement in overseeing two terrorist incidents (one in 1983 and another in 1987, as discussed later in this chapter) meant to take many lives. More recent events also testify to his comfort with tolerating high levels of deaths at home. In confronting North Korea's famine, saving lives has not been a top priority. Early in the famine cycle Kim cut off nearly all food supplies to the four eastern provinces and denied these provinces access to international aid.⁸ Large numbers of deaths also occurred when, between

1997 and 1999 on Kim's orders, several hundred thousand people displaced by the famine were herded into camps where conditions allowed few to survive.⁹ Moreover, according to the testimony of eyewitnesses, Kim has ordered the systematic killing of babies born in North Korea's camps for political prisoners.¹⁰

Decision-making Elites and Military Command and Control

Ruling elites. Kim Chong-il is the sole arbiter of who rises to senior levels of the party, government, and military and which individuals and institutions are allowed a voice on each decision-making occasion. The advisors closest to him form a hand-chosen kitchen cabinet of relatives and long-time allies. It is within this circle that Kim can let down his hair, so to speak, and obtain non-threatening policy advice and emotional support. The members of this group spend a good deal of leisure time with Kim, and they control mechanisms which earn substantial amounts of foreign currency, including that reserved for Kim's personal use. To the degree that North Korea is a kleptocracy, a political system managed to enrich a small number of leaders, the heart of that kleptocracy resides here.

This inner circle includes:

- Kim Kyong-hui, the younger sister of Kim Chong-il and his only full sibling. The South Korean press identifies her as deputy director of the KWP's Light Industry Department.
- Chang Song-taek, the husband of Kim Kyong-hui and the seniormost of the first vice directors of the KWP's Organization and Guidance Department. Through this department, Chang manages KWP headquarters operations, the procurement of goods and cash for Kim Chong-il, and smuggling by diplomats. Chang also reportedly heads the party-based Taesong Bank, and this may connect him to the flow of payments involved in North Korea's arms sales.¹¹
- Vice Marshal Cho Myong-nok, the second ranking member of the National Defense Commission and political commissar of the KPA. In

October 2000, as a special envoy of Kim Chong-il, Cho visited Washington D.C. and met with President Clinton, Secretary of State Albright, and Secretary of Defense Cohen. Some years earlier he was commander of the Air Force and is reported to have negotiated the transfer of missiles and missile-related technology to Iran.¹²

- Kim Yong-sun, the KWP secretary in charge of rapprochement with Seoul, South Korean investment in the North, and covert action programs against South Korea.
- Kim Ki-nam and Kim Kuk-tae, longtime KWP secretaries and specialists in propaganda and personnel affairs, respectively.

A second, larger circle of officials shores up Kim Chong-il's power base and joins the inner circle in strategic decision-making. In recent years, representatives from the KPA have gained dramatically increased prominence within this echelon as have the KWP officials who oversee weapons production. Key members of this group are currently the Minister of the People's Armed Forces and the KPA Chief of the General Staff; the KWP secretaries and department chiefs for Chagang Province, weapons production, and general military affairs; the head of the General Staff's Operations Bureau; and the two deputy political commissars of the KPA.

Military command and control. On paper and in practice under current peacetime circumstances, control of North Korea's military policies and armed forces is vested in Kim Chong-il and flows down from him in two intersecting chains-of-command. One chain-of-command is based in the KWP, where the Central Military Committee works with the KPA's General Political Bureau to ensure party control of the military. The other administrative channel of control is the National Defense Commission in whose name Kim rules.

North Korean media reporting indicates that the National Defense Commission currently includes the head of the General Political Bureau, the Defense Minister, Chief of the General Staff, the three service commanders, the active-duty heads of major security organizations, and the two civilian KWP officials who manage the armaments industry. The Commission is North Korea's closest equivalent to the U.S. National Security Council but it lacks representatives from the foreign affairs establishment and the non-armaments economic sector.

It is not known how often the National Defense Commission meets, either as a full or partial group. Information on the dynamics of Commission discussions is also not available, but given Kim Chong-il's dislike of opinions that challenge his and his solo ability to dictate the Commission's membership, any question of his having to defer to Commission decisions may be moot. Consistent with this judgment is one journalist's report of Secretary of State Albright's discussion of missile-related issues with Kim in October 2000. After Albright had "commented that some of the questions were technical and might require study, Kim picked up the list and began immediately to provide answers one by one without advice or further study, in what Albright later called a 'quite stunning' feat, which could only be performed by a leader with absolute authority."¹³

Under Kim Il-song, the chain-of-command for implementing military orders originated with him and moved down through the Minister of Defense, to the director of the KPA's General Political Bureau, and finally to the Chief of the General Staff. According to the defector Hwang Chang-yop, Kim Chong-il has streamlined this process so that orders now flow directly from him to the Chief of the General Staff.¹⁴ This reporting is consistent with a downgrading of the Defense Minister's portfolio under Kim Chong-il. For several years, Kim allowed the post to be encumbered by an official too frail to attend to his duties, and at several subsequent junctures he has allowed the position to remain unfilled for short periods of time.

North Korea's Political Culture

The underpinnings of ideology. In defining a policy path, Kim Il-song and his colleagues articulated an ideology of national self-reliance called *chuche* (pronounced 'jew-cheh'). Initially, Kim's preoccupation with independence grew out of past circumstances, for Korea is situated where the ambitions of three historically hegemonistic powers--China, Russia, and Japan—overlap. Of most immediate concern was Japan's colonial occupation which Kim Il-song and his fellow guerilla fighters had challenged.

Exaggerated in importance, Kim's days as a guerilla became the basis for his reinvention as the great liberator and for his political legitimacy.¹⁵ The emphasis placed on Kim Il-song's guerilla days helped, in turn, underwrite a state ideology focused on defending the country's

independence. For Kim Il-song, the major lesson learned from the Japanese occupation was that overwhelming military strength and a willingness to employ violent struggle were absolutely vital. North Korea's answer was to make massive investments in the military. Even today, under difficult economic conditions, Kim Chong-il and his ruling circle still calculate that military strength, rather than a vibrant economy, is the most critical need for the regime's and country's survival.¹⁶

At the same time that he addressed strategic issues, Kim Il-song molded *chuche* to serve two other ends. One was justifying his authoritarian rule, and the other was arguing that the socioeconomic system was superior to all others. In both instances, the leadership used utopian metaphors, describing North Korea as a paradise on earth whose citizens were uniquely blessed.

This utopian vision involved a social contract wherein the state would provide for all of the citizens' needs while the populace would cede to the government the right to make nearly all decisions, large and small, public and personal. The state's provision of housing, food, and daily necessities never produced anything approaching the lifestyles in the rest of Asia, but, through the 1970s and 1980s, most of the populace apparently believed that the leadership had fulfilled its obligations. The Kims, meanwhile, had gained what they sought, a culture of dependency in which the state was seen as the source of all beneficence while the populace was passive, disinclined to assume personal responsibility, and unaccustomed to think independently.¹⁷

The state of control. As a result of the Orwellian controls imposed by the Kims, North Korea lacks any voluntarily-organized associations, be it in the intellectual, scientific, artistic, recreational, religious, or economic domains. All activities and organizations are controlled by the state, as are all publications. One or two small political parties other than the KWP exist, but they—like several small churches—have been created to provide the illusion of democracy and religious freedom.

The minds and will of senior leaders other than Kim and of the general populace have also been affected by suffocating controls. In this vein, Hwang Chang-yop, the KWP secretary who defected in 1997, has reported that “some party members acknowledge that [North Korea is] in trouble...but they keep worrying without any plan to get out of it.”¹⁸ A larger sample of defectors interviewed by two U.S. scholars has indicated

much the same. Although none of these defectors had anything positive to say about Kim Chong-il and expressed cynicism about his cult and propaganda, they reported having had “no energy to pursue their thoughts and certainly no opportunity to discuss them.” Instead, like many other North Koreans, they had simply “become politically disengaged.”¹⁹

While there remains no opportunity for opposition political activity, there are signs that Kim Chong-il and his ruling colleagues have lost some of the control they long enjoyed. This is most evident in how the population at large and even some officials have responded to the severe famine of the last decade. A sharp deterioration of controls can be seen in the regime's current inability to dictate the physical mobility of its citizens. In a country that had previously achieved a state of near total immobility by denying the population access even to bicycles, many people are now footloose gypsies who wander the countryside searching for food and who illegally crowd trains that will transport them towards the border with China.

At the same time, corruption has soared, especially in regions hardest hit by the famine. In the northeast, for example, officials have aided and abetted the illegal harvesting of trees and the cannibalizing of factories as they struggle to find goods that might be traded for Chinese food supplies. In Ch'ongjin City, this uncontrolled activity is said to have become so severe that in 1995 Kim reportedly removed both the civilian and military leadership, disbanding in the process the VI Corps headquartered in the city.²⁰

Whether the senior leadership also lacks full control of its military operations is less easy to determine. Speculation to this effect surfaces periodically, as, for example, when a deadly naval skirmish occurred in June 2002 off the west coast. According to analysis carried in *The New York Times* after this incident, the North Korean provocation at sea may have reflected military dissatisfaction with conciliatory gestures towards both South Korea and the United States.²¹

The State of the Economy

The economic balance sheet. North Korean leaders have consistently given priority to developing military strength at the expense of building a consumer-oriented economy with global ties. For at least four decades,

this strategy sufficed because P'yongyang's key supporters in the Communist world—the Soviet Union and China—were willing to prop up the North Korean economy with subsidized trade, concessionary prices on energy resources, and debt write-offs.

However, in the early 1990s, Moscow and Beijing turned their backs on these arrangements. Chronic shortages of petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) were one early consequence of this change, leading to serious power shortages. Combined with North Korea's long-term failure to maintain and upgrade its industrial infrastructure, these power problems resulted in a manufacturing sector operating at only a fraction of capacity.²² In turn, widespread unemployment and underemployment resulted, and North Korea began to experience a run of negative growth statistics.

Reliable statistics are not published by P'yongyang, but the Central Intelligence Agency in 2001 reported an estimated growth rate of minus 3 percent in 2000 and a GDP of roughly \$22 billion. Imports were pegged at \$960 million and exports at \$520 million. In contrast, CIA statistics for South Korea showed a positive growth rate of 9 percent, a GDP of \$764.6 billion, imports of \$160.5 billion and exports of \$172.6 billion. These extraordinary differences in levels of economic activity are all the more striking because South Korea's population is little more than twice the size of the North's.²³

In the agricultural sector, the situation is even more dire as North Korea has experienced nine consecutive years of crop failure. While the leadership blames these failures on weather disasters—several years of flooding followed by drought—outside experts attribute an overwhelming portion of the blame to the regime's dysfunctional policies.²⁴ Even the receipt of foreign food aid has failed to avert mass starvation, and studies by international experts set the number of deaths at roughly 2.5 million people, according to Andrew Natsios, currently serving as administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. If this estimated figure is correct, the loss equals more than ten percent of the population.²⁵ Surveys by the World Food Program and UNICEF further indicate that as many as 18 percent of children under the age of nine are suffering severe malnutrition, including body wasting, and that 62 percent are the victims of stunted growth.²⁶

To deal with the food crisis, Kim Chong-il and his ruling colleagues have washed their hands of broad responsibility for feeding the nation and

allowed most of the national food distribution system, which had been administered via the workplace, to collapse. Initially, local authorities were tasked with feeding their citizens, but in January 1998, Kim demanded that each family henceforth fend for itself. This has required people not previously engaged in agriculture to raise food directly or to barter their labor and non-food products for food supplies. Many citizens have relocated to the countryside to farm, while others have become foragers and several hundred thousand more have fled to China.

Prospects for reform. The senior leadership recognizes the severity of the economic crisis, and it has accepted the fact that changes in the food distribution system have led to a *de facto* privatization of many plots and farmers markets. Kim Chong-il made two recent visits to China (in 2000 and 2001), stopping to see special economic zones (SEZ) and such institutions as the Shanghai stock exchange, and while there—although not at home—praised China's economic achievements. Several sets of legal reforms have also paved the way for foreign investment, and a SEZ is already operating, albeit in the remote region of Najin-Songbong near the Tumen River.²⁷

Despite these steps forward, the leadership has not signaled either a willingness to abandon a Stalinist model of development or a willingness to make strategic changes. According to the scholar Nicholas Eberstadt, getting North Korea back on a growth track would require an end to massive investment in the military sector, an end to spending on politically-oriented showpiece projects, the introduction of market-driven dynamics, and true integration into the world economy.²⁸ Such policy adjustments would involve a sea change in policy, and there are as yet few signs that Kim Chong-il is thinking in such ambitious terms. Instead it appears as if North Korea, for the time being, has opted to pursue one of its favorite types of balancing acts. This involves seeking the greatest payoff while incurring the lowest possible political risk and economic cost.

In the foreign investment domain, one such proposal fits this bill ideally: opening North Korean territory to rail transit rights that would give Russia a land connection to the markets of South Korea. This plan would maximize foreign currency earnings while minimizing the exposure of North Korean citizens to outside influences. In the domestic arena, meanwhile, experiments in localization are being pursued in Chagang Province in the mountainous north. Making a virtue out of necessity, this

program calls for some relaxation of central planning in favor of making the province self-reliant in both food production and electricity generation.²⁹ It is telling that this experiment is being managed not by a local official but rather by a heavyweight dispatched from P'yongyang. This is Yon Hyong-muk, who is the former premier, the mastermind of North Korea's failed, centrally planned economy, and the KWP official also currently in charge of the weapons industry.

The Diplomatic Front

Because P'yongyang's approach to foreign affairs is driven above all by a sense of threat, it had traditionally been reactive and focused on preserving North Korean independence while denying South Korea legitimacy. For many years, this unimaginative strategy was played out in a world split and defined by ideology. The Socialist family of nations could be relied on to deny Seoul diplomatic recognition, to trade on a non-cash basis, and to offer significant aid without North Korea having to exert any great diplomatic skill to obtain it. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, these sureties were undermined by the irresistible draw of South Korea's robust economy, the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, and the unwillingness of Moscow and Beijing to continue subsidizing trade with P'yongyang.

As a result, Kim Chong-il has found it necessary to proactively rebuild ties of critical importance, and he has made Russia the front-burner issue. Russia too is seeking improved relations, for it wishes to avoid losing its voice in a potentially unstable region contiguous to its Far Eastern provinces. In February 2000, Moscow and P'yongyang initialed a revised friendship treaty, this time without security guarantees, and in July 2000, Vladimir Putin became the first Russian or Soviet head-of-state to visit North Korea. In April 2001, the two countries signed a Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement meant to benefit North Korea, and in the area of economic cooperation particular attention is focused on linking rail lines with a connection through to South Korea.³⁰

P'yongyang's relations with Beijing, while benefiting from a greater sense of cultural affinity and the Korean War legacy, also took serious hits in the last years of Kim Il-song's rule. The establishment of U.S.-Chinese

relations in 1979 brought rapprochement between North Korea's closest ally and worst enemy, and the following year China began trading with South Korea. In 1988, China, like the Soviet Union, participated in the Seoul Olympic games and four years later Beijing and Seoul established diplomatic relations. Still, China, like Russia, is unwilling to completely abandon North Korea. The Sino-Korean friendship treaty of 1961 remains in force, although some Chinese officials have suggested to Western interlocutors that Beijing no longer feels committed to dispatch troops to North Korea in time of war.³¹

The Armed Forces and Their Weapons Systems

Conventional military forces. The result of North Korea's massive investment in its armed forces is the world's most militarized country in terms of the standing army compared to the population size. Roughly 1.1 million personnel are on active duty status, while another several million citizens form a body of reservists operating under four umbrellas.³²

The *ground forces* have slightly over one million personnel divided among 20 corps. Approximately 70 percent of these forces are in a forward deployment close to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), and this accounts for the U.S.-South Korea calculation that warning of war might, at best, come only 24 hours before hostilities begin. Approximately 90,000 of the army's troops are classified as special operations forces. These have been trained to undertake reconnaissance, penetrate South Korea to establish a second front, disrupt U.S. and South Korean facilities and command and control, and otherwise sow chaos and confusion.³³

Major armaments in the inventory of the ground forces are an estimated 4,000 tanks and assault guns, 2,500 armored personnel carriers, 10,000 artillery pieces, 2,300 multiple rocket launchers, and five battalions of free rockets over ground (FROGs). Some analysts also assign to the ground forces operational control of North Korea's four ballistic missile systems (two deployed and two under development).³⁴

Naval forces, believed to number between 46,000 and 60,000 personnel, are split among a command headquarters in P'yongyang, a East Sea Fleet, a West Sea Fleet, two sniper brigades, and two coastal defense missile regiments. Their mission is primarily defensive in nature. The

navy has close to 1,000 surface vessels, some constructed indigenously and others acquired years ago from the Soviet Union and China. According to one estimate, 83 percent of the navy's vessels are smaller than 200 tonnes and none are of destroyer size or larger. Midget submarines and small semisubmersibles are used primarily as infiltration craft by the intelligence services.³⁵

The *air force* has a personnel base estimated at 100,000 or less and approximately 1700 aircraft. Because the inventory of fighters is heavily skewed towards MiG-15s, 17s, 19s, and 21s, many planes are limited to daylight hour-use and good weather conditions. More advanced capabilities are available with the MiG-23 FLOGGERS, MiG-29 FULCRUMs, and Su-25 FROGFOOTs acquired from the Soviet Union in the 1980s, but these craft total just 98. The sole bomber in the inventory is the Il-28 (H-5), of which North Korea has about 80. Roughly 300 helicopters and 300 transport planes round out the inventory.³⁶

Weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems. According to U.S. Government estimates, North Korea has a significant but uneven capability to produce and use WMD.

- In the nuclear area, P'yongyang is believed to have recovered enough plutonium from the spent fuel rods of the Yongbyon reactor to fabricate one or two weapons. As discussed at the conclusion of this chapter, a clandestine and unsafeguarded uranium enrichment program begun in the late 1990s may be providing another source of fissile material. Whether weaponization has occurred is not known.
- In the biological weapons area, P'yongyang has pursued a capability since the 1960s and appears to have the infrastructure needed to produce agents such as anthrax, cholera, and plague. Here too, it is not known whether weaponization has occurred.
- In the chemical weapons area, North Korea is believed to have large stockpiles of warfare agents (of the nerve, blister, choking, and blood types) and is known to have trained its own forces to survive in a chemical warfare environment.³⁷

Delivery options available for WMD include ballistic missiles; anti-ship cruise missiles; fighters, bombers, and helicopters; artillery pieces;

rocket launchers and mortars; sprayers; and special operations personnel. The ballistic missile option is of greatest concern. North Korea, according to a recent U.S. Intelligence Community study, is nearly self-sufficient in developing and producing these missiles. In difficult economic times, it has financed this ambitious program via the export of weapons systems, components, and technology to countries in the Middle East and South Asia, and this has made P'yongyang the world's leading proliferator of ballistic missiles.³⁸

Already deployed in large numbers in North Korea are three missile systems: the SCUD B and Scud C SRBMs and the Nodong MRBM. Another MRBM, the Taepo-dong 1, was successfully tested in August 1998, with a flight that moved eastward over the Japanese archipelago before plunging into the Pacific Ocean. Work also continues on the Taepo-dong 2, an ICBM.

- The SCUD B and SCUD C, with their ranges of several hundred kilometers each, provide coverage of South Korea and small portions of Northeast China and Siberia.
- The Nodong missile has a range of 1,300 kilometers and can reach all points in South Korea and Japan as well as parts of the Chinese and Russian maritime provinces.
- The Taepo-dong 1, with a range estimated by the Department of Defense at 2,000 kilometers, can reach all of South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, most of China's maritime provinces, and part of Siberia.
- The Taepo-dong 2, the ICBM, has not been flight tested under the terms of a moratorium that the United States negotiated with North Korea. The U.S. Intelligence Community estimates that in a two-stage configuration it could carry a payload of several hundred kilograms up to 10,000 kilometers. In a three-stage configuration, it is believed, it might attain a range of 15,000 kilometers, which would allow it to reach all of North America.³⁹

Covert action assets. North Korea has a large cadre of officers trained to collect intelligence, build cells in South Korea, and undertake covert action. Under the control of the KWP are four organs, all

supervised by Secretary Kim Yong-sun. These are the Social and Cultural Department, the Investigation Department, the Operations Department, and the Unification Front Department. Under the KPA is the Reconnaissance Bureau, which collects intelligence of relevance to the military and undertakes special operations. These organs have at their disposal a variety of military assets, most notably North Korea's minisubmarines and other craft suitable for seaborne infiltration of South Korea.⁴⁰

The Strategic Paradigm

The post-Korean War paradigm. From the late 1960s until the late 1980s, senior leaders in P'yongyang assumed that they could unilaterally dictate the agenda for reunification, and, conditioned by their guerilla past, they expected to employ violence in doing so. They had factored in the possibility that China and Russia might not support another military adventure southward but still thought a second peninsula war a worthwhile gamble if:

- South Korea were attacked at a vulnerable time.
- Preconditions for unrest in South Korea had been fostered by North Korean covert action programs.
- U.S. military engagement on behalf of South Korea were limited.
- Massive, early damage were inflicted on Seoul.

Defector information, joined with a study of propaganda themes, North Korean behavior, and weapons deployment patterns, indicates that P'yongyang thought that an initial use of artillery followed by a push of armor would quickly level Seoul and force the South Koreans to sue for peace. To a generation of guerilla veterans accustomed to long-term struggles and inured to physical and economic hardships, the South Koreans were viewed as lacking a fighting spirit equal to that of their northern brethren and the Americans, especially after the war in Vietnam, were thought to lack the stomach for another Asian conflict.⁴¹

Covert action and terrorism. These assumptions regarding the ideal conditions for an attack shaped the blueprint for much of North Korea's

behavior towards South Korea in this period. Of particular note was the two-pronged strategy that evolved to create an enabling environment for a quick collapse of the government in Seoul. On the one hand, the North Koreans sought to build cells and emplace sleeper agents in the South, so that chaos, confusion, and a collapse of U.S. and South Korean command and control could be orchestrated at the outset of hostilities. On the other hand, the North Korean leadership looked to the use of terrorist incidents to precipitate instability in the South.⁴²

Activities involving covert action, intelligence collection, and penetrations of South Korea have been numerous and are presumed to be occurring regularly, even at the present time. Most involve small numbers of agents and go undetected, or, at a minimum, occur without fanfare. Some others however, have been ambitious and involved substantial bloodshed. The highest-profile operation of this type was an infiltration that, in late 1968, involved 120 commandos who penetrated the Ulchin-Samchok area seeking to initiate guerilla warfare. Twenty South Korean civilians and armed officers died before all the North Koreans were killed or captured. A more recent penetration that gained attention occurred in September 1996, when a small submarine ran aground in South Korea. All 26 crew members either committed suicide or were hunted down by South Korean authorities.⁴³

Terrorist attacks against South Korea have numbered three.

- In January 1968, a 31-man commando team infiltrated Seoul in an unsuccessful attempt to kill President Pak Chong-hui at the Blue House.
- In October 1983, North Korean commandos set off a bomb in Rangoon, killing 17 visiting South Korean officials, including four cabinet ministers. Arriving late for the event, President Chun Doo-hwan escaped death.
- In November 1987, operatives planted a bomb on KAL Flight 858, which went down in the Andaman Sea and killed 115.

When the first of these three incidents occurred in 1968, Kim Chong-il was just four years out of college and beginning his work within the KWP. Although it is not known whether he participated in the decision-making

and planning that preceded the Blue House raid, it seems safe to assume that he lacked at that juncture the authority to order such a high-risk operation. In fact, scholars such as Dae-Sook Suh identify the aggressiveness of hard-line guerilla veterans as being largely responsible for both the raid and the subsequent shooting down of a U.S. EC-121 reconnaissance plane in April 1969.⁴⁴

By the time that the next two terrorist incidents occurred, Kim Chong-il's influence in policy matters and his day-to-day control of the military and the intelligence apparatus were substantial. At the same time, the guerilla veterans who had promoted the 1968 raid were long gone from the scene, having been purged by Kim Il-song after the EC-121 incident. In interviews, the agent who planted the bomb on the KAL aircraft is said to have identified Kim Chong-il as the initiator of the bombing.⁴⁵ It is not clear whether the agent would have had access to such sensitive information. However, what we know generally about the roles played by the two Kims in the 1980s suggests that neither the Rangoon bombing nor the KAL bombing could have occurred without Kim Chong-il's operational oversight and Kim Il-song's final approval.

Since 1987, North Korea has undertaken no terrorist incidents. The leadership has no religious or philosophical motive for creating chaos as an end in itself, and its inclusion on the Department of State's list of state sponsors of terrorism has precluded its accessing critically-needed sources of international financial aid. Most significantly, however, it is likely that, with the introduction of democratic reforms in South Korea, Kim Chong-il and his colleagues have been unable to identify any moment of vulnerability equal to that which they thought existed in 1983. The Rangoon bombing of October 1983 occurred just five months after large numbers of protestors in Kwangju—taking to the streets to protest the imposition of martial law—had been killed by President Chun Doo-hwan's dispatch of special forces troops to the city.

Dealings with the United States. Through the late 1980s, North Korean leaders had two major goals vis-à-vis the United States: weakening the alliance with Seoul and raising doubts in Washington about the desirability of U.S. military engagement on the peninsula. As a corollary to this second goal, North Korea also sought to compress the window of time that U.S. leaders would have in deciding how to respond to the start

of hostilities. Here the forward-deployment of ground forces was critical, for it reduced the warning of war timeframe.

As a tactic for pursuing its goals vis-à-vis the United States, the senior leaders in P'yongyang decided that periodic reminders of how dangerous a place Korea is, produced a useful payoff. The most serious of these reminders were the seizure of the *Pueblo* in January 1968, the downing of the EC-121 in April 1969, and the axe murders of several U.S. servicemen at Panmunjom in August 1976. In handling these issues, as well as numerous lesser incidents, the United States dealt with North Korea through the U.N. armistice structure based at Panmunjom. Throughout this period and despite the seriousness of some of these incidents, North Korea failed to intimidate the United States into withdrawing its forces from South Korea and failed to engage Washington in senior-level, political talks outside the armistice venue.⁴⁶

The more recent strategic paradigm. In the post-1987 period, information provided by the defector Hwang Chang-yop has indicated that North Korean leaders have continued to preach the same four articles of faith that informed strategic thinking through much of the 1980s.⁴⁷ However, they have added some new elements to the paradigm to reflect opportunities offered by their more threatening WMD capability and have sought accommodations with both the United States, Japan, and South Korea as a means of building a stronger economic base.

Objective conditions have changed dramatically over the past 15 years in North Korea, and Kim Chong-il has had to factor into his strategic planning severe economic problems, an end to the country's conventional military advantage, and an erosion of the military manpower base. In these circumstances, an interest in nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons undoubtedly reflects a judgment that WMD provides the best and only possible means for equalizing the broader balance-of-power when U.S. and South Korean military assets are aggregated. A WMD capability has also allowed North Korea's top leaders to place new emphasis on the concept of deterrence. According to Hwang Chang-yop, senior leaders view even the threat of using WMD against the United States and/or Japan as their ace card in convincing Washington to forgo involvement should another peninsula war begin.⁴⁸

While leveraging threats regarding a WMD capability to his advantage, Kim has also tried to accommodate the United States. He

views our country as uniquely well-positioned to help North Korea build a stronger economic base and, despite decades of railing against capitalism and singing the praises of *chuche*, he is not bothered by the ideological irony of this approach. At the same time, Kim appears motivated to lessen what he views as U.S. military pressure on North Korea. In this regard, three recent developments—President George W. Bush’s inclusion of North Korea in the “axis of evil,” the issuance of a Pentagon study discussing the potential use of nuclear weapons against nations such as North Korea, and the refusal of Washington to continue certifying compliance with negotiated nuclear agreements—may have motivated Kim in mid-2002 to seek a new round of bilateral talks.

Kim’s interest in dealing with the United States on well more than the nuclear issue was signaled most clearly in October 2000, when he dispatched Marshal Cho Myong-nok, North Korea’s second-ranked official, to Washington. Cho, who met with President Clinton, failed to get North Korea removed from the Department of State’s list of state sponsors of terrorism, but U.S. officials were sufficiently encouraged by North Korea’s interest in rapprochement that Secretary of State Albright quickly traveled to P’yongyang to talk directly with Kim Chong-il. At that time, Kim indicated North Korea’s willingness to forgo further flight testing of the Taepo missiles under development.

Risk Taking and Escalation to Force

The early risk calculus. Scholars and other experts have characterized Kim Il-song’s circle of guerillafighters as the most aggressive of North Korean leaders, but even they engaged in risk assessment.⁴⁹ The four-point paradigm outlined above reflected their view of what North Korea needed (South Korean instability, predisposing covert action, limited U.S. involvement, and massive, early damage) to tilt the balance in favor of success in another invasion. These assumptions can be tracked through the reporting of senior defectors and inferred from North Korean actions, propaganda, and force deployments.

Less easy to document are a few additional assumptions that likely informed the thinking of senior North Korean leaders. Identifying these working theses is necessary to appreciate how North Korea, confronted

with devastation to its homeland in the 1950-1953 war and Washington's continued commitment to Seoul, could nonetheless contemplate initiating new hostilities. One assumption appears to have been that, safely bunkered themselves, North Korea's senior leaders would not flinch from sacrificing soldiers and civilians in war. Another likely assumption was that, if hostilities could indeed be concluded very rapidly, what remained of South Korea's infrastructure would more than offset North Korea's material and human losses.

Through the mid-1980s, senior North Korean leaders were satisfied with the applicability of this body of assumptions for assessing risk. This was so because they believed their country to be operating from a position of strength.⁵⁰ The Socialist community of nations provided moral support, China and the Soviet Union had proven themselves ready to prop up the economy, the North still had a conventional weapons edge, and both South Korea and the United States had been willing to suffer acts of aggression and terrorism without retaliating militarily. At home, meanwhile, Kim Il-song was regarded as something akin to a deity and nothing seriously threatened his grip on power.

The new risk calculus. In the 1990s, the world as North Korea knew it changed dramatically, and this has likely changed how senior leaders now assess risk. The North Korea that weighs its options today is diplomatically weak and has an economy in freefall, a shrinking population and military manpower base, and deteriorating control of its citizens.

Moreover, North Korea's inventory of conventional weapons systems has aged and what was once superiority in the weapons competition with South Korea has given way to inferiority. Budget figures reinforce the reality of this now irreversible trend. The CIA has estimated that for 1998 North Korea's military expenditures had an equivalent purchasing power of between \$3.7 and 4.9 billion and that this consumed between 25 and 33 percent of GDP. South Korea, meanwhile, was able to allocate \$12 billion to defense in 2000 by spending little more than 3 percent of GDP.⁵¹

It was in this broad context of strategic decline that North Korea's negotiations with the United States on both nuclear and missile-related issues unfolded in the 1990s. That segment of the negotiating process which culminated in the nuclear-related Agreed Framework of October 1994 began in April 1993. At that time, Kim Il-song's government

precipitated a crisis by announcing its intent to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and to spurn further inspections of safeguarded facilities. To defuse the crisis, Kim Chong-il (his father had died in July 1994) traded away North Korea's ability to unilaterally control and reprocess the spent fuel rods that would henceforth be removed from the Yongbyon reactor.

According to the defector Hwang Chang-yop, this decision displeased some military leaders.⁵² However, this was far from the greatest risk that Kim faced, for U.S. officials had considered imposing economic sanctions against North Korea and some private voices in the United States had called for a preemptive strike against Yongbyon.⁵³

Balanced against North Korea's concession, Washington promised to provide light water power reactors with a capacity of 2000 Mwe as well as oil until the reactors went on-line. Moreover, North Korea emerged from the negotiations still in control of whatever plutonium had already been reprocessed. The deterrence value of a nuclear capability, or an assumed nuclear capability, was thus preserved. The crisis, moreover, had motivated Washington to negotiate in political channels at a senior level, even absent diplomatic relations, and in the closing days of the Clinton Administration, there was even talk of a presidential visit to P'yongyang.

Further, the presumption that North Korea had a nuclear weapons capability had reminded Russia and China that they could not afford to walk away from a role in ensuring Northeast Asian peace, and it helped prompt international interest in maintaining a stable environment in North Korea via the provision of some limited economic aid.

Escalating to force. Whereas the strategic paradigm that informed North Korean thinking through most of the post-1953 period rested on an assumption that P'yongyang could deal from a position of strength, that type of planning is no longer possible. As a consequence, North Korean leaders today are devoting more energy to simply keeping the country afloat.

Deterring foreign interference and aggression remains the highest priority, and in this regard Kim Chong-il and his ruling circle still value a strategy of convincing other nations that North Korea is dangerous. However, they are now attempting to do this with implicit threats—such as the missile overflight of Japan in August 1998—without employing outright aggression. The result of these changes is a more nuanced method of manipulating risk and an abstention from acts of major aggression

against South Korean or U.S. forces in Korea. In particular, while Kim and other senior leaders have worked to develop a deterrence based on fears of WMD programs, they have also sought to leverage these fears to wrest concessions of concrete benefit to North Korea.⁵⁴

These changes notwithstanding, neither Kim Chong-il nor his country as a whole are about to renounce their commitment to one day reunifying the peninsula by force. Too much has been invested in the armed forces in terms of material wealth, ideological dogma, and the very legitimacy of the Kim family to jettison the priority in military investment and the threat of using military force. At the same time, Kim and other senior leaders seem less inclined than in the past to use their military card in launching unprovoked hostilities against the South.

Even if this perception of a less trigger-happy North Korea is correct, the country remains, just as Kim wishes it to be seen, a strategic pressure point of potential danger. Despite the leadership's greater exposure to the outside world and track record of having negotiated with the United States for the past several years, North Korean officials still find it difficult to read foreign intentions. Moreover, they remain hypersensitive about perceived foreign interference in their affairs, and they are still relatively inexperienced in knowing how to pursue national interests by leveraging other than explicit and implicit military threats. Outside North Korea, meanwhile, expanded engagement seems to have only deepened the confusion that foreign observers feel in assessing P'yongyang's intentions and actions.

These risks of miscalculation on both sides appear today to hold the greatest potential for a North Korean escalation to force. This danger was recognized in 1993 and 1994 when U.S. military and diplomatic officials feared that the imposition of economic sanctions against North Korea and a likely need to deploy more U.S. military assets to Korea risked provoking P'yongyang into going to war. Information on North Korea's thinking on possible military responses to real or imagined provocations is not available. However, the leadership appears ready to employ the full range of military assets available to it. Moral issues do not appear to factor into Kim Chong-il's thinking on any matter, and his decisions would undoubtedly reflect a determination to protect both his personal equities and those of his nation.

Risks linked to a succession fight. A nearly equal level of risk may be inherent in any internal power struggle to replace Kim Chong-il. It is tempting to believe that North Korea after Kim would suddenly produce a visionary and daring leader, clone Chinese-style economic reforms, and become a more constructive member of the international community. However, over decades the two Kims have taken pains to ensure that there is little breathing room for a Gorbachev or Deng-like figure to prosper, be it in the capital city or the provinces, the government and the party or the military.

It is also unlikely that, despite having an ideology which vests political authority in Kim Il-song and his blood descendants, that Kim Chong-il will be succeeded by his favorite son. Kim Chong-nam, 31 years of age, was raised and educated in Western Europe and Russia and, according to the South Korean press, currently heads the state Computer Committee. Both his upbringing and current responsibilities suggest that he has not had the opportunity to build a power base in North Korea.⁵⁵

In a country that has neither a history of routinized leadership changes nor a long-established pattern of monarchical succession, it is difficult to predict whether North Korea will manage a stable transition. Kim Chong-il's leadership style has distorted normal institutional dynamics and made it seemingly inevitable that the military will step in and take an important role in the succession. Armed showdowns within the country could easily result and even carry the conflict beyond North Korea's borders.

The 2002 Nuclear Crisis

In October 2002, it was revealed that North Korea had for several years been operating a revamped nuclear weapons development program in violation of an international agreement, the so-called 1994 Agreed Framework, which bars such work. This revelation trained a klieg light on the opportunistic quality of Kim Chong-il's decision-making, the high priority that he assigns WMD, and the manner in which he often handles foreign crises.

According to information released by the White House, Foreign Ministry officials—while meeting with the visiting U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs in early October—were

confronted with evidence of a clandestine nuclear weapons program and thereafter confirmed the program's existence. This program, according to unnamed U.S. officials cited in the *New York Times*, is designed to enrich natural uranium with gas centrifuges reportedly acquired from Pakistan. In the immediate aftermath of the revelations, North Korea did not claim to possess nuclear weapons, but it declared the right to do so in light of what it describes as the threatening posture of the United States.

As of late 2002, no foreign nation or group of nations was debating a military response to the breach of the 1994 Agreed Framework. Steps already taken in the economic domain, however, promise severe setbacks for North Korea's quality of life and the opportunity costs of other losses may eventually be even more dramatic.

- In mid-November, the U.S. Government announced that it would halt further financing of the monthly fuel shipments being sent to North Korea under the terms of the Agreed Framework. The agreement had called for the yearly delivery of 500,000 metric tons of fuel oil.
- Also in jeopardy is further progress on the supply of two light water reactors financed and constructed by a U.S., Japanese, South Korean, and European Union consortium per the terms of the 1994 Agreed Framework. Work on the reactor site in North Korea had begun in mid-2002.
- Food aid from other than U.N. agencies and non-governmental organizations is in jeopardy. The CIA recently estimated the value of food aid received from the same group of nations building the reactors at \$300 million annually.⁵⁶
- Further progress on diplomatic rapprochement with Japan is in question. In September 2002, Kim Chong-il and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had signed an agreement to move toward the establishment of diplomatic relations. Had this process been concluded successfully, North Korea stood to receive aid from Japan totaling several billion dollars.
- Also at risk is a general warming of relations with Seoul that had gained significant momentum in the months prior to October 2002.

First-hand accounts of how Kim Chong-il decided to reinstate a clandestine nuclear weapons program are not available, but it is clear that he is powerful enough to have given the program a green light even if individual or institutional objections had been raised. In fact, Kim would have been the sole arbiter of who was allowed a seat at relevant planning and decision-making discussions. In this regard, it is possible that foreign affairs and civilian trade officials were denied even knowledge of the program. On the other hand, key planning officials would have been those in Kim's inner circle who are most experienced in managing special channels for weapons sales and weapons technology procurements.

Whether Kim Chong-il sponsored a cost-benefit analysis of the decision to clandestinely produce weapons-grade uranium is also not known. What is apparent, however, is that his decision would have been strongly colored by abiding fears of the countries he considers enemies, particularly the United States, and by the stock he places in the deterrence value of WMD. In his arrogance, which has been reinforced by work in the fields of propaganda and theatrical illusion, Kim may also have calculated that he could once again, with time, manipulate much of his foreign audience into viewing him as a pragmatic reformer. The fact that he violated the 1994 Agreed Framework, meanwhile, is consistent with an unprincipled approach to nearly everything that crosses his radar screen: Kim's commitments last only as long as he perceives that programs, promises, and other people serve his utilitarian interests.

There seems little reason to doubt that Kim Chong-il would have preferred that the clandestine centrifuge program continue undetected and that progress achieved in dealings with Japan and South Korea remain on track. However, Kim's past behavior as well as recent North Korean statements suggest that Kim sees in the nuclear crisis some compensatory opportunities. The very fact that no nation wants to deal with North Korea on military terms is in itself a measure of P'yongyang's success in building a weapons inventory—both conventional and unconventional—that can deter aggression in other than extreme circumstances. Moreover, as occurred in the months leading up to the 1994 Agreed Framework, the world has been reminded that North Korea remains a dangerous nation, and this, Kim may believe, will serve him in his quest to continue negotiating economic aid and to

realize high-level talks with the United States. Regarding Washington, Kim seeks above all a U.S. commitment to forswear aggression against North Korea.

Notes

1. Some scholars report that Kim Chong-il attended flight school in East Germany while in his late teens, but there is no corroborating evidence for this claim. Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il-sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 283-285.

2. Biographical information on Kim Chong-il and other leaders is available from the *Nkchosun.com*, an English-language internet site maintained by the *Chosun Ilbo* newspaper published in Seoul.

3. Han S. Park, *North Korea: The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom* (Boulder Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2002), 149.

4. Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), 115-116.

5. A valuable body of defector reporting is available on the internet site of the National Intelligence Service, Seoul's counterpart to the U.S. CIA. See in particular the series titled *Testimonies of North Korean Defectors*.

6. Buzo, 88.

7. See Helen-Louise Hunter, *Kim Il-song's North Korea* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999), for details on the privileged lives of the ruling elite.

8. Andrew S. Natsios, *The Great North Korean Famine: Famine, Politics, and Foreign Policy* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 106-107.

9. *Ibid.*, 73-74.

10. "Defectors from North Korea Tell of Prison Baby Killings," *The New York Times*, 10 June 2002.

11. The Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* reported in April 1995 that Kim Il-song had earlier designated Kim Kyong-hui and Chang to negotiate with Tel Aviv on the subject of P'yongyang's missile exports.

12. "N. Korea's Air Force Chief Visits Iran for Closer Ties," *Washington Times*, 25 February 1994.

13. Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (Basic Books, 2001), 438.
14. *Testimonies of North Korean Defectors: Hwang Chang-yop Speaks on Preparations for War in North Korea*, on the internet site of the National Intelligence Service.
15. See Park, for a historical examination of *chuche*.
16. Park, 24.
17. A culture of dependency is encountered frequently in political systems shaped by terrorists. Robert S. Robins and Jerrold M. Post, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 83-87.
18. *Testimonies of North Korean Defectors: Hwang Chang-yop Speaks on Politics in North Korea*, on the internet site of the National Intelligence Service.
19. Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, *North Korea: Through the Looking Glass* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 35-37.
20. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., *The Armed Forces of North Korea* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), 59.
21. "North and South Korea Trade Charges Over Naval Clash," *The New York Times*, 30 June 2002.
22. *CIA Factbook*, Washington D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2001.
23. Ibid.
24. Natsios, 109.
25. Natsios, 202-206.
26. Natsios, 105.
27. Marcus Noland, "North Korea's External Economic Relations," *Washington D.C.: Institute for International Economic Relations*, 2001, 6-7.
28. Nicholas Eberstadt, *The End of North Korea* (Washington D.C.: AEI Press, 1999), 120.
29. Park, 152.
30. Oh and Hassig, 154-155. Central Intelligence Agency, *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and*

Advanced Conventional Munitions, 1 January Through 30 June 2001, Washington D.C.: January 2002.

31. Oh and Hassig, 156.

32. Bermudez, 1-8. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance: 2001-2002*, London: Oxford University Press, 2001, 196-197.

33. Bermudez, 3-5.

34. Bermudez, 3-5. IISS, 196-197.

35. Bermudez, 5-6, 106-111. IISS, 196-197.

36. Bermudez, 147-149. IISS, 196-197.

37. CIA, *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions: 1 January Through 30 June 2001*, January 2002, CIA/DCI; Department of Defense, *Proliferation: Threat and Response*, January 2001, 9-13.

38. Department of Defense, *Proliferation: Threat and Response*, January 2001, 9-13; CIA, *Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat Through 2015* (unclassified summary of a National Intelligence Estimate), CIA/DCI.

39. CIA, *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions: 1 January Through 30 June 2001*, January 2002, CIA/DCI; Department of Defense, *Proliferation: Threat and Response*, January 2001, 9-13; CIA, *Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat Through 2015* (unclassified summary of a National Intelligence Estimate), CIA/DCI.

40. Bermudez, 177-195.

41. *Testimonies of North Korean Defectors: Hwang Chang-yop Speaks on Preparations for War in North Korea*, on the website of the National Intelligence Service. Buzo, 201-202

42. Apart from its desire to destabilize South Korea, North Korea has had other reasons to be associated with terrorism. In the past, training terrorists from other countries meshed with Kim Il-song's efforts to promote the stature of North Korea among Third World revolutionaries. Although North Korea continues to harbor the Japanese Red Army members who hijacked a plane in 1970, it has in recent years eschewed promoting terrorist capabilities overseas. Even so, its involvement with smuggling,

counterfeiting, and opium sales has resulted in contacts with terrorist groups. *Global Patterns of Terrorism*, 2001, Washington D.C.: Department of State, May 2002

43. Bermudez, 195.

44. Suh, 231-232, 238-239.

45. Kim Hyon-hui debarked from the KAL flight in Abu Dhabi after placing the bomb in an overhead luggage rack. Following the explosion, she was picked up elsewhere in the Middle East and transferred to Seoul, where she was interrogated and still lives. According to the journalist Don Oberdorfer, Kim Hyon-hui was told before departing P'yongyang that Kim Chong-il had ordered the KAL bombing to discourage participation in the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Oberdorfer, 183.

46. Oh and Hassig, 166.

47. *Testimonies of North Korean Defectors: Hwang Chang-yop Speaks on Preparations for War in North Korea*, on the website of the National Intelligence Service

48. *Testimonies of North Korean Defectors: Hwang Chang-yop Speaks on Preparations for War in North Korea*, on the internet site of the National Intelligence Service.

49. See, for example, Suh, 321-234.

50. Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 13.

51. *CIA Factbook*, Washington D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2001.

52. *Testimonies of North Korean Defectors: Hwang Chang-yop Speaks* on the internet site of the National Intelligence Service.

53. Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 75-81

54. Snyder, 13-14

55. Kim Chong-nam gained international notoriety in 2001, when, accompanied by a toddler, he attempted to enter Japan on a falsified Dominican passport. Before being deported to China, he reportedly told the Japanese authorities that he had wished to visit Tokyo Disneyland and that he had illegally entered Japan on numerous occasions in the past.

56. *CIA Factbook*, Washington D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2002.

