



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE HAGUE

Research Report

MUNISH 2009



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“Fostering democratic process in North
Korea”

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Introduction

As one can read from its complete name “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”, North Korea advocates democracy, having a multi-party system. There are three official political parties which include: Korean Workers’ Party (KWP), Korean Social Democratic Party and Chondoist Chongu Party. However, KWP is the only party that actually possesses any form of power over the government. In fact, KWP controls the other two minor parties and its leader Kim Jong Il is often referred to as the head of the state. This uneven distribution of political power has led to North Korea being recognised as a state with a dominant party-system. Many sources, including *the CIA The World Factbook*, describe the type of government in North Korea as a communist state with a one-man dictatorship.

History of the issue

With the end of World War II in 1945, Japanese occupation of Korea ended. The exiled government called the *Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea* - formed in 1919 - had been attempting to gain the country’s full independence. This included the country’s political independence. However, at the Cairo Conference in 1943 - held to make decisions about the post-war Asia- Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Chaing Kai-shek declared that “mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea we are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.” The phrase “in due course” implied there will be no immediate independence for Korea.

As discussed at the Cairo Conference the allies (the United States of America and the Soviet Union in particular) agreed to divide the country along the 38th parallel and temporarily occupy the country as a trusteeship. Based on the 38th parallel line, the Soviet Union occupied the Northern part of Korea and the United States occupied the Southern part of Korea.

This forced segregation of Korea eventually led to the permanent separation of the country. The southern part of Korea, which was being occupied by United States, slowly turned into a democratic government under the control of the US-friendly anti-communist leader Syngman Rhee. In the meantime the Soviet Union established an organisation named the *Soviet Civil Authority* to govern the northern part of Korea until the country became stabilised. This organisation put USSR friendly communist Koreans into important positions and set up the foundation of the communist government. In March 1946, under the control of the new northern Korea leader Kim Il-Sung, North Korea land reform took place. The purpose of this land reform was to distribute the land that was once occupied by Japanese. The significance of this land reformation was that everyone was allowed to have same amount of land regardless of an individual’s economic status or social position. This was done in an effort to eliminate former leaders from power by nullifying ownership and reassigning land to individuals of the KWP party. Kim Il-Sung’s plan worked perfectly and was successful in removing influential village leaders. Not long afterwards he nationalised the country’s key industries and the North Korea Provisional People’s Committee was established. The committee assassinated and, or kidnapped all opposition movements. Gradually the country was entirely controlled by Kim Il-Sung.

On November 14, 1947, the United Nations (UN) passed a resolution declaring that free elections should be held. It also state that foreign troops should be withdrawn and a UN commission for Korea should be established. The USSR however, boycotted this resolution and did not hold a free election while the South did hold an election. South Korea elected Syngman Rhee as their first president who assumed power from the US military on August 13, 1948. In the following month, North Korea was named the *Democratic People’s Republic of Korea* (DPRK) with Kim Il-Sung as the prime minister. Two years later in 1950, South Korea also declared the independence under the name of the Republic of Korea (ROK). The

idea of two separate Koreas could not be easily tolerated for both sides especially since they had been a united nation up until the end of Japanese rule. DPRK and ROK wanted to reunite the country by invading each other by force. This sparked the Korean War. Many countries and organisations including the United States, China and the UN were involved in this war. Over 2 million Koreans including many innocent civilians were killed. Hundreds of families were separated during the chaotic warfare and to this day many families remain fragmented. On 27 July 1953, an armistice was signed which led to a cease-fire between the two countries and a three-mile demilitarised zone (DMZ) was created around the 38th parallel.

After the war, the DPRK showed fast industrial growth and was a dominating economical force in Asia, coming in second only to Japan during the 1960s. In 1955, Kim Il-Sung first introduced his *Juche* ideology, in which he urged his country towards complete self-reliance and total independence from all other nations. *Juche* replaced the DPRK's past belief in Leninist-Marxism. The new ideology had a positive impact and helped the country to grow by encouraging its people to make use of technology and natural resources. However, its strong slogan of being independent from all other nations created an atmosphere of isolation. China and the Soviet Union were no exceptions for the closed-door policy. The DPRK desired to gain as much independence as possible from these two countries, which led to a focus on building a strong military. North Korea believed that they could retrieve their economic investment in the military by selling its mineral resources. They borrowed money from other countries and purchased machinery from the international market to excavate minerals from within their territory. Soon after oil prices went up and mineral prices went down. The North Korean economy slowed down and they were left with large debts and the burden of high social welfare. The *Juche* ideology only made things worse and prevented advanced foreign technology from entering the country. By the 1970s North Korea was far behind the modern technology of times and many Asian countries including South Korea surpassed North Korea both technologically and economically. In the 1980s North Korea made the decision to not pay its international loans, which resulted in lots of closed doors on the international market.

The global society felt threatened about the DPRK's growing nuclear force. In 1992 the DPRK allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect their country but the following two years blocked the IAEA from entering suspected nuclear plants.

By the time Kim Jong-Il came to power, North Korea's economy was already unstable and its political system was fraught with corruption. Kim Jong-Il tried to remedy these problems by establishing the National Defence Commission (NDC), in which Kim himself acted as chairman. Nevertheless the NDC seemed to work only as a pretence for legitimising military rule. Due to the extreme economic crisis in the country, the DPRK froze its nuclear programme in return for 5 billion dollars worth of fuel and 2 modern nuclear reactors. The United States built the two reactors for the DPRK. Their design only allowed for the production of low-grade plutonium and therefore could not be used for making nuclear bombs.

Kim Jong-Il could not retrieve the economic glory that North Korea had in the 1960s. He had chosen to continue following his father's *Juche* ideology- locking up all the doors to foreign countries. From 1996 to 1999 the country suffered a huge famine. It was a disaster caused by a lack of technology and machinery. About 800,000 people died during the famine. Despite the harsh situation inside the country, the DPRK announced that they will no longer abide by the armistice and will station its soldiers in DMZ.

One of the causes of the economic hardship is that about a quarter of the country's GDP is spent on armaments and nuclear weapons. This is majorly due to its relationship with South Korea. The two countries did not sign any peace treaties, in other words, technically the war has not ended yet. This leads the DPRK to feel the need to create a form of a safety net as, in their eyes, the threat still remains.

North Korea in recent days is dependent on international aid from various countries including South Korea, the U.S., Japan, China, and various NGOs such as UNICEF and the World Food Programme. However, despite the large amount of support that those countries and organisations provide for North Korea, it is only friendly towards China which was once a communist nation.

According to Amnesty International's 2003 report on North Korea, "there were reports of severe repression of people involved in public and private religious activities, including imprisonment, torture and executions. Unconfirmed reports suggested that torture and ill-treatment were widespread in prisons and labour camps. Conditions were reportedly extremely harsh." Due to its extremely harsh living conditions, many refugees have fled the country entering neighbouring South Korea or China. They escaped from their homeland to get away from the great economic and food crisis; however, many of them were proud of their country, felt bound to it and consequently chose to stay.

Specialists say, this phenomenon was purposely created by North Korean officers who use propaganda to glorify the county's founder Kim Il-Sung and current leader Kim Jong-Il. It was found truth that it is not hard to find posters of Kim Il-Sung's face on the streets and students are educated in school to pray upon Kim Il-Sung.

In 2002, South Korea's attempt to boost North Korea's economy by building factories in Kaesong was relatively successful. Recently, because of continual economic problems, North Korea demanded that South Korean companies in Kaesong pay a ten-fold increase in compensation for use of their land and resources. Needless to say, some companies have decided to move from Kaesong.

North Korea's nuclear weapon and missiles issue has been a major global issue for more than a decade. To find peaceful solution to this, six party talks have been held irregularly. Nations involved in the six party talks are the U.S., Japan, China, Russia, South Korea and North Korea.

Timeline

November 22-26, 1943

Cairo Conference

August 15, 1945

End of World War II, Japan surrenders

The independence day of Korea

August 1945

Soviet Civil Authority established in the northern part of Korea

March 1946

North Korea land reform

February 1946

North Korea Provisional People's Committee established

November 14, 1947

UN resolution regarding free election in Korea, withdrawal of foreign troops in Korea and establishment of UN commission for Korea

1948

Soviet Union departed from the North Korea

August 13, 1948

South Korea took over power from the U.S military

September 9, 1948

Democratic People's Republic of Korea declared

1950

Republic of Korea declared

June 25, 1950 –

Korean War

July 27, 1953

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| <u>1991</u> | DPRK and ROK joined the United Nations |
| <u>1994</u> | Kim Il-Sung died |
| <u>1998</u> | Missile shootings, flew over Japan and landed in the Pacifics North Korean submarines got captured by South Korea |
| <u>2000</u> | South Korean president Kim Dae-Jung and North Korean representative Kim Jung-Il met in Pyongyang |
| <u>2002</u> | DPRK reactivated Yongbyun nuclear reactor South Korea built factories in Kaesong area in North Korea |
| <u>2003</u> | North Korea left the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) |
| <u>2007</u> | North Korea agreed with six party nations to shut down its nuclear reactors completely in exchange of economic and energy assistance |
| <u>March 2008</u> | North Korea restarted testing missiles |
| <u>July 2008</u> | South Korean woman got shot in Mount Kumgang |
| <u>April 2009</u> | North Korea tested long-range missiles North Korea walked out of six party talks |
| <u>May 2009</u> | North Korea carried out underground nuclear test A military general declared they will no more abided by the armistice signed in 1953 which put a pause on the Korean War |

Relevant Documents

United Nations Security Council Resolution 82, 83, 84, 85 (1950)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874 (2009)

The Cairo Conference – The details about the independence of Korea

Major Countries Involved

- North Korea
- South Korea – Six party talks member, neighbouring country of North Korea. Was once a united country.
- The United States – Six party talks member, with aim of terminating terrorism on the earth
- Japan – Six party talks member, several missile flew above Japan
- China – Six party talks member, formal allies of North Korea. Most friendly to DPRK.
- Russia – Six party talks member, formal allies of North Korea (USSR)

Recent Developments

The DPRK has been threatening its neighbouring countries by shooting missiles and crossing the sea border between South Korea with submarines. In 1998, the DPRK launched missiles, which flew over Japan and landed in the Pacific Ocean. In the same year several submarines were captured by South Korea in its territory of sea.

Four years later (2000), South Korean president Kim Dae-Jung took a step towards trying to achieve a unified Korea. Leaders of both South and North Korea met in Pyongyang and arranged several dispersed family meetings. The effect of the friendly environment did not last long. Several people died during a naval gun battle between South and North Korea in the Yellow Sea in June, 2002. In that same year the DPRK admitted that they had reactivated the Yongbyon nuclear reactor. The following year North Korea reneged upon the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Six party talks began in 2003 regarding the nuclear weapon issue in North Korea. The members of six party talks are ROK, DPRK, the US, China, Japan, and Russia. The talk resulted in progress. On February 13, 2007, economically stumbling North

Korea agreed with the six party nations to shut down its nuclear reactors completely in exchange for economic and energy assistance. IAEA inspectors verified the shutdown of reactors later in the same year. It seemed that North Korea had finally renounced its antagonistic character. In February 2008, New York Philharmonic played in Pyongyang and many saw this as a cultural diplomacy.

Very recently - from March 2008 to 2009- the situation has reached another dimension. North Korea accused new South Korea president Lee Myung-Bak of sending warships to their waters. As a result they started test firing missiles. In July same year a South Korean woman was shot during the special tour at Mount Kumgang.

This year, in the month of April, North Korea tested its long range missiles. The UN Security Council criticised the nation and consequently North Korea walked out of six party talks. In the following month North Korea carried out underground nuclear tests. A military general appeared on one of the country's major TV channels and declared they will no longer abide by the armistice signed in 1953, which indefinitely suspended the Korean War.

Previous & Possible Solutions

UNDP and Armenia – similar situation - <http://www.undp.am/?page=DemocraticGovernance>

1. Suggestions for a new peace treaty could be made. The UN could get involved in forming a peace treaty between North Korea and South Korea. This would lessen the money both nations spend on their military as they would no longer feel threatened by each other and feel the need to protect themselves. However, considering that the two countries have completely different government types and neither one of them wants to give in to the other: negotiation should not be easy.
2. Possible ways to monitor the distribution of international aid could be explored: To make sure that the aid is equally distributed among the nations by, for instance, NGOs such as Amnesty International.

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