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NORTH KOREA



HANDBOOK

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This unclassified handbook is for use as a unit training manual and as a ready reference guide for individual Service members. It is designed to provide US and allied military personnel with a base of information for conducting effective operations on the Korean Peninsula.

This reference document has been prepared by the National Maritime Intelligence Center's US Marine Corps Intelligence Activity and produced by the Defense Intelligence Agency. Contributions were made by DIA, to include the Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center and the Missile and Space Intelligence Center, the US Army Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center, US Army Foreign Science and Technology Center, US Navy Office of Naval Intelligence, US Air Force National Air Intelligence Center, and the Defense Language Institute.

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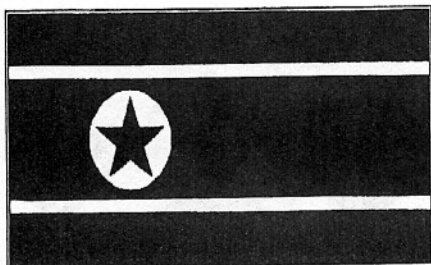
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SECTION 1
KOREAN PENINSULA GENERAL INFORMATION



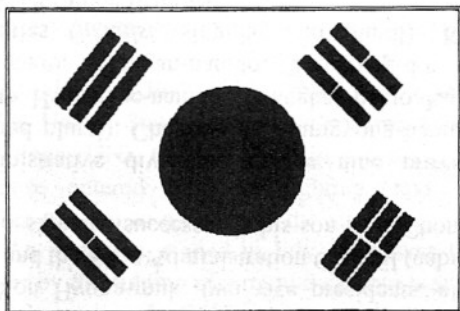
NATIONAL FLAG
THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
KOREA



General Information

1-2

**NATIONAL FLAG
REPUBLIC OF KOREA**



POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW (NORTH KOREA ONLY)

The long form name of North Korea is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The DPRK is a Communist state led by a Stalinist-type dictatorship, with its capital city as Pyongyang. The executive branch of the government includes President Kim Il-song, national leader since 1945 and last elected 24 May 1990 without opposition, Premier Yon Hyong-muk, two vice presidents, eleven vice premiers, and the State Administration Council (cabinet). Kim Il-song's designated successor is his son Kim Chong-il.

Administrative divisions include nine provinces (*do*, singular and plural); Chagang-do, Hamgyong-namdo, Hamgyong-pukto, Hwanghae-namdo, Hwanghae-pukto, Kangwon-do, Pyongan-pukto, Pyongan-namdo, Yanggang-do; and three special cities (*jikhalsi*, singular and plural); Kaesong-si, Nampo-si, and Pyongyang-si.

In August 1945, the Japanese in Korea surrendered to the former Soviet Union, which gained control of the Korean

peninsula south to the 38th parallel. In August 1948, supposedly following general elections throughout the peninsula, the DPRK was established, with Kim Il-song heading the central government. These factitious elections are the basis for Pyongyang's claim as the only legitimate government of Korea and make reunifying the country on its terms a national goal. In pressing this claim, the DPRK has engaged in a political, economic, and military competition with the Republic of Korea (ROK). However, in any comparison except military power, Pyongyang is a poor second.

On Saturday, 24 June 1950, DPRK forces invaded the ROK. The United States, acting with a mandate from the United Nations (UN), took the lead in defending the ROK. The Chinese entered into the fighting, and the war's inconclusive end led to a return to the status quo at the 38th parallel. An armistice, signed in July 1953, was followed 2 months later by the signing of a mutual defense treaty between the United States and the ROK.

The country is currently being held together by the aging Kim Il-song, a ruthless, charismatic leader who has retained tremendous loyalty from the people, despite their hardships.

The country is facing insurmountable internal problems and is unstable politically, economically, and socially. The big question today is the succession of Kim Il-song by his son Kim Chong-il, who does not have his father's abilities, is paranoid, spoiled, and suspicious; his access to the government bureaucracy is through a clique.

One of the great periods of uncertainty and danger will come when Kim Il-song dies, and Kim Chong-il attempts to succeed as leader. Kim Chong-il may initially seize power, but his limited personal ability, possible widespread opposition, and the continuing poor economic and social conditions could lead to a coup.

Recent political setbacks have further isolated the DPRK and include the 1990 formal recognition of the ROK by the former Soviet Union, and the 1991 entrance of both Koreas to the UN. The DPRK lost one of its major supporters with the demise of the Soviet Union. Moreover, although the People's Republic of China (PRC) remains the only credible supporter of the DPRK, economic and political rapprochement between the PRC and the ROK continues. The DPRK will continue to be both economically and socially backward/repressed and will

become increasingly isolated. The DPRK will likely cling to its outmoded style of communism and political change will not occur until the current leaders are gone.

Negative economic growth, chronic shortages of raw materials (especially oil), ineffective centralized economic planning, and an emphasis on military power have contributed to the economic failure of North Korea. The requirement by Russia and the PRC that materials exported to the DPRK be paid for with cash has further degraded North Korea's economic viability. The DPRK can no longer generate sufficient electrical power to meet industrial needs, social services have been severely degraded, and segments of society have been reduced to one meal a day. The DPRK suffers from chronic shortages of many of the basic commodities required for subsistence and industrial production. Critical resources continue to be dedicated to the military with increasing detriment to the economy. There will be no relief from the severe shortages, which could foster growing dissatisfaction among the intelligentsia, workers, students, and bureaucrats. The DPRK's management of its economy does not provide freedom of action for producers, real incentives for individuals to excel, or a government responsive to scientific and

technological progress. If the DPRK keeps its emphasis on its military and does not reform its economic system, the country could eventually be in grave danger of imploding. The DPRK is and will likely remain one of the most dangerous countries in the world.

TRANSPORTATION

General

Railroads:

North Korea: 4,915 km (3,055 mi) total; 4,250 km (2,641 mi) 1.435 m (4.7ft) standard gauge, 665 km (413 mi) 0.762 m (2.54 ft) narrow gauge; 159 km (99 mi) double track; 3,084 km (1,917 mi) electrified; government owned (1989).

South Korea: 3,106 km (1,930 mi) total operating in 1983; 3,059 km (1,901 mi) 1.435 m (4.7 ft) standard gauge, 47 km (29 mi) 0.61 m (2.0 ft) narrow gauge; 712 km (442 mi) double track; 418 km (254 mi) electrified; government owned.

Highways:

North Korea: Approximately 30,000 km (18,645 mi) 1989; 85% crushed stone or earth surface; 15% paved.

South Korea: Approximately 62,936 km (39,115 mi) 1982; 13,476 km (8,375 mi) national highway, 49,460 km (30,740 mi) provincial and local roads.

Inland waterways:

North Korea: 2,253 km (1,400 mi) mostly navigable by small craft only.

South Korea: 1,609 km (1,000 mi) use restricted to small craft.

Pipelines:

North Korea: Crude oil 37 km (23 mi).

South Korea: Crude oil 455 km (283 mi).

Ports:

North Korea: Chongjin, Haeju, Hungnam/Hamhung, Nampo, Wonsan, Songnim, Najin, Sonbong (formerly Unggi), Kim Chaek.

South Korea: Pusan, Inchon, Kunsan, Mokpo, Ulsan.

Airports:

North Korea: 55 total, 55 usable (est); about 30 with permanent surface runways.

South Korea: 105 total, 97 usable; 60 with permanent surface runways.

DPRK Transportation

Road and rail networks follow a general north-south axis, with limited east-west routes, especially in northern areas. Rugged mountainous terrain restricts or channels supply movement to a few routes. Shortages of heavy rolling stock, scarcity of heavy rail lines, and lack of centralized traffic control hamper the rail system. An insufficient number of roads and poor surfaces and maintenance constrain the highway system.

About 75% of the DPRK's 4,915-km railroads are electric. A major priority is to electrify all primary rail lines, which would nearly double the rail capacity without additional track. However, electric railroads could become a liability during wartime if key transformers or hydroelectric power plants were rendered nonfunctional. The DPRK produces both diesel

and electric locomotives. Diesel locomotives operate mostly in yards. Most steam locomotives, acquired from various sources shortly after World War II, still operate. The DPRK also manufactures several types of railcars, including 60- and 100-metric ton freight cars. However, rolling stock shortages are frequent.

The DPRK's economic plans include upgrading and expanding several primary maritime ports. Construction of the Nampo Lockgate stabilized Taedong River water levels, allowing Nampo Port expansion and facility development farther up the river. Songnim Port is an example of this process.

Some of the DPRK's rivers are navigable by small craft and are used as an auxiliary means of transportation to ease the strain on the railroads and highways. The Taedong, in the west central region, serves as a major artery for commerce.

The DPRK's civil airlift remains limited. In addition to Sunan International Airfield, the Civil Air Administration operates a few domestic terminals throughout the country. Although personnel and equipment assigned to civilian flights

do not have a direct military function, they could offer limited support during wartime.

