

**I. INFORMATION AND THE DPRK'S
MILITARY AND POWER-HOLDING ELITE**

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PREFACE

This paper will examine in broad terms the means by which information is accessed by and flows among the military and power-holding elite in the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK, more commonly called North Korea).

An examination of the available "open sources" dating from 1990 quickly reveals that very little has been written on the subject of information usage among the military and power-holding elite within the DPRK. When the subject is mentioned, it is done so tangentially and with modest detail. The observations and information in this paper have been pieced together from open source information collected by the author during his twenty-five years of research on the Korean People's Army and the DPRK's intelligence services.

For the author, this difficult topic presents disadvantages and advantages. On the negative side, accuracy in any work dealing with the DPRK is a matter of relatives. Inevitably some of the observations in this paper will be incorrect. Other material may be misinformation, disseminated by parties interested in serving their own purposes rather than serving the truth. This is especially true when dealing with DPRK defectors—a major source of information on the DPRK. The catchwords *probably*, *estimated*, *are believed to*, and *apparently* must appear frequently in any work of this type. On the positive side, this topic presents the author with a blank slate and allows room for expression of thoughts and ideas that do not easily fit in elsewhere. It is conceivable that a more complete understanding of the subject matter could be achieved by conducting extensive in-depth interviews with DPRK defectors who have held the rank of colonel or above in the Korean People's Army or with officials above the deputy director level in the Korean Workers' Party.

The projected audience for this paper are those Department of Defense (DoD) personnel who are tasked with understanding the DPRK or who would be called upon to conduct activities involving the DPRK during a future crisis. Considering this audience, the author will try to emphasize readability and easy access to information rather than adhere to a formal academic style of writing. The ultimate hope is that this paper will serve to stimulate discussion and provide a framework upon which DoD personnel can layer additional information—both open source and classified—thereby achieving a better understanding of the DPRK.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGI	Auxillary, general, intelligence (i.e., an intelligence gather vessel)
CCSKA	Central Committee Secretary in Charge of South Korean Affairs
COMSEC	Communications security
DoD	Department of Defense (i.e., of the United States)
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EIW	Electronic Information Warfare
EW	Electronic Warfare
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
KCBS	Korean Central Broadcasting Station
KCNA	Korean Central News Agency
KCTV	Korean Central Television
KPA	Korean People's Army
KPAF	Korean People's Air Force
KPN	Korean People's Navy
KWP	Korean Workers' Party
MPAF	Ministry of People's Armed Forces
MPS	Ministry of Public Security
NDC	National Defense Commission
OPSEC	Operations Security
PBS	P'yongyang Broadcasting Station
PRC	People's Republic of China
SIGINT	Signal Intelligence
SSD	State Security Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As with any nation, access to information within the DPRK proceeds along two very broad paths - official and unofficial. And, as with any other nation, the paths are affected by a host of social and political factors. Within the DPRK, these factors are expressed in extremes not typically witnessed in other nations.

The most significant of these is the importance and closeness of an individual or organization to Kim Chong-il and the power-holding elite. The average infantry soldier or citizen has no access whatsoever; however, as one progresses up the military chain of command or within the Korean Workers' Party (KWP), access increases so that at the very top three-tenths of one percent of the population - the military and power-holding elite and their immediate subordinates - access to information is the best it can be.

The military elite within the DPRK should be understood to comprise not only those individuals within the National Defense Commission holding military rank, but also those military personnel situated within the broader power-holding elite. From an organizational standpoint, this includes the Ministry of People's Armed Forces (MPAF) leadership and extends down to the commanders of the Guard Command, Security Command, General Rear Services Bureau, General Staff Department, Korean People's Navy Command, Korean People's Air and Air Defense Command, Corps, and a small number of the General Staff Department's major bureaus (e.g., Reconnaissance Bureau). It also includes those individuals within the KWP, the State Security Department (SSD), and the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) who are serving military officers.

When looking at access to information among the military elite, it is essential that the reader set aside many preconceived ideas concerning the nation and the subject. The most common of these - and thus the most important to set aside - is that the DPRK is a "closed" nation. While true for the vast majority of its population, it is patently false when considering the military elite. Their potential to access information,¹ should they desire to do so, is quite good, but certainly less than that of their counterparts in the Republic of Korea (ROK, more commonly known as South Korea).

The flow of information within the DPRK can best be described as "Kim-centric" - vertical and convoluted. That is, it is towards Kim Chong-il that all important

¹ The term "potential" is used here because it is unclear whether the majority of the military and power-holding elite actually desire to access information on their own from outside the nation.

information streams, and from him that all significant orders and directions issue forth. For the nation in general, and the military specifically, this flow is vertical. In most militaries in the world, information flows both up and down the chain of command and horizontally at each level, while orders flow down. Within the Korean People's Army (KPA), information flows up the chain of command and only orders flow down. There is extremely little horizontal flow of information or communications except at the highest levels. Major KPA units (e.g., corps, divisions, and brigades) can communicate with headquarters above them and units subordinate to them, but very little communication is permitted with units adjacent to them. This vertical flow of information is a means of maintaining strict control over the KPA. The belief is that if major units were allowed to communicate horizontally, they could unite and possibly stage a coup.

As information flows upwards into the military and power-holding elites, it is processed by overlapping and competing organizations - many of which are in competition with each other through what might best be described as a lens of self deception composed of four layers: historical world view, political indoctrination, hatred for the U.S., and authoritarian cultural rules. This lens is so darkly colored that instead of focusing and illuminating, it distorts and misrepresents the reality of the information. Ominously, it is upon this information and analysis that Kim Chong-il and the military and power-holding elite base their decision making.

The Internet (and to a lesser degree the national intranet) is playing an increasingly important role within the DPRK. The basic reason for this is simple: "information is power." Kim Chong-il and the military and power-holding elite unmistakably understand this, which is why they have so vigorously endeavored to restrict access to it. Yet, at the same time they understand the decisive importance of the information concerning world affairs available on the Internet in bolstering their national survival.

Because of the extremes inherent in the access and flow of information among the military and power-holding elite, the entire process is vulnerable to self-deception, overload, manipulation (domestic or foreign), and collapse.

A. THE MILITARY AND THE POWER-HOLDING ELITE

Simply stated, all power within the DPRK originates with Kim Chong-il, who is simultaneously Chairman of the National Defense Commission, General Secretary of the KWP, and Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army (a unified armed force comprising ground, navy, and air forces). Therefore what really matters within the DPRK is not so much an individual's schooling, personal achievements, job, position within society, rank within the military, etc., but how close - physically and emotionally - that individual is connected to Kim Chong-il. The closer the individual is, the more power that person wields, and the greater access to uncensored and foreign information he or she has.

This can best be illustrated by viewing Kim Chong-il as the center - physically, politically, and socially - of the DPRK (see Figure 1). Immediately surrounding him are a group of individuals, primarily men, and their subordinates, who come from five broad societal groupings: Kim Chong-il's extended family and close confidants¹; MPAF; KWP; Cabinet; and intelligence and internal security services. The convergence of these groupings represents the power-holding elite within the DPRK. The pinnacle of the power-holding elite is the National Defense Commission, which consists of ten individuals, eight of whom hold military rank (see below). Thus, the military elite within the National Defense Commission are among the highest power-holders within the DPRK.

A noteworthy characteristic of the National Defense Commission specifically and the power-holding elite in general is that its members occupy multiple leadership positions within the MPAF, KWP, and intelligence and internal security services. For example, Chon Pyong-ho is simultaneously KWP Central Committee Secretary in charge of the Defense Industry Policy and Inspection Department and a member of the National Defense Commission; Vice Marshal Kim Yong-ch'un is simultaneously KWP Chief of Staff and a member of the National Defense Commission. In fact, all the military members of the National Defense Commission are also members of the Central Military Committee. This cross-pollination and concentration of power

¹ Information on the Kim family may be found in Buckley, Sarah. "North Korea's Secretive 'First Family'," BBC News, October 29, 2003, accessed October 30, 2003, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3203523.stm>; and Carlson, Peter. "Sins of the Son; Kim Jong Il's North Korea Is in Ruins, But Why Should That Spoil His Fun?," *Washington Post*, May 11, 2003, p. D1.

within the hands of a few individuals enables Kim Chong-il, through the National Defense Commission, to easily maintain extremely firm control over all aspects of DPRK society and the flow of information. It also means that the decision-making process and poles of political power apparent in western nations are not present within the DPRK.

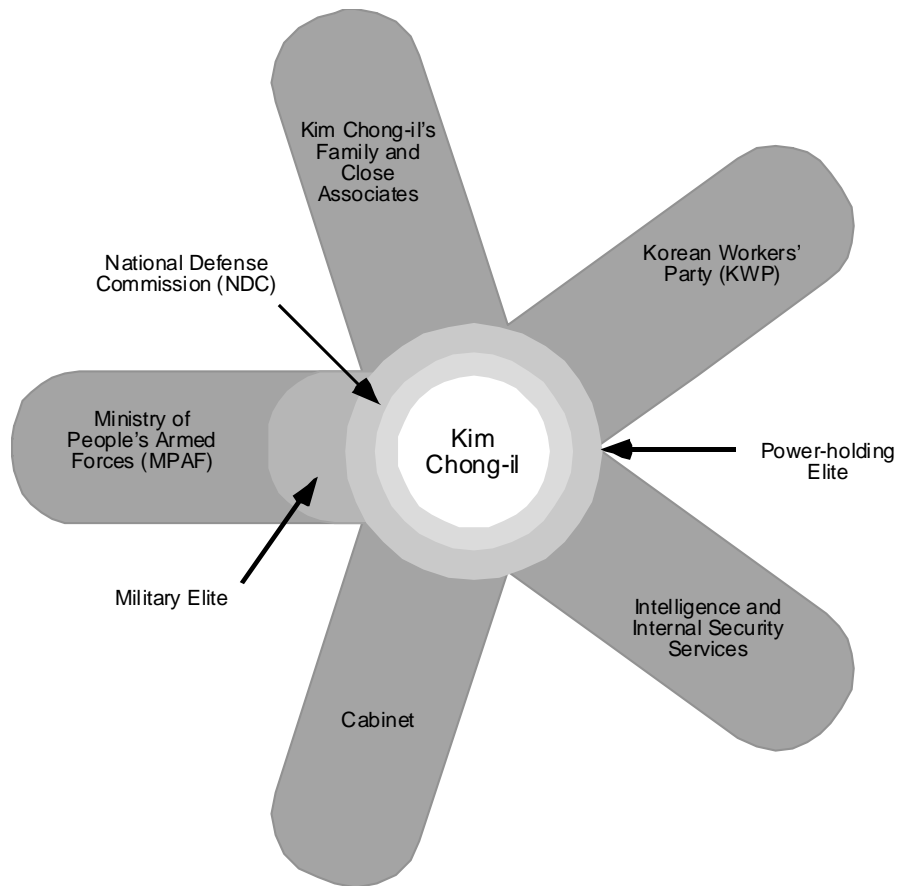


Figure I-1. Military and Power-holding Elite

There is a common misconception that during his forty-plus years as leader of the DPRK, Kim Il-sung was virtually impervious to the desires and concerns of the military, government, or people. Kim, while unquestionably “running the show,” always exercised control through, and shared power with, a very small tight-knit circle of power-holding elites, most of whom shared a common history reaching back to the days of the “anti-Japanese partisan struggle” of the 1930s and 1940s. And there always has existed a consensus-building and filtering mechanism within the DPRK leadership based principally upon this small power-holding group. The composition, effectiveness, and functioning of this mechanism have varied over time, especially during the 1990s with the passing of the old “partisan” leadership.

Contrary to popular belief, it is highly unlikely that Kim Chong-il (or Kim Il-sung, were he alive today) would unilaterally employ nuclear weapons, initiate a war, or pursue a policy which directly threatened national survival without first gaining the consensus of this power-holding group. This did not preclude Kim Il-sung's attempting to restructure or influence the power-holding group. He did so on numerous occasions throughout his career by purging his opposition. These purges, however, required a significant level of consensus-building among those engaged in the purging. Additionally, such shifts within the power-holding group have been long drawn-out affairs that have not been conducive to conducting national survival decision-making. Since the death of Kim Il-sung, Kim Chong-il has undertaken numerous significant changes in the power-holding group. With his elevation of the National Defense Commission as the ultimate power-holding group and the expansion of the "Military First" policy, the power of the military has assumed an historic high - even higher than that of the "Partisan Generals" of the late 1960s.² The process by which he has achieved this, however, has been selective and less disruptive than that frequently utilized by his father.

The military elite within the DPRK should be understood to contain not only those individuals within the National Defense Commission holding military rank but also those military personnel situated within the broader power-holding elite. From an organizational standpoint this would include the MPAF leadership and extend down to the commanders of the Guard Command, Security Command, General Rear Services Bureau, General Staff Department, Korean People's Navy Command, Korean People's Air and Air Defense Command, Corps, and a small number of the General Staff Department's major bureaus (e.g., Reconnaissance Bureau). As with military organizations throughout the world, the immediate staffs of the military elite can be viewed as having access to information considerably higher than their rank would typically suggest.

The concepts of military elite and proximity to power can be viewed as being institutionalized within the KPA. As best as can be determined, promotions of all officers from battalion level and higher within the KPA require the personal approval of Kim Chong-il. Candidates' names only reach Kim Chong-il after extensive background reviews by the KWP and Security Command, and with the personal recommendations of the individual's battalion, brigade, division, and corps commanders. The two primary factors used to determine a candidate's suitability by each level of command is whether that individual is politically reliable

² For information on the period of the "Partisan Generals," see: Bermudez Jr., Joseph S. *North Korean Special Forces: Second Edition*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1998, pp. 64-68 and 90-93; Suh, Dae-sook. *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, pp. 211-231; Sung-joo, "North Korea's Security Policy and Military Strategy," in *North Korea Today: Strategic and Domestic Issues*, ed. Robert A Scalapino and Kim Jun-yop, University of California, Berkeley, 1983, pp. 144-163.

and whether or not he will embarrass those recommending the candidate. The net result of this is twofold. First, an officer is indebted throughout his career to Kim Chong-il and to specific individuals for his promotions and quality of life. Second, an officer's rank is dependent upon political loyalty and reliability rather than professional competence and experience. This allows Kim Chong-il to depend upon the absolute loyalty of the military. It also allows him, should he desire, to easily bypass the organizational chain of command and issue an order directly to a mid- or low-level officer.

By all accounts, Kim Chong-il is a workaholic, micromanager, and "information junkie." He is technologically savvy, impatient, quick-tempered, intelligent, and ruthless. By his own admission, he surfs the Internet daily, regularly watches NHK (Japan), CCTV (China) and CNN, and has foreign books and articles (especially anything written about himself) translated and summarized for him. He prefers to manage almost everything directly, down to the most minor of details. Without his personal approval, nothing of significance can be initiated or accomplished. He insists on numerous detailed reports from all organizations and then spends long hours at his office reading them. He doesn't necessarily trust any single source for information but rather compares the information he receives from several different organizations and sources (apparently including the Internet). It is not unusual for him to instruct specialists and technocrats throughout the government to appear before him so that he might directly question them concerning a particular matter. Finally, he believes that the decisions and choices he makes are better than those of the people around him. It is towards Kim Chong-il that all important information streams, and from him that all significant orders and directions issue forth.³ Ominously, much of the information and analysis he bases his decision making upon is fundamentally distorted by the system his father established and he perpetuates.

One final aspect of the military and power-holding elite that needs to be mentioned is what in the West would be termed corruption. In fact, this corruption may be viewed as being institutionalized and the means by which many of the military and power-holding elite have attained their positions. It is manifested in the access elites have to information, foreign manufactured goods, opportunity to have their children travel abroad for schooling, their own

³ Maas, Peter. "The Last Emperor," *New York Times Magazine*, October 19, 2003; "Interview with defector Hwang Jong Yop [Hwang Jang Yop]: A Rare Portrait Of North Korea," *Time [Asia]*, September 7, 1999, Vol. 152, No. 9, <http://www.time.com/time/asia/>; "DPRK's Kim Chong-il's Position on Retaliation," *Choson Ilbo*, October 17, 1996, pp. 8-11, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-231; "Defector to ROK on Kim Chong-il's Control of DPRK Military," *Win*, June 1996, pp. 161-167, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-197; "Articles by Defector Kang Myong-to Reported," *Chungang Ilbo*, April 21, 1995, p. 5, as cited in FBIS-EAS-95-097; "North Korean Defectors 27 July News Conference," *Choson Ilbo*, July 28, 1994, pp. 3-4, as cited in FBIS-EAS-94-145; and "Newspaper Profiles Kim Chong-il's Supporters," *Sindong-a*, February 1994, pp. 421-439, as cited in FBIS-EAS-94-050.

greater opportunities to travel, nepotism, etc. Thus, favoritism and cronyism are endemic among the elite. Given this vortex of institutionalized corruption, fear of displeasing Kim Chong-il, and a convoluted flow of information, it is certainly within the realm of possibility that Kim Chong-il is being deceived or misled at some level by subordinates. Exactly how it occurs is unclear, but it may manifest itself in a manner similar to the Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein.⁴ It may be something to the effect that managers or leaders of programs exaggerate achievements or the potential capabilities of programs or systems. Some of this may account for the stories related by defectors concerning Kim Chong-il's surprise at times concerning the conditions in military units or factories and the excessive remedies that he initiates to address these conditions.

Within such an environment of corruption it would serve an individual's interest (and by extension those who ally themselves with that individual) to have higher quality and greater diversity of information than a political rival. The corollary to this is that limiting a rival's access to information is of significant benefit to a member of the military or the power-holding elite.

B. ORGANIZATION⁵

As stated, all political, governmental, and military control within the DPRK originates with Kim Chong-il; it then proceeds down through three distinct paths – the National Defense Commission, the KWP, and the Cabinet (see Figure 2).

The principal path for command and control of the military extends through the National Defense Commission to the Ministry of People's Armed Forces and its General Staff Department. From here, command and control flows to the Korean People's Navy Command, the Korean People's Air and Air Defense Command, and various bureaus and operational units.

Two secondary paths exist to ensure political control of the KPA. The first extends through the KWP Central Committee to the Central Military Committee and onto the General Political Bureau subordinate to the National Defense Commission. From the General Political Bureau, it extends down via a separate chain of command to the lowest levels of the KPA. The second path extends from the National Defense Commission to the State Security Department. This department controls the MPAF's Security Command, which also maintains representatives

⁴ Risen, James. "Ex-Inspector Says C.I.A. Missed Disarray in Iraqi Arms Program," *New York Times*, January 26, 2004.

⁵ Author interview data; *Vantage Point*, "Military Rule in Full Swing," April 1999, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 2-8; *Defense White Paper 1998*, pp. 57-58 and 67-69; *A Handbook on North Korea: 1st Revision*, Naewoe Press, Seoul, 1996, pp. 64-88; *Vantage Point*, "An Analysis of the Constitutional Amendment and the Reorganization of Power Structure in North Korea," November 1998, Vol. XXI, No. 11, pp. 30-39; "Journal Views DPRK's Military Organization," *Sisa Journal*, 6 June 1996, pp. 30-31, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-116; *NSP Issues Press Release on Hwang's Comments*; and *North Korea: The Foundations for Military Strength—Update 1995*, pp. 1-3.

to the lowest-levels of the KPA. As a unified armed force, the Chief of the General Staff not only directly commands the ground forces but also the naval and air forces. These two secondary paths are critical conduits through which information flows up to the military elite and National Defense Commission. Command and control of the DPRK's various intelligence and internal security forces also proceed down through the National Defense Commission, the KWP, and the Cabinet.

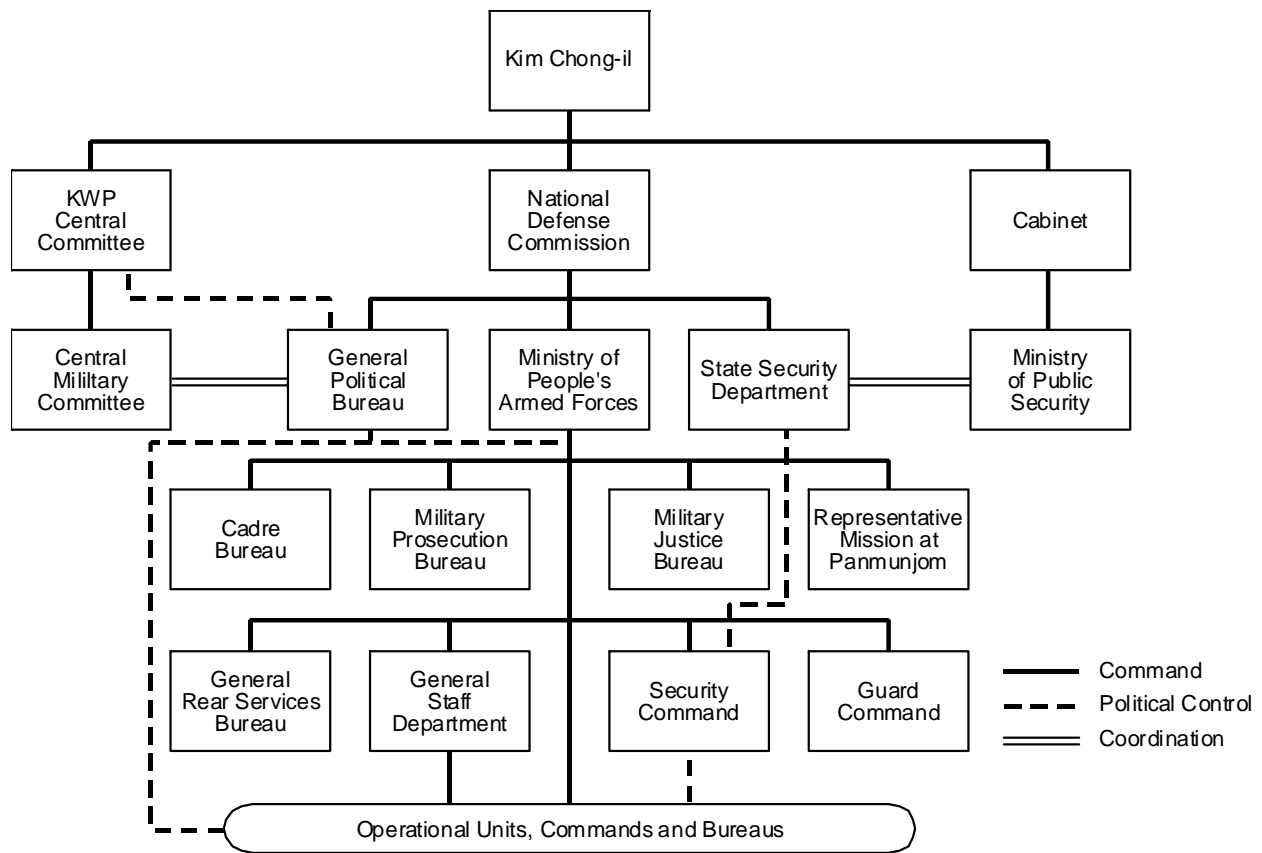


Figure I-2. Command and Control (Simplified)

National Defense Commission⁶

As of September 1998, "...the National Defense Commission Chairman controls all of the political, military, and economic capabilities of the Republic." It comprises ten individuals: Marshal Kim Chong-il (Chairman), Vice Marshal Cho Myong-rok (First Vice Chairman), Vice Marshal Kim Il-ch'ol (Vice Chairman), Vice Marshal Li Yong-mu (Vice Chairman), Vice Marshal Kim Yong-ch'un, Yon Hyong-muk, Marshal Li Ul-sol, Vice Marshal Paek Hak-rim, Chon Pyong-ho, and General Kim Ch'ol-man. The National Defense Commission represents the pinnacle of the power-holding elite, its military members are the elite of the military elite.

The exact organization of the National Defense Commission and the individual responsibilities of its members are unclear. Directly subordinate to the National Defense Commission are the MPAF, the State Security Department, and the General Political Bureau.

Korean Workers' Party⁷

The KWP pervades every aspect of life within the DPRK, including the KPA. Its two principal components are the Central Committee and the Central Military Committee. The Central Committee is composed of the Political Bureau, the Secretariat, the Central Control Committee, and the Central Auditing Committee. The Secretariat is the executive body of the KWP. It includes General Secretary Kim Chong-il, eight secretaries, and 22 departments. These secretaries and departments are responsible for organizing and implementing the policies and decisions of the KWP. The Central Military Committee and the Organization and Guidance Department are the most powerful entities within the KWP.

The KWP's Central Military Committee was established in December 1962 and is the highest level KWP organization directly involved with military policy. The KWP Charter states that the "Central Military Committee of the Party debates and decides on methods of implementing Party's military policies, organizes and guides all the projects related to the

⁶ Author interview data; "Military Rule in Full Swing," pp. 2-8; *A Handbook on North Korea: 1st Revision*, pp. 64-88; "An Analysis of the Constitutional Amendment and the Reorganization of Power Structure in North Korea," pp. 30-39; *Vantage Point*, "Is People's Army Becoming More Powerful than Workers' Party?" June 1998, Vol. XXI, No. 6, pp. 32-39; and "Journal Views DPRK's Military Organization," pp. 30-31.

⁷ "Defector Hwang Chang-yop [Hwang Jang Yop] Interviewed," *Sindong-a*, July 1998, pp. 328-345, as cited in FBIS-EAS-98-191; "Role of Political Organs in Military Examined," *Naewoe Tongsin*, 15 January 1998, pp. B1-B6, as cited in FBIS-EAS-98-079; "DPRK's Kim Chong-il's Position on Retaliation," pp. 8-11; "Defector to ROK on Kim Chong-il's Control of DPRK Military," pp. 161-167; "Defector Says KPA Under 'Complete Control' of Kim Chong-il," *Seoul Sinmun*, 26 February 1996, p. 20, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-039; and "Channels and Means of Control of the Workers' Party to Control the People's Army," *Vantage Point*, March 1995, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, pp. 32-41; and "Newspaper Profiles Kim Chong-il's Supporters," pp. 421-439.

strengthening of all armed forces, including the People's Army, as well as the programs of developing the war industry, and commands the army.”

The Central Military Committee leadership is centered on the members of the National Defense Commission. It is headed by Marshal Kim Chong-il in his position as Supreme Commander of the KPA. Other members include: Marshal Li Ul-sol (Director of the Guard Command); Vice Marshal Cho Myong-rok (Chief of the General Political Bureau); Vice Marshal Kim Yong-ch'un (Chief of the General Staff); Paek Hak-rim (Minister of Public Security); Vice Marshal Kim Ik-hyon (Chief of People's Defense); Vice Marshal Kim Il-ch'ol (Minister of People's Armed Forces); Vice Marshal Li Ha-il; Vice Marshal Pak Ki-so (Commander of the P'yongyang Defense Command); Vice Marshal Li Du-ik; General Oh Ryong-bang (Vice Minister of People's Armed Forces); Colonel General Yo Ch'un-sok (Vice Minister of People's Armed Forces); General Kim Myong-guk; General Kim Du-nam; and Li Yong-chol. The officers of the Central Military Committee who are not members of the National Defense Commission form a second tier within the military elite.⁸

The Organization and Guidance Department, under the directorship of Chang Song-taek, Kim Chong-il's brother-in-law, is one of 22 departments comprising the KWP's Secretariat. In reality, it is the most powerful organization within the KWP and provides guidance to all KWP, Cabinet, and National Defense Commission organizations through personnel management, supervising the activities of subordinate political departments, and conducting political surveillance and investigations. In pursuing its mission, the Organization and Guidance Department generally concerns itself with individuals at the provincial secretary level or higher within the KWP, vice director and above within the Cabinet, and general grade officers and above within the National Defense Commission and MPAF.⁹

While directly subordinate to the National Defense Commission since September 2000, the General Political Bureau is actually controlled by the KWP's powerful Organization and Guidance Department. The General Political Bureau is responsible for ensuring the political reliability and for exercising political control of the KPA. It does so through the organization of party committees and front organizations throughout the KPA hierarchy, the placement of KWP members in key positions, the planning of political indoctrination, and the supervision of affairs by assistant political commanders and political departments.

⁸ Precise details as to how recent changes within the DPRK have affected membership in the Central Military Committee and Organization and Guidance Department are presently lacking.

⁹ “Newspaper Profiles Kim Chong-il's Supporters,” pp. 421-439.

*Ministry of People's Armed Forces*¹⁰

The Minister of the People's Armed Forces is the National Defense Commission's officer directly responsible for the KPA. Operational and administrative control of the KPA is exercised through the Chief of the General Staff. Directly subordinate to the MPAF are the Cadre Bureau, General Rear Services Bureau, General Staff Department, Guard Command, Representative Mission at Panmunjom, Military Justice Bureau, Military Prosecution Bureau, and Security Command.

The General Staff Department exercises administrative and operational control over the KPA ground forces, Korean People's Air Force (KPAF), Korean People's Navy (KPN), Workers'-Peasants' Red Guard, and Paramilitary Training Units. It is roughly equivalent to the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff. The General Staff Department is staffed by officers and enlisted personnel from all the branches and is responsible for organizing, training, and equipping, as well as planning and executing all operations within the KPA.

Subordinate to the General Staff Department are 24 known bureaus, and a number of military academies, universities, and research institutes. A number of these bureaus are directly involved in the processing of information and intelligence for the military elite. The most important of these bureaus are the Classified Information Bureau, Communications Bureau, Electronic Warfare Bureau, Military Training Bureau, and Reconnaissance Bureau. The level of computerization, and thus potential to access the Internet, within these bureaus is believed to be generally higher than that found in other bureaus of the General Staff Department.

The Classified Information Bureau is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the production, transmission, and storage of classified information within the KPA, including planning and inspection, encryption, and decryption. The Communications Bureau is responsible for the administration and operation of all communications within the KPA and presumably provides support to the National Defense Commission in cooperation with the State Security Department. The Electronic Warfare Bureau is responsible for the administration and training of all Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and electronic warfare (EW)/electronic information warfare (EIW) assets within the KPA. The Military Training Bureau is responsible for education and training within the KPA, including that at military schools and academies. In fulfilling its mission, it conducts research and evaluates foreign combat operations through a small number of

¹⁰ Author interview data; "Role of Political Organs in Military Examined," pp. B1-B6; "Journal Views DPRK's Military Organization," pp. 30-31; "Defector Says KPA Under 'Complete Control' of Kim Chong-il," p. 20; "Channels and Means of Control of the Workers' Party to Control the People's Army," pp. 32-41; "Organization, Officers of Korean People's Army," *Pukhanui Kigwan Mit Tanchaebiyol Inmyongjip*, April 1988, pp. 93-99, as cited in JPRS-KAR-88-018; and Kin Motoyoshi, "DPRK Military Structure," *Gunji Kenkyu*, March 1986, pp. 196-205, as cited in JPRS-KAR-85-045.

research institutes and “think tanks.” The Reconnaissance Bureau (see below) is responsible for the collection of tactical and strategic intelligence within the military sphere, and strategic special operations throughout the ROK and overseas.

Intelligence and Internal Security Services

The primary mission of the DPRK’s intelligence organizations is to actively collect and disseminate timely and accurate information concerning any possible political, military, or economic threat to the security of the nation or to its political and military leadership, and to conduct subversion activities against the ROK. The primary missions of the DPRK’s internal security organizations are to protect the government and KWP from domestic threats and to prevent or neutralize any foreign intelligence collection or subversion activities against the DPRK. The DPRK’s intelligence and internal security organizations are the primary means by which foreign information enters the DPRK and reaches the military elite as processed intelligence.

The DPRK’s intelligence organizations have proven that they are capable of fulfilling their missions, especially within Asia. Intelligence collection outside of Asia is problematic as a result of the DPRK’s expanding economic crisis and political isolation in the international community. The DPRK’s internal security organizations have proven to be extremely effective.

While the missions presented above suggest a distinct separation of external and internal security responsibilities, the reality of the situation is somewhat more ambiguous, with various agencies often having overlapping areas of responsibility; in some cases, the agencies are in competition with each other (see below). For example, all agencies have an internal security responsibility to some degree, and internal security agencies have conducted positive intelligence operations within the ROK and overseas.

The organization of the intelligence and internal security community originates with Kim Chong-il and proceeds down through three distinct paths (see Figure 3): National Defense Commission, KWP, and Cabinet. Subordinate to the National Defense Commission are the MPAF and State Security Department. Subordinate to the MPAF are the Reconnaissance Bureau, Security Command, and Guard Command. The paths through the KWP and Cabinet are relatively short. Subordinate to the KWP is the office of the Central Committee Secretary in Charge of South Korean Affairs (CCSKA), which controls four intelligence-related departments. Subordinate to the Cabinet is the Ministry of Public Security.¹¹

¹¹ Author interview data, *North Korean Special Forces—Second Edition*,; *A Handbook on North Korea*, p. 20; and Bermudez Jr., Joseph S., *Terrorism: The North Korean Connection*, Taylor & Francis, New York, October 1990.

The office of CCSKA is responsible for implementing anti-ROK operations. It also exercises control over subordinate agencies and coordinates with the Reconnaissance Bureau, Ministry of Public Security, and State Security Department. It apparently collects information from its subordinate intelligence agencies and other organizations, and disseminates finished intelligence products to all DPRK government agencies including the National Defense Commission. The CCSKA controls four subordinate departments: Foreign Liaison Department (a.k.a., Social-Cultural Department or Liaison Department); Unification Front Department (a.k.a., South-North Dialogue Department); Office 35 (a.k.a., Research Department for External Intelligence, or Investigative Department); and Operations Department. The Foreign Liaison Department is tasked with establishing cells within the ROK and training agents; the Unification Front Department is responsible for “unified front” operations and anti-ROK psychological warfare operations; Office 35 is tasked with internal and external intelligence collection and infiltration into the ROK; and the Operations Department is responsible for basic training of anti-ROK agents and infiltration (a.k.a., escort) operations.¹²

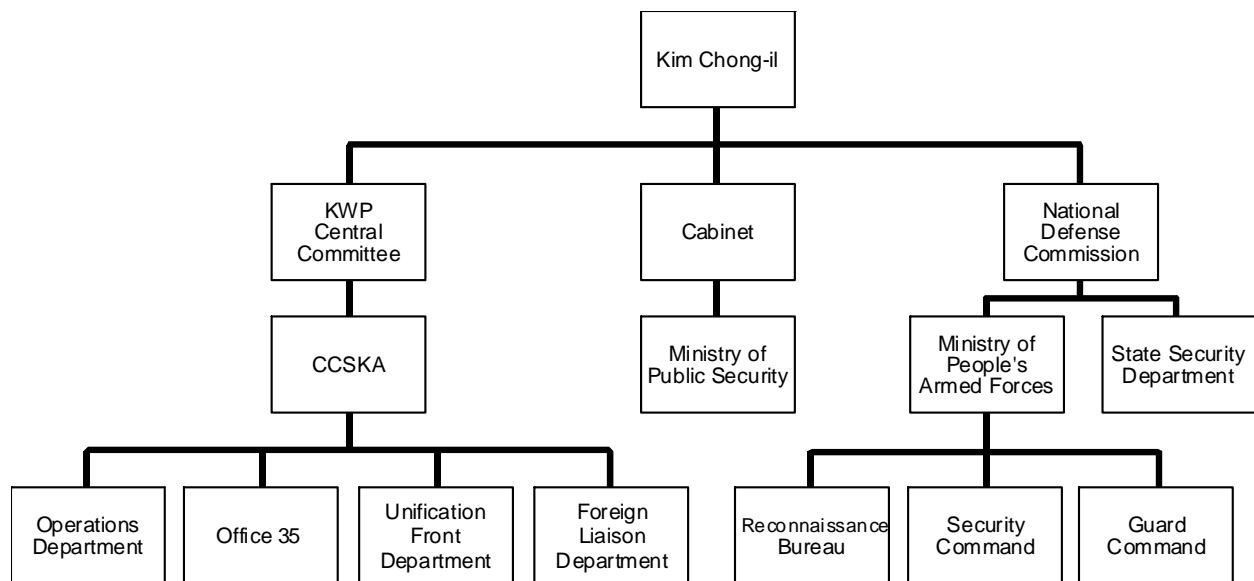


Figure I-3. Intelligence Services

¹² There is some question as to whether the position of CCSKA has been eliminated and its responsibilities assumed by Kim Chong-il. Author interview data; “National Security Planning on DPRK’s Anti-ROK Departments,” *Choson Ilbo*, July 30, 1998, as cited in FBIS-EAS-98-220; *Defense White Paper*, various editions 1990-1998; “The Aims and Characteristics of North Korea’s United Front Strategy,” *Vantage Point*, March 1996, Vol. XIX, No. 3, pp., 27-29; and “Former North Korean Agent Discloses DPRK’s Spy Activities,” *Mainichi Shimbun*, 9 May 1996, p. 6, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-093.

The primary missions of the Reconnaissance Bureau are the collection of tactical and strategic intelligence within the military sphere, and strategic special operations throughout the ROK and overseas. It is organized into a headquarters, Political Department, Intelligence Department, Special Department, Technical/Radio Department, Training/Plans Department, Maritime Department, and five Reconnaissance Battalions. Additionally, the Reconnaissance Bureau is believed to operate a small number of Trading Companies as “covers” and to generate financing for operations.¹³

Subordinate to the MPAF is the Guard Command, which is responsible for the personal security of Kim Chong-il and high-ranking officials. Although it is roughly comparable to the U.S. Secret Service or the ROK Office of Presidential Security, it also possesses a small number of combat units. In the performance of its mission, it works closely with the State Security Department and, to a lesser degree, the P’yongyang Defense Command.¹⁴

Although institutionally subordinate to the MPAF, the Security Command is controlled by the State Security Department. This organization is responsible for internal security within the KPA.¹⁵ The State Security Department functions both as an intelligence agency engaged in active operations overseas and as a domestic political security force (i.e., secret police). It is most comparable in function to the former Soviet KGB or, to a lesser degree, the ROK National Intelligence Service (formerly National Security Planning Agency). It is responsible for security (physical and political) within the DPRK’s embassies, missions, and legations located throughout the world. The State Security Department and the Guard Command are the agencies most directly responsible for the security of Kim Chong-il and reportedly only he is exempt from their scrutiny. Following the Constitutional amendments of September 1998, the State Security Department was subordinated to the National Defense Commission.¹⁶

¹³ Author Interview data and “DPRK Spy Organizations Targeting Japan,” *Gunji Kenkyu*, June 1999, pp. 68-73, as cited in FBIS.

¹⁴ Author interview data; “Monthly Discusses Secret Works in DPRK,” *Pukhan*, 12 January 1999, pp. 72-83, as cited in FBIS-EAS-99-012; “Kim Chong-il’s Security Force Strengthened,” *Naewoe Tongsin*, No. 961, 13 July 1995, pp. E1-E4, as cited in FBIS-EAS-95-182; and “Journal Views DPRK’s Military Organization,” pp. 30-31.

¹⁵ Author interview data; “DPRK’s Kim Chong-il’s Position on Retaliation,” pp. 8-11; “Generational Shift in DPRK Leadership Gaining Momentum,” *Hanguk Ilbo*, 29 July 1996, p. 13, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-146; “Defector to ROK on Kim Chong-il’s Control of DPRK Military,” pp. 161-167; “Defector Hwang Chang-yop [Hwang Jang Yop] Interviewed,” pp. 328-345; “Defector Says KPA Under ‘Complete Control’ of Kim Chong-il,” *Seoul Sinmun*, February 26, 1996, p. 2, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-039; “Articles by Defector Kang Myong-to Reported,” p. 3; and “Journal Views DPRK’s Military Organization,” pp. 30-31.

¹⁶ Author interview data; “NK Reshuffles Political Structure,” *A Handbook on North Korea*, p. 20; “Attempted 1995 Military Coup d’Etat in DPRK Alleged,” *Chugan Choson*, March 21, 1996, pp. 34-35, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-053; “Article on Past Military Coup Attempts in North,” *Iryo Sinmun*, 21 May 1995, p. 9, as cited in FBIS-EAS-95-097; “DPRK ‘Intensifying’ Internal Control,” *Seoul Sinmun*, 6 May 1996 p. 2, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-088; and “Journal Views DPRK’s Military Organization,” pp. 30-31.

The Ministry of Public Security functions primarily as the national police and civil defense force for the DPRK. Like the State Security Department, it also is responsible for conducting political surveillance; however, political suspects are remanded to the State Security Department.¹⁷

Cabinet

Under the Constitutional changes initiated by the 10th Supreme People's Assembly in September 1998, the Central People's Committee and State Administration Council were abolished and replaced by a Cabinet and a Presidium. The Cabinet "...represents the government of the DPRK" and assumed the responsibilities of the Administration Council, while the Presidium "...represents the state and receives credentials and letters of recall from diplomatic representatives accredited by a foreign state."

The Cabinet is charged with responsibility for all economic programs and the administration of the nation. It exercises these responsibilities through at least 27 ministries, the most powerful of which is the Ministry of Public Security, which functions as a combination national police force, civil defense force, and national construction force. The Cabinet is the primary means by which the nation presents itself to the international community.

C. INFORMATION ACCESS AND FLOW

Information within the DPRK can be broadly divided into two categories - official and unofficial. Official links are those means of communication that are institutionally or governmentally created and maintained by the DPRK, to include all print and electronic media (see Appendix A) originating within the DPRK; official lines of communications between the National Defense Commission and components of the MPAF, SSD, KWP, and other military and intelligence components; daily/weekly/special intelligence reports produced by the intelligence and internal security services; translations of foreign broadcasts, media and publications; information collected by DPRK embassies and legations which is forwarded to P'yongyang; reports produced by government ministries; etc. Access to the Internet, which is growing considerably among the military and power-holding elite, can be viewed as falling within the official category since it is provided by the government and is closely monitored by the intelligence and internal security organizations. Unofficial links are those means of

¹⁷ Author interview data; "Kim Chong-il Thanks KPA, Security Officers," *KCNA*, 11 January 1996, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-008; *A Handbook on North Korea*, p. 20; "Attempted 1995 Military Coup d'Etat in DPRK Alleged," pp. 34-35; "Article on Past Military Coup Attempts in North," p. 9; "DPRK 'Intensifying' Internal Control," p. 2; "DPRK Military Structure, Make-up Discussed," pp. 196-205; and "Kim Chong-il's Army," pp. 200-209.

communication that generally fall outside official channels. These would include listening to foreign media broadcasts or reading foreign newspapers and magazines; viewing films and videos brought into the country by personnel traveling abroad; obtaining information gathered from interaction with foreign individuals through official and unofficial contacts and from study abroad;¹⁸ communicating among family members, coworkers, and former classmates; gathering information during an individual's travels, both domestic and foreign; etc.

Internet, Intranet, and Cell Phones

The increasing use of the Internet, national intranet, and cell phones within the DPRK are new dynamics in the process by which information is accessed and flows within the DPRK.

DPRK computer security technology is reported to be relatively sophisticated. Although it probably possessed others before it, the DPRK's first known permanent link to the Internet began in October 1996 through the P'yongyang office of the United Nations Development Program. Since that time, links to the Internet have continued to expand. Access is restricted and is monitored by the State Security Department. Beginning in 1996, a small group of computer technicians began building the Kwangmyong (Bright) Network - a national level intranet. It currently has nodes in P'yongyang, each provincial capital, and several major cities. Although isolated from the world, it allows for email messaging and the sharing of web pages on the domestic level. The reason for this isolation is twofold. First is the fear that the DPRK's enemies (i.e., the ROK and the U.S.) would use the information sharing against the nation. The second reason for isolation is to prevent the people from being "contaminated" by outside influences. This isolation has resulted in all Internet web sites promoting the DPRK actually being located in Japan, the PRC, or other nations. For the general public, there is extremely limited access to the Internet available in P'yongyang (and possibly a few other selected cities) at major universities and selected institutes.¹⁹

The Internet (and to a lesser degree the national intranet) are playing an increasingly important role within the DPRK. The basic reason for this is simple—"information is power."

¹⁸ Students studying and Foreign Ministry personnel living abroad are viewed with some suspicion upon their return to the DPRK since they are often assumed to have been corrupted while abroad. While they may have not been "corrupted," all evidence points to the fact that they certainly understand the staggering differences between the DPRK and the nations in which they have lived. Even Foreign Ministry officials, when pressed in private conversations, admit to the wide disparity between the DPRK and most other nations. They, however, quickly assert the ideological and spiritual superiority of the DPRK. "North Korean Defectors 27 July News Conference," pp. 3-4.

¹⁹ Author interview data; Cho, Un-hui. "Do They Use Cellular Phones in North Korea?" *Chungang Ilbo*, 12 July 12, 2001; "China Report Highlights N. Korea's Homegrown Web," *Reuters*, March 23, 2001; "Cyber Commerce with North Korea Proposed," *Korea Herald*, June 8, 1999; and "DPRK Linked to Internet Through UNDP Office," *Hanguk Ilbo*, December 1, 1995, p. 8, as cited in FBIS-EAS-95-23.

Kim Chong-il and the military and power-holding elite unmistakably understand this, which is why they have so vigorously endeavored to restrict access. Yet, at the same time they understand the decisive importance of the information concerning world affairs available on the Internet in bolstering their national survival. This need to access information on the Internet appears to be insatiable and has resulted in the creation of an subclass of Internet-, technology-, and information-savvy soldiers and citizens who are younger than the leadership they support and who know more about the world they live in. Working in the computer and information technology field has become a goal of the elite and a symbol of privilege.²⁰ Like millions of such young people around the world, they undoubtedly find the technology and information liberating, seductive, and addictive. And in pursuing this technology and information, they are ever increasingly exposed to the reality of the world. They almost certainly understand that the world has more to offer than what they presently have; they likely see the conditions under which they live and compare them to what exists in the ROK, Japan, China, and the rest of world - and they undeniably want a better life for themselves. Just as fax machines and computer bulletin boards in China during the late 1980s proved to be essential tools for young Chinese democracy seekers, the Internet has the potential to be an equally powerful tool for change within the DPRK over the next 10 to 15 years. This potential is something that should be attentively observed and nurtured as best as is possible.

Beginning in 2002, cellular phone service was initiated in the P'yongyang region.²¹ The DPRK plans to expand this coverage to include additional cities in the future. Cellular service is also available at some locations along the PRC border and along the DMZ. As best as can be presently determined, access to the cellular network is limited to foreigners and the military and power-holding elite.

The introduction of cellular service, while undoubtedly allowing Kim Chong-il to “reach out and touch” his subordinates, presents several new situations with regards to information flow and access. As the military and power-holding elite use the new system, it will provide for an increased flow of information among individuals; however, it also is likely that the new technology will be abused by the users, thus presenting both domestic and foreign vulnerabilities. It is natural for individuals to assume - even if they've been told otherwise - that their conversations are private and that the only person listening is the one they are talking to. The reality is different. Any agency within the DPRK with the capability to intercept communications - and there are a number - can now utilize that capability to monitor the communications of potential political rivals. Presenting Kim Chong-il, or a high ranking member

²⁰ “N Korea-Computer Craze,” *Associated Press*, December 24, 2003.

²¹ “N. Korea’s Kim Orders Start of Mobile Phone Service,” *Kyodo*, January 20, 2002.

of the State Security Department or the Organization and Guidance Department, with a recording or transcript of a political opponent's conversations would be an ideal means of neutralizing or disadvantaging him.

Access to Information

The average citizen within the DPRK has very little opportunity to access foreign or uncensored information. The great majority of radios and televisions within the DPRK do not come with tuners or, if they do, these are limited to selecting only the state-approved radio and TV stations. Most people cannot access foreign broadcasts. In fact, the Ministry of Public Security and to a lesser degree the State Security Department ensure that average citizens do not modify their radios and televisions to receive foreign broadcasts. To do so, and to be found out, can result in extreme prison (i.e., detention camp) sentences. However, as an individual moves up through society, his potential to access uncensored information increases. As a civilian, it is when an individual attains a mid-level position within the KWP or government administration (especially one involved in external affairs) that such access can become a reality.

Despite draconian efforts, it appears that gradually increasing numbers of average citizens are risking their livelihoods to listen to ROK radio broadcasts. During the mid 1990s, the ROK Korean Broadcasting System surveyed defectors and arrived at an estimate of 2 to 6 million people within the DPRK who listen to their programming using inexpensive battery operated transistor radios manufactured in China and obtained on the black market. Since the time of this report, the border with China has become considerably more porous to black market trade and it appears that the number of illegal transistor radios within the DPRK has grown considerably.²²

An individual's ability to access information appears also to be dependent upon his physical location. Individuals living in P'yongyang, other large cities, or in the provinces along the DMZ appear to have a greater opportunity to view or listen to foreign broadcasts, while those living near the Chinese border appear to have a greater opportunity to obtain unrestricted televisions and radios.

High-ranking officials within the KWP and Cabinet frequently have access to foreign-made televisions or radios that do not have their tuners restricted. These are frequently presented to them as gifts from Kim Chong-il, obtained through individuals engaged in foreign trade, or

²² Author interview data; "2 to 6 Million in North Reportedly Hear KBS," *Yonhap*, February 13, 1995, as cited in FBIS-EAS-95-031; and "Many North Koreans Eager to Listen to South Korean Radio Program," *North Korea News*, May 23, 1994, No. 736, p. 4.

purchased on the black market. More significantly, they have access to regularly published translations of foreign broadcasts (see below).²³

Within the military, the potential to access uncensored or foreign information becomes significant at the level of a general grade officer or mid-level officer within a major bureau of the General Staff Department or MPAF. The members of the National Defense Commission have the potential to directly access whatever foreign or uncensored information they wish. They also have access to regularly published translations of foreign broadcasts, the opportunity to travel abroad, access to the Internet, and the opportunity to purchase foreign made radios and televisions that can access ROK, Japanese and Chinese stations.

The members of the military and power-holding elite typically have support staffs. In most military organizations and corporations throughout the world, it is not just the leaders who possess a certain level of power and access, but their support staffs do also. So it is with the staffs of the military and power-holding elites in the DPRK, who can be viewed as also having almost as much access to uncensored and foreign information as the people they work for. This access is even more pronounced with the DPRK's military elite since many are elderly, not computer savvy, and depend heavily upon their support staffs for information, research, and computer skills. Thus, the number of individuals within the military who actually have access to uncensored and foreign information is significantly greater than normally would be assumed.

Flow of Information

The flow of information within the DPRK can best be described as “Kim-centric,” - vertical and convoluted; that is, it is towards Kim Chong-il that all important information streams, and from him that all significant orders and directions issue forth. For the nation in general, and the military specifically, this flow is vertical. In most militaries in the world, information flows both up and down the chain of command and horizontally at each level, while orders flow down. Within the KPA, information flows up the chain of command and only orders flow down. There is extremely little horizontal flow of information or communications except at the highest levels. Major KPA units (e.g., corps, divisions, and brigades) can communicate with headquarters above them and units subordinate to them, but very little communication is permitted with units adjacent to them. These communications, according to defectors, rely heavily upon computers down to the battalion level and are conducted over what is presumed to be a secure military intranet.²⁴ The vertical flow of information is a means of

²³ “High-Level Defector Comments on DPRK Military,” *Choson Ilbo*, February 5-9, 1996, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-072; and “Articles by Defector Kang Myong-to Reported,” p. 3.

²⁴ “N. Korea-Computer Craze,” *Associated Press*, December 24, 2003.

maintaining strict control over the KPA. The belief is that if major units were allowed to communicate horizontally, they could unite and possibly stage a coup.

The flow of information moves through a convoluted, almost Byzantine at times, series of paths controlled by different organizations with diverse agendas and priorities, in a manner that is quite frequently redundant and inefficient. As information flows upward toward the military and power-holding elites, it is processed through organizational, political, and cultural dynamics that distort and misrepresent its nature and reality.

The internal dynamics of the various intelligence and internal security agencies are such that the agencies are in competition with one another and do not readily share information. Therefore, each only possesses a “piece of the puzzle” from which to produce reports or briefings that are presented to the senior leadership. This has often resulted in the duplication of effort and a waste of precious resources, with operations frequently displaying overlapping and sometimes conflicting areas of responsibilities. Additionally, there appears to be a political competition among these agencies to accomplish “feats” in their anti-ROK operations in order to celebrate important domestic events (e.g., the anniversary of the KWP) or to ingratiate themselves with Kim Il-song or Kim Chong-il.²⁵ This situation has arisen because of the manner in which the intelligence and internal security organizations have evolved over the past fifty years and the fact that Kim Il-song and Kim Chong-il employ the various organizations as a means of preventing any person or faction from becoming too powerful and threatening their control.

Viewed in its most simplified form, information flows towards Kim Chong-il through three principal channels: KWP, the National Defense Commission, and the Cabinet. Each provides a distinctively tailored, often redundant and competitive conduit of processed information. At the uppermost levels, members of the military and power-holding elite unevenly overlay these channels.

Within the KWP, internal raw information is gathered from party members and organizations placed throughout the nation and the government and within the military. It is forwarded upwards through a dizzying array of departments and bureaus, where it is processed and refined within stringent guidelines established by the Central Committee. The Central Military Committee and Organization and Guidance Department are the most powerful entities within the KWP. Along with the National Defense Commission’s General Political Bureau, these organizations form a triumvirate within the KWP. As the semi-processed information enters

²⁵ Author interview data; and Chon, Shi-yong, “Security Agency Suspects North Korea Plotting Terrorism to Strain Ties,” *Korea Herald*, July 10, 1998.

these entities, it is used to prepare reports and briefings that are presented to the Central Committee, the National Defense Commission, and Kim Chong-il. Typical of these would be routine reports concerning the activities of provincial KWP committees, or the status of prisons and political prisoners. Alternately, depending on their subject matter, these reports and briefings may be solely for Kim Chong-il, or for Kim and a selected few confidants. Typical would be those reports dealing with counterintelligence and counterespionage, domestic security, and the like. The most feared of these are the surveillance and investigative reports produced by the Organization and the Guidance Department and the General Political Bureau.

The Organization and Guidance Department under the directorship of Chang Song-taek, Kim Chong-il's brother-in-law, focuses primarily upon the military (e.g., general level and above) and power-holding elite (e.g., department director and above). It produces what is believed to be a daily report highlighting the activities, attitudes, and political reliability of selected individuals that is submitted to Kim Chong-il. These internal security reports serve as a check to those produced by other agencies (e.g., State Security Department). The General Political Bureau compiles similar reports, but for selected KPA officers and soldiers below the military elite.²⁶

External information enters the KWP channel primarily through the intelligence agencies subordinate to the CCSKA, personnel stationed abroad, and unofficial (e.g., foreign media, Internet, etc.) sources. Raw information is sent back to P'yongyang from overseas intelligence stations and operatives as well as from Foreign Ministry personnel abroad. It is combined with intelligence acquired through official channels as a result of agreements with foreign governments, and information developed within the various agencies themselves. Numerous reports and briefings are presented to various members of the Central Committee, National Defense Commission, and Kim Chong-il; typical of these reports would be threat assessments, status reports of ongoing intelligence operations, etc. The KWP reports and briefings on political developments within the ROK, Japan, China, and Russia serve as a check to those produced by the State Security Department and Foreign Ministry.

The levels of computerization within the CCSKA are believed to vary considerably, with the highest being within the South-North Dialogue Department and the lowest within the Operations Department. Beginning in the 1990s, the growing availability of Internet access contributed significantly to the ability of agencies of the CCSKA to obtain previously unavailable intelligence on an almost endless range of subjects. During the 1990s, intelligence

²⁶ While a strict delineation of responsibilities is suggested here, the reality is probably significantly more ambiguous.

agencies in the ROK and Japan began to notice the use of commercial encryption software and Internet email services by CCSKA agents operating in their countries. The websites of the U.S. Department of Defense are heavily visited by users from the DPRK. The Internet also has provided a means to quickly and easily disseminate propaganda and engage in disinformation campaigns. The internet, along with foreign broadcasts, appears to be a major source of information for the CCSKA.

Central Committee members who hold the rank of department director or above and a limited number of other KWP officials receive the regularly published classified bulletin "Reference Information." It contains translations of foreign news items with an emphasis on news from the ROK, Japan, and the U.S. The information is presented in much the same manner as Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) reports - uncensored and without commentary. It is unclear if distribution extends outside the KWP; however, members of the National Defense Commission undoubtedly have access to it and similar products from other agencies.²⁷

The information channel subordinate to the National Defense Commission consists of three sub-channels: the General Political Bureau, the State Security Department, and the Ministry of People's Armed Forces.

As noted above, the General Political Bureau is primarily concerned with internal security within the KPA. While institutionally subordinate to the National Defense Commission, it is controlled by the KWP. Although the majority of its reports apparently proceed up through the KWP channel, some may bypass this and go directly to members of the National Defense Commission or Kim Chong-il.

The State Security Department functions both as an intelligence agency engaged in active operations overseas and a domestic political security force (i.e., secret police). It is most comparable in function to the former Soviet KGB. It controls both the MPAF's Guard Command and Security Command. The information it collects and the reports and briefings it produces cover the entire spectrum. For internal missions, the State Security Department and the Guard Command are the agencies most directly responsible for the security of Kim Chong-il. In this role, the State Security Department collects information on possible threats to Kim Chong-il and the political reliability of members of the military and power-holding elite. Its counterespionage and counterintelligence missions allow it collect additional information on anyone within the DPRK, including foreign residents. Depending upon its nature, the information and intelligence

²⁷ It is unclear whether the "Reference Information" publication noted here still exists as such. It is, however, probable that there are a series of products similar to FBIS available to the military and power-holding elite today. "North Korean Defectors 27 July News Conference," pp. 3-4.

produced by the MPAF's Guard and Security Commands may flow upward through both the State Security Department and MPAF. The reports and briefings that are produced by the State Security Department serve as a check of those produced by the KWP. These reports may be directly passed to the National Defense Commission or Kim Chong-il. At the external level, the State Security Department's role in providing for the physical and political security of embassies and legations throughout the world allows it to collect information on the political reliability of members of the Foreign Ministry, foreign political developments, status of DPRK defectors, and foreign military and intelligence operations. This information is forwarded back to P'yongyang where it is processed and incorporated into briefings and reports for the National Defense Commission or Kim Chong-il. The State Security Department reports on foreign political developments serve as a check for those produced by the Foreign Ministry and CCSKA.

With regard to information access and dissemination, the State Security Department's Communications Interception Bureau (a.k.a., Signals Interception Bureau) is believed to be the DPRK's primary SIGINT agency. It is responsible for the creation of encryption systems and equipment, as well as the decryption of foreign code systems. It maintains a system of collection sites throughout the country that monitor both illegal internal and foreign civilian and military transmissions. This system appears to be separate from that of the Reconnaissance Bureau's Technical/Radio Department. In addition to its SIGINT capabilities, this bureau is believed to possess EW and EIW assets. The relationships among the Communications Interception Bureau, the Technical/Radio Department, and the Electronic Warfare Bureau are unclear; however, the Communications Interception Bureau appears to be the senior service. The State Security Department, possibly through its Communications Interception Bureau, is believed to play a crucial role in monitoring access to the Internet. The general level of computerization within the State Security Department is believed to be high, with numerous modern high-end computers of Asian, European and U.S. manufacture.

The State Security Department and the Reconnaissance Bureau are believed to be the primary agencies involved in the production of translations of foreign broadcasts that apparently are regularly disseminated to the military and power-holding elite. It is probable that the KWP's "Reference Bulletin" is prepared from information collected by these agencies.

The sub-channel that proceeds through the MPAF comprises at least seven significant components: Guard Command, Security Command, Reconnaissance Bureau, Classified Information Bureau, Communications Bureau, Electronic Warfare Bureau, and Military Training Bureau. With the exception of the Guard and Security Commands, these components produce reports and briefings from raw information and pass them up through the MPAF to the National Defense Commission and Kim Chong-il.

The Guard and Security Commands, while institutionally subordinate to the MPAF, are controlled by the State Security Department. Information and intelligence produced by these Commands serve as a check to that produced by the KWP's General Political Bureau and are believed to flow upward through both the MPAF and the State Security Department. Both the Guard and Security Commands possess small SIGINT components, which are apparently focused upon internal targets. The level of computerization within these Commands is believed to be high.

The Reconnaissance Bureau is the primary military intelligence agency within the DPRK. As such, it utilizes a wide array of methods to collect relevant information and process it into intelligence, which is then disseminated to varying degrees among the components of the MPAF and General Staff Department, as well as the National Defense Commission. The Internet and foreign media apparently serve as important sources of information for the Reconnaissance Bureau.

With regard to information access and dissemination, the Reconnaissance Bureau's Technical/Radio Department plays a crucial role. This Department, in cooperation with the Electronic Warfare Bureau, is believed to be the organization exercising overall responsibility for SIGINT, communications security (COMSEC), EW, and EIW operations within the MPAF. The number and organization of SIGINT assets within the MPAF is unclear. Ground based assets are believed to consist of a small number of independent SIGINT collection sites located throughout the DPRK in areas of high interest (e.g., along the DMZ and the Russian and PRC borders); the EW/SIGINT battalions within KPA corps; and the EW/SIGINT battalions that exist within some KPA divisions. In addition to these assets, the Technical/Radio Department exercises some degree of control over KPAF SIGINT collection aircraft and KPN intelligence-gathering vessels (AGIs). Assets subordinate to the Technical/Radio Department are responsible for EIW operations. The Department also coordinates with the MPAF Communications Bureau and its subordinate units. The relationship and level of coordination and cooperation between the Reconnaissance Bureau's Technical/Radio Department and the State Security Department's Communications Interception Bureau is unknown. The Communications Interception Bureau is apparently the senior service. The Reconnaissance Bureau and the State Security Department are believed to be the principal agencies involved in the production of regular translations of foreign broadcasts. These apparently are disseminated with varying levels of access to the military and power-holding elite.

As with the State Security Department, the level of computerization within the Reconnaissance Bureau is believed to be high, with numerous modern desktop and mid-range computers, the vast majority of which are of Asian manufacture. The availability of Internet

access over the past ten years has undoubtedly provided several orders-of-magnitude improvement in the Reconnaissance Bureau's ability to collect quality information and produce timely intelligence on a wide range of subjects. As noted above in reference to the CCSKA, DPRK users frequently visit U.S. Department of Defense web sites.

The General Staff Department's Classified Information Bureau, Communications Bureau, Electronic Warfare Bureau, and Military Training Bureau play unique supporting roles to the Reconnaissance Bureau in the collection and processing of military-related information.

The Classified Information Bureau is believed to have an operations security (OPSEC) responsibility and works in cooperation with the Communications Bureau. It is unclear what roles this department may play in the creation of code systems for the KPA, or in the decryption of foreign communications.

The Communications Bureau conducts monitoring of both domestic and foreign telecommunications traffic and is believed to work closely with the Reconnaissance Bureau and State Security Department in conducting SIGINT operations. This bureau also plays an important role within the area of COMSEC for the KPA and works in cooperation with the Classified Information Bureau. Within its role of COMSEC, the Communications Bureau probably exercises some control over the KPA's growing computer networks and their ability to access the Internet. Subordinate to the Communications Bureau is the 9th Signals Brigade (a.k.a., 9th Communications Brigade) and a communications school.²⁸ Aside from overseeing all communications within the KPA, this unit apparently operates a nationwide SIGINT collection system and plays a role - along with the Reconnaissance Bureau and State Security Department - in the preparation of translations of foreign broadcasts.

The Electronic Warfare Bureau, in coordination with the Communications Bureau and Reconnaissance Bureau's Technical/Radio Department, probably oversees both offensive and defensive EW/EIW operations. The Electronic Warfare Bureau is believed to consist of a staff, the Electronic Warfare Institute, and a small number of SIGINT, EW, and EIW assets.²⁹

The Military Training Bureau conducts research and evaluates foreign combat operations through a small number of research institutes and "think tanks." Because of this mission, it has wide-ranging access to uncensored and foreign information. While the primary focus of its mission is to prepare and train the KPA, its "think tanks" undoubtedly produce studies and

²⁸ It is unclear whether the 9th Signals Brigade is still designated as such.

²⁹ Author interview data; "Ex-KPA Major Writes on DPRK Military Situation," *Pukhan*, January 2000, pp. 86-93, as cited in FBIS; and "Future Electronic Warfare Discussed," *Nodong Sinmun*, December 5, 1999, p. 6, as cited in FBIS.

reports that are funneled up through the MPAF to the National Defense Commission and Kim Chong-il. The bureau's best-known "think tanks" are the Research Institute for Military Sciences and the Strategy Research Institute. These institutes are known to have conducted extensive historical research not only on World War II and the Fatherland Liberation War (i.e., Korean War), but also more significantly on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iran-Iraq War, Operation DESERT STORM, Operation ALLIED FORCE; Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (see below), etc. Additionally, they have conducted an intensive study of the process by which the Nationale Volksarmee (armed forces of the former German Democratic Republic) was dissolved and merged into the Bundeswehr (armed forces of the German Federal Republic). These institutes also conduct research into the development of new weapons (especially ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and precision-guided munitions) by other nations.³⁰ Information developed within the Military Training Bureau is then used to instruct the KPA and is the foundation for developing new tactics and doctrines.

The information channel subordinate to the Cabinet consists of two sub-channels: the Ministry of Public Security and the Foreign Ministry.

The Ministry of Public Security functions primarily as the national police and civil defense force for the DPRK. This Ministry plays an important role in preventing the general public from accessing foreign broadcasts and printed media. Like the State Security Department, it also is responsible for conducting political surveillance; however, political suspects are remanded to the State Security Department. In this role, the MPS prepares reports and briefings concerning internal security, civil preparedness, etc. These reports and briefings flow up to the Cabinet and possibly on to Kim Chong-il. The Ministry's Public Security Bureau is believed to possess a small SIGINT capability. The level of computerization within the Public Security and Prison Bureaus is believed to be moderate.

The Foreign Ministry is the DPRK's principal means by which it presents itself to the world. It also serves as an important asset by which it collects information on foreign nations. Diplomatic personnel stationed around the world are required to submit regular reports concerning their activities and political, cultural, and military developments within their host nations. These reports serve as a check against those produced by the KWP and the State Security Department. Reports from important nations (e.g., Russia, China, U.S.) are routed through the Foreign Ministry to both the National Defense Commission and Kim Chong-il.

³⁰ Author interview data; "Lessons for DPRK From NATO Bombing of Yugoslavia," *Nodong Sinmun*, 20 April 1999, p. 1; "DPRK's Keen Interest in New Weapons Used in Yugoslavia," *Yonhap*, 13 May 1999; "DPRK Military Studies Merging of East, West German Armies," *Choson Ilbo*, 25 April 1997, p. 2, as cited in FBIS-EAS-97-115; and "Journal Views DPRK's Military Organization," pp. 30-31.

A distinct aspect of diplomatic communications through the Foreign Ministry is that they are excruciatingly slow in all countries with the possible exceptions of China and Russia. This results from two factors. First, DPRK diplomats are briefed only on a limited number of subjects and are not allowed to negotiate or communicate freely within their host nations. So, if a DPRK delegation to a conference encounters a situation on which it has not been briefed, it must refer back to P'yongyang for guidance. Second, due to a variety of reasons - including paranoia and lack of technological capabilities - DPRK embassies, missions, and legations have a very limited means to securely and rapidly communicate back to P'yongyang. Therefore, important negotiations require that couriers hand-deliver messages between delegations and P'yongyang. Since events proceed so quickly in the world today, a message sent through official diplomatic channels based upon specific circumstances might be completely superceded by new events by the time it arrives and is processed in P'yongyang. During diplomatic exchanges of a critical nature to the DPRK, it is not unusual for Kim Chong-il to order the diplomat most closely associated with the exchange back to P'yongyang to brief him personally.

Probably one of the most disconcerting aspects of DPRK diplomatic communications for foreigners is the distortion or misinterpretation of these communications caused by the manner in which it is processed within the DPRK (see below). It is not unusual for the DPRK to issue a communication to a foreign government believing - quite often incorrectly - that it will be received and interpreted in a certain manner. It is received by the foreign government, but interpreted and responded to in a manner entirely at variance with the DPRK's intention. The message from the foreign government is then received back in P'yongyang where it is processed and interpreted based on their originally flawed expectations and entirely at variance with the foreign nation's intention. This cycle then repeats itself, often spiraling out of control.

While the entire information flow process described in this section is essentially a "push" system, during periods of crisis Kim Chong-il or the National Defense Commission frequently issues critical requests for information from all branches of the KWP, MPAF, and intelligence services - a "pull" system. Defectors report that during the 1994 nuclear crisis, which was eventually resolved by the signing of the Agreed Framework, all branches of the government were placed on emergency alert and directed to collect information regarding the possibility of a U.S. attack, the likelihood and degree of Chinese assistance should the U.S. attack, and China's stance concerning the nuclear crisis. Similar emergency requests for the collection of information have been reported during subsequent periods of perceived threat.³¹

³¹ "DPRK Defectors' News Conference Reviewed," *Sisa Journal*, August 11, 1994, pp 6-10, as cited in FBIS; and "Articles by Defector Kang Myong-to Reported," p. 3.

Complicating the entire “Kim-centric” flow of information are three factors: limited strategic reach, competition among organizations, and the “lens of self deception.” The ministries, bureaus, and departments involved in the collection of information and production of intelligence, reports, and briefings are very active and assumed to acquire reasonably accurate raw information in the nations immediately surrounding the Korean Peninsula: ROK, China, Japan, and Russia. As the distance from the Korean peninsula increases, however, the quantity and quality of information apparently decreases dramatically. Therefore, information for strategic intelligence and indications and warnings comes not from a widespread network of human and technical assets passing on information to an impartial, professionally trained and developed staff working with multiple sources, but rather from the Internet, CNN, NHK, and CCTV, etc. proceeding through a fundamentally flawed analysis and interpretation process.

Lens of Self Deception

It is important to note that the information and intelligence that reaches Kim Chong-il and the National Defense Commission are processed through what might be described as a lens of self deception comprising four layers: historical world view, political indoctrination, hatred for the U.S., and authoritarian cultural rules. This lens is so darkly colored that instead of focusing and illuminating, it most often distorts and misrepresents the reality of the information.

As noted above, the real power within the DPRK rests within the hands of a small group of men, the majority of whom either fought with Kim Il-sung during the “Fatherland Liberation War” or who have been raised entirely within a cultural and educational environment that worships Kim Il-sung and Kim Chong-il. These individuals possess a narrow and distorted worldview that is based not upon the free flow of ideas, questioning of facts, and exposure to different cultures and philosophies, but rather almost entirely on the propaganda of the KWP. This worldview places world events and the actions of other nations within a distorted historical context. For example, Japan is not only a neighbor and important trading partner, it also is the nation that occupied Korea and brutally oppressed the Korean people for many years. Because of this, any actions undertaken by Japan, benign as they might be, are viewed with suspicion. Likewise, the United States is both a superpower and the hated enemy who interfered in the internal affairs of the Korean people and prevented the reunification of Korea. All actions undertaken by the U.S. are viewed with distrust and as attempts to both prolong the division of the Korean people and directly threaten the existence of the Kim regime.

The DPRK has never attempted to conceal the fact that it believes the United States is its principal enemy and the ROK a “puppet” of the U.S. In the DPRK’s view, it was the United States that interfered in a purely internal dispute (i.e., the “Fatherland Liberation War”) and

threatened to employ nuclear weapons. Since that time, it has been the U.S. that has continued to both prevent the unification of Korea and threaten the existence of the DPRK with the use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, it is the U.S. that “controls” the U.N. and directs world attention against the DPRK and other countries that it doesn’t approve of. The DPRK leadership views U.S. actions in countries such as Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, and Iraq as demonstrative of threats to their own nation, with the U.S. acting as a bully, “kicking the door in...” and interfering in purely internal affairs. These beliefs have only been strengthened by U.S. “unilateral” actions in Iraq during 2003.

Korean society within both the ROK and DPRK has a strong underpinning of Confucian philosophy. One notable aspect of this is the influence of stringent authoritarian hierarchal rules. Within military and intelligence organizations, this is expressed by the fact that subordinates will rarely, if ever, disagree with their superiors. In fact, they are encouraged not to. Therefore, if a superior is known to possess a particular view on a subject, his subordinates - whether they believe the view correct or not - will tend to work new information into that view. These authoritarian rules also are manifested in deep institutional loyalty that results in a frequent refusal to share information and are detrimental to inter-agency competition. While such submission to superiors and institutional loyalty are witnessed throughout the business, military, and intelligence communities around the world, within the DPRK they are taken to extremes. The distinct possibility exists that this dynamic may manifest itself in a desire by the subordinates and support staffs of Kim Chong-il and the National Defense Commission to not present information that displeases or is at variance to stated opinions.

The net effect of this is that, whether consciously or subconsciously, information internally processed or transformed into intelligence passes through a lens of self-deception and exits in a fundamentally flawed state. It is upon this flawed process, however, that decisions within the DPRK are made. When combined with Kim Chong-il’s apparent belief that he “knows better” and can arrive at better decisions than those around him, this process often leads to ill-advised courses of action and unanticipated outcomes. A prime example of this was evidenced by Kim Chong-il’s 2003 public admission that DPRK intelligence agencies had kidnapped Japanese civilians over the past thirty years. Kim’s apparent analysis of the situation was that the Japanese would appreciate his magnanimous admission of guilt, view it as a sign of a new level of openness, and open themselves to the DPRK. It apparently never occurred to him that it would ignite deep emotions from a broad spectrum of the Japanese population and harden their feelings towards him and the DPRK. It should be anticipated that such a dynamic will be present during any future dealings with the DPRK, especially during times of crisis.

Within the military, this dynamic can be illustrated by how the Military Training Bureau evaluated U.S. operations against Iraq during Operations DESERT STORM and IRAQI FREEDOM. According to defectors,³² international news broadcasts concerning Operation DESERT STORM were taped and

“Videos of the Gulf War were watched everyday in the Operations Office, and assessments of the military power of the United States and the multinational forces, and studies of their strategy and tactics, were re-assessed from new angles.”

In one of those paradoxes that are so common when dealing with the DPRK, the same defector indicated that what they witnessed in the videos was shocking, yet they concluded

“...the Gulf War was, in short... “child’s play.” Should [the DPRK] face such circumstances, they concluded, it could easily deal with the United States and the multinational forces. The reasons for this were that: unlike in the past, a US-led military block, even if it is formed, would be unable to act without the consent of its allies; in the event of another Korean war, neighboring powers would not go along with the US position as they did in the Gulf War; [the DPRK’s] symmetry in conventional and high-tech weapons; and [the DPRK’s] new confidence in electronic warfare.”

Other defectors recount that following Operation DESERT STORM, officers above the level of regimental commander were required to watch videotapes of the war to familiarize themselves with U.S. tactics. The videotapes, however, had a negative effect upon the commanders, who realized that modern war depends on modern weapons and that the weapons possessed by the KPA were obsolete.

More recently, during the buildup to and early combat phases of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Kim Chong-il is reported to have gone into seclusion for 50 days beginning in mid-February and extending to the end of March. He even missed the traditional opening ceremonies of the Supreme People’s Assembly in P’yongyang. The general assessment of this behavior was that Kim and probably the DPRK intelligence community interpreted media reports concerning U.S. intentions and subsequent attempts to decapitate the Iraqi leadership and the U.S. deployment of additional bombers and combat aircraft to East Asia as indications that Kim might also be the target of a similar decapitation attack. Yet, no such attack was contemplated by the United States.³³

³² “Ex-DPRK Major Unveils KPA Military Plan,” *Pukhan*, February 1, 2000, pp. 92-99; and “Anti-Kim Front: DPRK Military May Revolt,” *Chugan Choson*, December 2, 1993, pp. 32-34, as cited in FBIS-EAS-94-028.

³³ “Kim Jong II Reportedly Feared Being Next Target,” *Houston Chronicle*, May 12, 2003, p. 12.

D. SUMMARY

Simply stated, all power within the DPRK originates with Kim Chong-il, who is simultaneously Chairman of the National Defense Commission, General Secretary of the KWP, and Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army. Therefore, what really matters within the DPRK is not so much an individual's schooling, personal achievements, job, position within society, rank within the military, etc. but how close - physically and emotionally - that individual is connected to Kim Chong-il. The closer an individual is, the more power that person wields, and the greater access to uncensored and foreign information he has.

The military elite within the DPRK should be understood to contain not only those individuals within the National Defense Commission holding military rank but also those military personnel situated within the broader power-holding elite. From an organizational standpoint, this would include the MPAF leadership and extend down to the commanders of the Guard Command, Security Command, General Rear Services Bureau, General Staff Department, Korean People's Navy Command, Korean People's Air and Air Defense Command, Corps, and a small number of the General Staff Department's major bureaus (e.g., Reconnaissance Bureau). It also includes some of those high-ranking military personnel located with various government, intelligence, and internal security organizations. In fact, a significant number of the military, and to a lesser extent power-holding, elite occupy multiple leadership positions within the MPAF, KWP, and the intelligence and internal security organizations.

The ever increasing use of the Internet, national intranet, and cell phones by the military and power-holding elite presents new dynamics in the process by which information is accessed and flows within the DPRK. While attempting to restrict access to the Internet, the DPRK leadership unmistakably understands the decisive importance of the information available concerning world affairs and its contribution to bolstering national survival. This need to access information on the Internet appears to be insatiable and has resulted in the creation of a subclass of Internet-, technology-, and information-savvy soldiers and citizens who are younger than the leadership they support and who know more about the world they live in. They almost certainly understand that the world has more to offer than what they presently have. Just as fax machines and computer bulletin boards in China during the late 1980s proved to be essential tools among young democracy seekers, the Internet has the potential to be an equally powerful tool for change within the DPRK during the next 10 to 15 years. This potential is something that should be attentively observed and nurtured as best as is possible.

Information flow within the DPRK can best be described as "Kim-centric" - vertical and convoluted. That is, it is towards Kim Chong-il that all important information streams, and from

him that all significant orders and directions issue forth. For the nation in general, and the military specifically, this flow is vertical. In most militaries in the world, information flows both up and down the chain of command and horizontally at each level, while orders flow down. Within the KPA, information flows up the chain of command and only orders flow down. There is extremely little horizontal flow of information or communications except at the highest levels. This vertical flow of information is a means of maintaining strict control over the KPA. The belief is that if major units were allowed to communicate horizontally, they could unite and possibly stage a coup.

This flow of information is convoluted - almost Byzantine at times - as it moves through a series of paths controlled by different and competing organizations with diverse agendas and priorities in a manner that is quite frequently redundant and inefficient. Most notably, the information and intelligence flowing upward toward Kim Chong-il and the military and power-holding elites are processed through what might be described as a lens of self deception composed of four layers: historical world view, political indoctrination, hatred for the U.S., and authoritarian cultural rules. The net effect of this is that, whether consciously or subconsciously, information internally processed or transformed into intelligence passes through a lens of self-deception and arrives in a fundamentally flawed state. It is through this flawed process, however, that decisions within the DPRK are made. When combined with Kim Chong-il's apparent belief that he "knows better" and can arrive at better decisions than those around him, this process often leads to ill-advised courses of action and unanticipated outcomes. It should be anticipated that such a dynamic will be present during any future dealings with the DPRK, especially during times of crisis.

APPENDIX I-A: DPRK PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA¹

The news media within the DPRK do not exist to serve the people's right to know, but rather to serve the interests of the state (or more accurately, Kim Chong-il). Private individuals or organizations own none of the news agencies, television, or radio stations or any of the 30 or more newspapers and magazines currently published in the DPRK. All are ultimately subordinate to the National Defense Commission, the KWP, or the Cabinet.

The printed media are heavily weighted towards newspapers. The largest number of newspapers, and those with the largest circulation, are published in P'yongyang. The largest include *Nodong Sinmun*, *Minju Choson*, *P'yongyang Sinmun*, and *Nodong Chongnyon*. Also published in P'yongyang is the weekly English language *P'yongyang Times*.

Because of the media's official function, major articles are generally identical or complementary in content to each other, except for some minor differences. Content is targeted towards internal consumption and centers around praising the Kim Chong-il regime and reinforcing the ideology of the KWP. The small number of news-related articles confine themselves to positive reporting of social and political activities throughout the country. Papers almost never report on crime or accidents within the DPRK, or irregularities involving KWP or MPAF officials. They do, however, devote considerable space to negative aspects of ROK and U.S. society, and condemn foreign (especially U.S., ROK, and Japan) bullying of the DPRK. These articles almost always grossly distort or exaggerate facts so as to present the DPRK in the most favorable light.

All articles written by the various departments within the papers and magazines are first submitted to intense scrutiny by local staffs and editors. Articles passing this level of approval are then passed to the Newspaper Section of the Press Guidance Bureau. If approved, they must then be cleared by the KWP's Propaganda and Agitation Department. All of this is done to ensure that the content is consistent with the approved Party line and that there are no conflicts with previously published articles.

¹ "Defectors Comment on DPRK Broadcast Media, Research Organs," *Yonhap*, June 7, 1996, as cited in FBIS-EAS-96-111; "Journalism in North Korea," *Vantage Point*, June 1995, Vol. XVIII, No. 6, pp. 25-32; "North Korea is Essentially a Slave Society, Theocratic System, and Military State," pp. 404-425; and "Article Describes DPRK News Media," *Naewoe Tongsin*, 11 March 1993, pp. B1-B6, as cited in FBIS-EAS-93-092.

Until the 1990s, the electronic media were divided into two systems, television and radio. During the late 1990s, KCNA established an Internet website and began releasing stories and announcements on a daily basis.

The three principal television stations within the DPRK are Korean Central Television (KCTV), Mansudae TV, and Kaesong TV. The KCTV network is by far the largest and covers almost the entire nation. Its programming includes news, educational, and entertainment shows; however, it mimics the print media in praising Kim Chong-il, publicizing KWP policies and denouncing the ROK and the United States. Mansudae TV can be considered the cultural channel of the DPRK's electronic media, as its primary programming is art and movie programs. It only broadcasts on weekends and special occasions in the P'yongyang area. Kaesong TV is used almost exclusively for propaganda broadcasts to the ROK.

The leading radio station in the DPRK is the Korean Central Broadcasting Station (KCBS). Its broadcasts consist of domestic and foreign programs and can be heard in eight languages besides Korean. Programming is similar to the print media, although there are a larger percentage of press reports from the Korean Central News Agency and there are a number of programs for children and youth. Radio Pyongyang broadcasts to the ROK with programs extolling the virtues of *Chuch'e*, the superiority of the DPRK, criticisms of ROK society, etc. This station is under the direct control of the KWP's Unification Front Department.

In addition to these radio stations, there is the "Voice of National Salvation" (VNS) allegedly the clandestine radio station of the underground National Democratic Front (Hanminjon) broadcasting from somewhere within the ROK. In reality, its transmitter is in Haeju, and the "Chilbosan Liaison Office" - a component of the KWP's intelligence system - manages the station. It broadcasts propaganda that is directed specifically towards ROK children and youth. The staff of the Chilbosan Liaison Station includes a high percentage of defectors from the ROK, a number of whom have permission to listen to ROK radio broadcasts and watch ROK television in order to become familiar with the words, customs, and popular feeling within the ROK, thereby making the VNS broadcasts more authentic.

The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) is the DPRK's only press agency. On the surface, it generally functions like other press agencies, receiving foreign wire dispatches and conveying them to newspapers and radio stations, maintaining contracts with foreign news agencies, employing overseas correspondents, etc. In reality it focuses on publicizing the DPRK's positions to the world and is under the same stringent censorship as all the other DPRK media outlets.

Many people who live in cities and large towns are privileged to have apartments; these apartments have hard-wired public address speakers mounted in the central living space. A public address system broadcasts propaganda, political education programming, and public service announcements directly into people's homes 18 hours a day. These speakers cannot be turned off or modified; to do so would result in extreme prison (i.e., detention camp) sentences and loss of a person's apartment and privileges.

