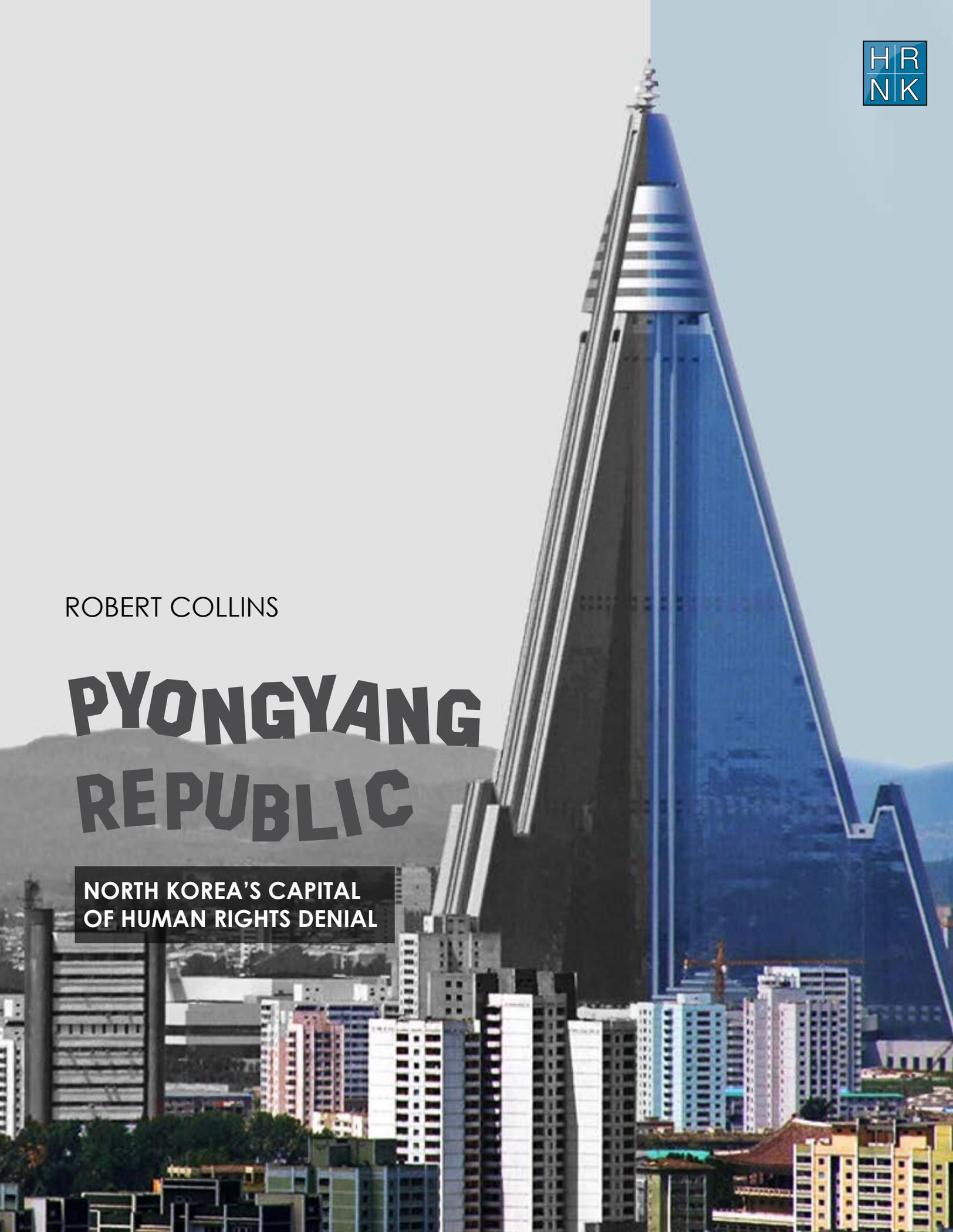


ROBERT COLLINS

# PYONGYANG REPUBLIC

**NORTH KOREA'S CAPITAL  
OF HUMAN RIGHTS DENIAL**



# PYONGYANG REPUBLIC

NORTH KOREA'S CAPITAL OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS DENIAL

Robert Collins



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\*Most of this section is a close translation of the October 17, 2011 *Weekly Chosun* article by Kim Dae-Hyun entitled “北 보위부 작성 평양 성인 210만명 신상정보 단독 입수” [North Korean State Security Department’s Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents]. The content is used here with the permission of the author.

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## **ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA (HRNK)**

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HRNK is the leading U.S.-based bipartisan, non-governmental organization in the field of North Korean human rights research and advocacy, tasked to focus international attention on human rights abuses in that country. It is HRNK's mission to persistently remind policy makers, opinion leaders, and the general public in the free world and beyond that more than 20 million North Koreans need our attention.

Since its establishment in October 2001, HRNK has played an important intellectual leadership role in North Korean human rights issues by publishing twenty-six major reports (available at <http://hrnk.org/publications/hrnk-publications.php>). Recent reports have addressed issues including political prison camps, North Korea's state sponsorship of terrorism, the role of illicit activities in the North Korean economy, the structure of the internal security apparatus, the *songbun* social classification system, and the abduction of foreign citizens.

HRNK was the first organization to propose that the human rights situation in North Korea be addressed by the UN Security Council. HRNK was directly, actively, and effectively involved in all stages of the process supporting the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry on North Korean human rights. Its reports have been cited numerous times in the report of the Commission of Inquiry and the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean human rights. On several occasions, HRNK has been invited to provide expert testimony before the U.S. Congress.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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CMC	Central Military Commission
COI	UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GPB	General Political Bureau
GNI	Gross national income
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
ICC	International Criminal Court
KCNA	Korea Central News Agency
KINU	Korea Institute for National Unification
KPA	Korean People's Army
KPISF	Korean People's Internal Security Force
KWP	Korean Workers' Party
MSC	Military Security Command
MPAF	Ministry of the People's Armed Forces
MPS	Ministry of People's Security
NDC	National Defense Commission
OGD	Organization and Guidance Department
PCRI	Paektusan Construction Research Institute
PEA	Pre-Trial Examination Agency
PAD	Propaganda and Agitation Department
PRDP	Pyongyang Reconstruction Design Plan
RGB	Reconnaissance General Bureau
ROK	Republic of Korea
SEC	Second Economic Committee
SSD	State Security Department
SPA	Supreme People's Assembly
UFD	United Front Department
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction
WFP	World Food Program

## CONCEPTS & TERMS

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<i>Bonghwajo</i>	“Group of princes” in North Korea that holds political and financial influence
<i>Donju</i>	“Money masters”; a newly emerging class that has profited from markets
<i>Ganbu</i>	Cadre
<i>Guyeok</i>	District; administrative subdivision of a city
<i>Jangmadang</i>	Markets
<i>Juche</i>	Self-Reliance
<i>Kotchebi</i>	Homeless or orphaned children
<i>Inmaek</i>	Personal “lines” or networks
<i>Inminban</i>	Neighborhood unit
<i>Sokdojeon</i>	Speed battle
<i>Songbun</i>	Socio-political classification
<i>Songun</i>	Military First
<i>Suryong</i>	Supreme Leader
<i>Suryong-juui</i>	Supreme Leader-ism
<i>Yeolsa</i>	“Patriot” or “hero”

## PREFACE

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*Pyongyang Republic: North Korea's Capital of Human Rights Denial* is a comprehensive study of North Korea's capital city and the dominant role it plays within North Korea's political system. Almost four years after the publication of his groundbreaking HRNK report, *Marked for Life: Songbun, North Korea's Social Classification System*, Collins delivers another pivotal publication, guaranteed to be instrumental in grasping the dynamics of the North Korean regime.

Understanding the inner workings of the Kim regime is key to scrutinizing the chain of command, mechanisms, and lines of responsibility behind the crimes against humanity and other egregious human rights violations perpetrated against the people of North Korea. According to the February 2014 report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (UN COI), such "crimes against humanity are ongoing" in North Korea "because the policies, institutions and patterns of impunity that lie at their heart remain in place."

Through its unique insight into the functioning of the North Korean regime, *Pyongyang Republic* provides information needed to support future accountability and transitional justice processes addressing human rights violations. If such violations are included in the regime behavior subjected to international sanctions—currently focused only on countering the development and proliferation of nuclear and missile technology—*Pyongyang Republic* will become reference material. The report also contributes meaningfully to the body of knowledge needed to establish effective sanctions regimes and other measures aimed to counter threats to international peace and security posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons, long-range ballistic missiles, and military provocations.

*Pyongyang Republic* reminds the reader that the city has served as the center of power in the northern half of Korea for 2,000 years. Currently home to about a tenth of North Korea's 25 million people, built around up to 200,000 members of core elite families, the North Korean capital city continues to stand as the stronghold of the most centralized and oppressive political system in the world. Collins explains the grave human rights breaches occurring in North Korea for decades as the consequence of the Kim regime's policy of 'human rights denial.' He thoroughly examines the levers of North Korean power, abuse, and oppression by scrutinizing the privileged treatment received by the Pyongyang citadel and many of its residents under three generations of dynastic totalitarian rule.

More than a quarter century since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the Kim regime has not only survived, but also accomplished two hereditary succes-

sions of power. Under Kim Jong-un, Pyongyang continues to be the power center of the post-communist, post-industrial, dynastic kleptocracy controlled by the Kim family. Every resource that enables power, advantage, or a better quality of life is centered in or managed from Pyongyang. Nevertheless, Kim Jong-un is temporally distant from his grandfather, Kim Il-sung, and the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. While his father, Kim Jong-il, had twenty years to prepare for hereditary succession, Kim Jong-un only had three years to start building a power base. For these reasons, it is now more important than ever to command and retain the loyalty of the elites by constructing and granting access to exclusive 'cultural' and entertainment infrastructure, including new apartment buildings, water parks, amusement parks, and indoor equestrian facilities.

Rigorously selected through the unforgiving filter of a loyalty-based system of social classification, the individuals who preserve the Kim family regime and enable it to retain political control are mostly located in Pyongyang, with some auxiliary elements situated in the provinces. To expound the nexus between the concept of the *Pyongyang Republic* and North Korea's policy of 'human rights denial,' Collins explains how North Korea's ideology, centralization of power, resource prioritization, and political loyalty-determined privilege support this connection. Those living outside the boundaries of the *Pyongyang Republic* are relegated to a life of perpetual insecurity. Those allowed to live inside the perimeter of the North Korean citadel of power can acquire highly coveted privilege only through active involvement or at least complicity in executing the policy of human rights denial.

As Collins indicates, under the reign of Kim Jong-un, the North Korean ruling family may no longer be inexpugnable. Although North Korea continues to be the world's most reclusive state, through the advent of new technologies and portable information storage devices, video and audio material from the outside world reaches some North Koreans. Information is slowly, but surely eroding the regime's grip on power. The protracted, but steady crumbling of North Korea's information firewall and the rise of growing expectations among North Korea's *donju*—the *nouveau riche* that has emerged from a grey underworld of non-institutional, low-level capitalistic practices—may develop as two of the principal factors that undermine the legitimacy of North Korea's regime.

**Greg Scarlatoiu**

Executive Director

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February 9, 2016

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**Robert M. Collins** is a 37 year old veteran employee of the U.S. Department of the Army and served for 31 years in various positions with the U.S. military in Korea, including several liaison positions with the Republic of Korea military. He finished his career in June 2009 as Chief of Strategy, R.O.K.-U.S. Combined Forces Command, Seoul, Korea. Mr. Collins served the 4-star U.S. commander as a political analyst for planning on Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asian security issues. In that capacity, he developed strategies and policy and planning concepts in pursuit of U.S. and R.O.K.-U.S. Alliance security interests relative to the North Korean threat and regional security challenges. Mr. Collins holds a B.A. in Asian History from the University of Maryland (1977), and an M.A. in International Politics with a focus in North Korean Politics from Dankook University (1988). He was an adjunct professor of political science at the University of Maryland University College from 1995 to 1999. He received the Republic of Korea Sam-il Medal (South Korean Order of National Security Merit, Fourth Class) from President Lee Myung-Bak and the U.S. Army Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service by the Secretary of the Army. Mr. Collins is currently a freelance writer focusing on Korean security issues and U.S. interests in Northeast Asia. He is the author of *Marked For Life: Songbun, North Korea's Social Classification System* (Washington, D.C.: HRNK 2012); and "Strategic Assessment of North Korean Human Environment During Crisis," (United States Forces Korea's Korean Battle Simulation Center).

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

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Pyongyang has served as the center of power in the northern half of Korea for two millennia. Today, it stands as the bastion of the most centralized political system in the world. North Korea's capital city, situated astride the Taedong River, is the power center of the Kim family regime. Every resource that contributes to power, advantage or a better quality of life is centered in or managed from Pyongyang. Most importantly, the individuals who enable the Kim family regime to maintain political control are predominantly located in Pyongyang, with supporting elements in the provinces. The Korean Workers' Party (KWP), the ruling party of North Korea, and all agencies of the government, security agencies, and military are headquartered in the capital city. It is where the institutions involved in the suppression of human rights maintain their centers of administration, policy, and decision-making. It is where the regime's doctrine of 'human rights denial' is formulated, and it is where political evaluations of key regime officials are conducted. Because Pyongyang provides privilege and resources to those that serve the regime's interests, North Koreans strive to live there. In doing so, they comply with the implementation of human rights denial in their personal performance and political participation.

Diplomats, analysts, and scholars alike have used the terms DPRK, North Korea, and the Kim family regime interchangeably with little success in linking those concepts to North Korea's internal dynamics. The city of Pyongyang goes by many other names: "another country different from the DPRK," according to those who live in the provinces;<sup>1</sup> "city of the sun;" "city of privilege;" "the President's city;" and "face of the nation." The regime's own publishing company states that "Pyongyang is the heart of the Korean people, the capital of our socialist homeland and a wellspring of our revolution."<sup>2</sup> However, it is the title "capital of the revolution" that has spurred the regime to construct Pyongyang as both the capital city and a "republic." Nevertheless, the concept of the Pyongyang Republic lies beyond these concepts.

While the official title of North Korea is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), this title does not accurately reflect the country's political, social, or economic reality. The KWP, with its immense influence and ubiquitous presence, is the driving force at the core of the Pyongyang Republic. The extreme disparity between Pyongyang and other regions reinforces the common perception that there are two republics within North Korea's borders—the "Pyongyang Republic"

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1 Tim Sullivan, "North Korea, The Mystery Of Pyongyang As Oz And The Rest, Forgotten Cities," *Huffington Post*, October 12, 2012.

2 *Pyongyang Review* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1995), 2.

and the “Republic of Provinces.”<sup>3</sup> Those in the provinces often say that “twenty million people exist to serve Pyongyang’s three million.”<sup>4</sup> Many among the 28,000 North Koreans who defected to South Korea, not to mention the media, have also come to refer to North Korea’s capital city as the “Pyongyang Republic.”

To explain the nexus between the concept of the Pyongyang Republic and the policy of human rights denial, this report addresses how North Korea’s ideology, centralization of power, resource prioritization, and politically-oriented privilege contribute to this connection. Chapter Two explains how each of the regime’s three Supreme Leaders contributed to the creation of the Pyongyang Republic through ideological and physical construction supported by highly effective regime security, an effort that began with the socio-political classification of every North Korean. Furthermore, it provides a general overview of how the regime’s political consolidation contributed to hereditary succession while employing Pyongyang as the center of power.

Chapter Three explains how *Suryong-juui* (Supreme Leader-ism) serves as the ideological foundation for maintaining the supremacy of the Supreme Leader over all other North Korean citizens as the ultimate leader in all facets of life and examines the related enforcement of human rights denial. This fundamental guidance for all North Korean institutional cadre, regardless of agency, compels North Korean leaders at all levels to ensure all individual rights are subordinated to the Supreme Leader’s directives and preferences.

Chapter Four identifies North Korea’s elite, from the power elite that dominates policy formulation and implementation to the lower elite, who serve the base requirements of the Pyongyang Republic. This chapter also discusses the power structures that serve the Supreme Leader’s decision. These structures provide consultation and advice for the Supreme Leader and sustain the Pyongyang Republic. The same chapter also assesses what role the most senior elite play in regime decision-making.

Chapter Five details how and why privilege—both lifestyle-related and professional—is bestowed on North Koreans as reward for those who serve the Kim family regime through demonstrated loyalty to the Supreme Leader and the Party and through support for the values, practices, and

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3 Joo Seong-Ha, “평양은 정말로 충성분자들이 사는 도시인가” [Is Pyongyang Really A City of Loyalists?], *Nambukstory.com* (blog), June 28, 2012, <http://blog.donga.com/nambukstory/archives/32598>.

4 Jang Jin-Bok, “北, 평양—지방 격차확대... ‘평양공화국’ 불만증대” [Gap Between Pyongyang and the Outer Regions in North Korea Is Expanding... Complaints About the Republic of Pyongyang Rising], *Newsis*, November 13, 2011.

intent of the regime. This relationship creates a direct link between privilege, direct service to the conceptual precepts of the Pyongyang Republic, and human rights denial.

Chapter Six explains general aspects of life in the Pyongyang Republic for both the most powerful of the elite down to Pyongyang's poor, with an emphasis on wealth disparity and the availability of superior cultural facilities compared to the provinces. Furthermore, this chapter takes a close look at the unique residency requirements for becoming a Pyongyang inhabitant, and also examines the pressures of public mobilization for political events and a stricter policing standard.

Chapter Seven chronicles the pace and design of constructing Pyongyang over the decades and the varying emphases and priorities of each of the three Supreme Leaders. One of the most dynamic aspects of this construction process is the type and location of housing for the various levels of North Korea's elite, and how this housing becomes an incentive to serve the regime.

Chapter Eight assesses the power institutions supporting the Kim family regime, which are the prime enablers of the Pyongyang Republic and the dynamics of human rights denial. These institutions are centrally located in Pyongyang and ensure the near complete centralization of power in the capital city.

Chapter Nine explains the role of the DPRK state as an operational front for the Kim family regime's true institution of political power—the Korean Workers' Party. In reality, the DPRK is a virtual Potemkin state that insulates the Supreme Leader and the Party from state-to-state pressures and international challenges. This reality is grounded in the 2009 DPRK constitution, which mandates that the state is subordinate to the Party. This is applied operationally from the state premier down to the local village, with equivalent dynamics in all other areas of North Korean organizational structure.

Finally, Chapter Ten assesses the future of the Pyongyang Republic under Kim Jong-un, who has created the improbable dichotomy of a reign of terror among the power elite while enabling open markets that allow not only personal survival but also dependence on the markets' success.

It is important to note that there are two key aspects of North Korea's policy of human rights denial: overarching doctrines that serve as national ideology and set North Korean society's behavioral norms, and foundational documents that serve as guidelines for policy implementation. Through these characteristics, we can identify several components of human rights denial: implementation of communist revolutionary theory under Soviet occupation; policy formulation; estab-

lishing overarching doctrine; foundational documents; policy implementation; policy leadership; and legal facades. At various points, this study will address the role of doctrine and loyalty to the *Suryong*, as well as privileges awarded for supporting the Supreme Leader and the Party's policies.

Despite all efforts by the Kim family regime to build the Pyongyang Republic into a secure bastion, this same republic is increasingly at risk. Though still quite limited, information from the outside continues to flow into North Korea at an ever-increasing pace. This includes radio broadcasting, leaflets, CDs, USBs, memory cards, and videotapes from South Korean sources, as well as defectors from North Korea now operating out of the Republic of Korea. In addition to this information crossing from south to north, the Chinese border is proving to be porous as well. This contributes to general knowledge within North Korea's population that the outside world has much more to offer than the Kim family regime. Furthermore, the newfound affluence of the *donju* ("money lords") class is a result of non-institutional, low-level capitalistic practices that feed into a sense of growing expectations among the population.

Lastly, this report will emphasize the disparities between Pyongyang and the provinces to the severe disadvantage of the latter, as well as the dynamics of individual and institutional service to the regime. Such service directly and indirectly leads to human rights denial throughout North Korean society.

## CHAPTER TWO: WHY THE PYONGYANG REPUBLIC WAS CREATED

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On an apartment roof in front of the Pyongyang train station is a sign that reads “Pyongyang is the capital of the revolution.” It is the first thing people see when they arrive in Pyongyang and the last thing they see when they leave. One defector-turned-South Korean reporter calls the slogan the “ultimate keyword.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the impression this sign leaves is what is conveyed by each of the leaders of the Kim family regime—that Pyongyang is intended to be not only the “capital of the revolution,” but also their own personal base of power as North Korea’s Supreme Leader.

The transition of Pyongyang from a national capital to the seat of the most totalitarian of dictatorships is closely tied to the survival of the Kim family regime. Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un have gradually shaped Pyongyang from the “capital of the revolution” into the capital of a personalized republic. Pyongyang has become insulated in a political cocoon that physically and ideologically separates it from the rest of North Korea, even as it maintains political and administrative control over the entire country. Pyongyang is the home of the ultimate “gentry” family, and of socialism’s gentry class.<sup>6</sup> Based on this analogy, the rest of North Korea is a fiefdom. Indeed, the provinces of North Korea serve the Pyongyang Republic more as vassal states than as equal partners in a socialist revolution. The provinces provide manpower and resources without receiving the benefit of local economic development in return.

What enables this dichotomy is the authority of the KWP, led by the *Suryong*, over the state. In North Korea, the Party serves as the initiating and final authority in all policies and decisions.<sup>7</sup> It maintains political control over all state, military, economic, and social organizations in North Korean society. It embeds itself in every organization through Party committees, enabling centralized control and implementation of political guidance and policies. The KWP is responsible for all policies and practices, including those associated with human rights. It also establishes the rules of social interaction.

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5 Joo Seong-Ha, “‘혁명의 도시’에서 ‘욕망의 도시’로 변한 평양” [Pyongyang Has Changed From the ‘City of the Revolution’ to the ‘City of Greed’], *Dong-A Ilbo*, July 24, 2014.

6 Choi Seung-Gyu, “北은 ‘평양공화국’?... 신분증까지 차별” [Is North Korea the ‘Pyongyang Republic?’ Even ID Cards are Different], *TV Chosun*, March 19, 2014. [http://news.tvchosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2014/03/19/2014031990117.html](http://news.tvchosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2014/03/19/2014031990117.html). The video at this link convincingly depicts the differences between Pyongyang and the provinces.

7 Hyun Seong-II, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu: Ganbu jeongchaeg-ul jungsimeuro* [North Korea’s National Strategy and Power Elite: Focus on Cadre Policy] (Seoul: Seonin Publishing, 2007), 400-403.

The evolution of the Pyongyang Republic into a citadel of power, center of privilege, and command post of human rights denial has been shaped by the values of the Kim regime and the sacrifices of the North Korean people. As Kim Il-sung fought political and military rivals to secure his rule, the total elimination of political opposition became a priority for the regime. All opponents were banished from Pyongyang, together with family members, especially those who criticized the *Suryong* or his efforts in any form.<sup>8</sup> The elevation of Pyongyang from the focal point of nation-state building to the center of regime preservation is directly tied to the leadership succession from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il. As Kim Jong-il accrued power as the Director of the KWP Organization and Guidance Department (OGD) and the KWP Propaganda and Agitation Department (PAD) in 1973, he began to centralize all political power through those institutions. He led the development of the concept of *Suryong*, the tenets of which directly enforce human rights denial. To adhere to the *Suryong* doctrine, individuals must sacrifice themselves completely to serving the *Suryong* and accept a common destiny that is completely determined by the Supreme Leader. By using this doctrine, Kim Jong-il prioritized all resources and construction to Pyongyang.<sup>9</sup> Kim Jong-un has continued this trend by rewarding those loyal to him through improving the cultural lifestyle in Pyongyang. As he attempts to consolidate his power as North Korea's third *Suryong*, Kim Jong-un has focused on eliminating even the slightest challenge from military and political leaders and elevated younger Party cadre to higher positions.<sup>10</sup>

Ideology has always played an important role in regime succession in North Korea. From communist revolutionary theory, *Juche* ideology, the Monolithic Ideology System, and the Monolithic Guidance System to law and legal decrees, the Kim regime leadership has shaped the formulation and implementation of policy to focus on the *Suryong*, national sovereignty, collective rights, and the denial of individual rights. All ideological and legal efforts target perceived domestic “anti-revolutionary reactionaries” and “anti-state enemies.” The regime not only politically categorizes the North Korean population into different *songbun* (socio-political classes),<sup>11</sup> but also employs political and

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8 To study Kim Il-sung's road from Soviet-appointed leader of the DPRK to totalitarian dictator, see Lim Un, *The Founding of a Dynasty in North Korea* (Tokyo: Jiyusha Publishing, 1982).

9 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 119-21. Also, for a study of Kim Jong-il's leadership, see Jae-Cheon Lim, *Kim Jong Il's Leadership of North Korea* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

10 See Chapter Ten for a further discussion of this topic. Also see detailed analysis at Jeong Yong-Soo and Kang Jin-Kyu, “Reshuffles in North slowing down,” *Korea JoongAng Daily*, December 17, 2015.

11 Discrimination based on family history is a core KWP policy and serves as the beginning point of human rights denial. Every single North Korean is politically classified as friendly to the Kim regime, an enemy of the Kim regime, or belonging to an in-between class referred to as “wavering.” The discrimination that results from this classification, known as *songbun*, impacts every aspect of life in North Korea. This is a core

legal procedures to restrict, if not eliminate, human rights. All political doctrines, philosophies, and charters adhere to this principle.

At the top of the doctrinal pyramid is the concept of loyalty to the *Suryong*, or Supreme Leader. There is a direct correlation between the Supreme Leader's personalization of the Pyongyang Republic and human rights denial. Pyongyang is the home of the *Suryong*. The ideology of the *Suryong*, which stresses total personal loyalty to the Supreme Leader, is incompatible with the concept of human rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Kim regime uses the Party to demand adherence to the Monolithic Ideology System and the Monolithic Guidance System, which demand total loyalty to the *Suryong*. Human rights imply opportunity for individual choice, which the Monolithic Ideology System and Monolithic Guidance System eliminate. Those that adhere to these systems and the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology are rewarded with privileges and the opportunity to live in Pyongyang or serve in leadership positions elsewhere. Only those of higher *songbun* are permitted to live in Pyongyang, contingent upon the continuous display of requisite loyalty to the *Suryong* and the Party through proper ideological posture. The elite serve the regime in critical policy and decision-making positions and receive, in return, the best privileges the regime has to offer. Required and institutionalized by the Party and the state, loyalty to the *Suryong* is the foundation for justifying human rights denial in North Korea.

North Korea's human rights denial incorporates political suppression and terror, personal surveillance, professional and political evaluation of individuals, rewards for denying human rights, social classification, and politically oriented jurisprudence. This policy was instated after liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 and the occupation of North Korea by the Soviet military and Korean communist revolutionaries. The reconstruction of North Korean society after 1945 did not focus on customs, traditions, and morals, but on revolutionary ideology and loyalty to the regime. State policy focused on strengthening regime control. The law served to protect the regime, not the individual. Those that were on the bottom of the social structure were elevated to the top, while those at the top were relegated to the lowest socio-economic class. They were banished to the countryside, sent to prison camps, or executed.

Human rights denial in North Korea gained momentum and became more sophisticated with the elimination of Kim Il-sung's political rivals between 1956–58. It has since been modified and strengthened based on both external events deemed to have an undue influence on the North Korean populace and internal events that are assessed to be existential threats to North Korea's

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policy of the Kim regime, and heretofore there is no indication of any intent to change this policy. See Robert Collins, *Marked for Life: Songbun, North Korea's Social Classification System* (Washington, D.C.: HRNK, 2012).

Supreme Leader. Though there has always been a major focus on the military as a force supporting both domestic and national security, the regime has prioritized domestic policy to support internal security. It has constructed a model of self-preservation that employs draconian methods of threat elimination and human rights denial that surpass the most brutal of history's political systems.

The Kim family regime's approach to human rights has always been one of formal policy versus real policy. Formal policy is based on state documents, starting with the constitution and formal laws, such as the DPRK Criminal Code and the DPRK Criminal Procedures Code,<sup>12</sup> which are all drafted and ratified by the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA). However, in reality, Party and state agencies conduct policy under the direction of the KWP Central Committee and the KWP Secretariat to protect the regime from internal threats. There is no agency that implements formal policy to protect the rights codified by the state; there are only front organizations with no real domestic function that serve the appearance of human rights implementation.<sup>13</sup> The implementers of human rights denial ignore rubber-stamped laws and carry out domestic political mandates. Human rights are denied and violated in some way by every Party, state, economic, and social organization in North Korea at every level, from Pyongyang down to the smallest village.

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12 See Code of Criminal Procedures (as amended up to Decree No. 2035 of October 18, 2006, of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly), available at [http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file\\_id=331277](http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=331277); and Kim Soo-Am, *The North Korean Penal Code, Criminal Procedures, and Their Actual Applications* (Seoul: KINU, 2006).

13 See Annexes 2 and 3 of the "National Report Submitted in Accordance with Paragraph 15(A) of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1" dated August 27, 2009, presented in Geneva to the Sixth Session of the Working Group on the UPR. This document can be accessed at <http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/UPR%202009.pdf>. Though the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly overseas all laws associated with human rights in North Korea, there is no evidence of effective efforts to enforce such laws.

**Table 1: Development of North Korea’s Human Rights Denial**

Event	Year	Context	Impact
Korean Liberation, Kim Il-sung becomes leader of North Korea	1945	Communist revolution	Pro-Japanese, landowners, religious leaders, and businessmen banished or executed; beginning of political prison camps
May 30 Decree	1957	First major human rights denial policy; established programs for conducting North Korea’s first large-scale purges	Family background determines each person as a political friend or foe
August Purges of Other Political Factions	1956–58	Yan’an, Russian, Domestic Factions Eliminated	No challenges remain to Kim Il-sung’s policies, including human rights policies
Monolithic Ideology System Initiated	1967	First of numerous background investigations on every North Korean citizen	<i>Songbun</i> becomes predominant social-political qualifier, base policy of human rights denial; political prisons formalized
Kim Jong-il Becomes Party Secretary For Organization and Propaganda	1973	Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology promulgated	Discussion of individual rights regarded as anti-revolutionary; legal system uses Ten Principles as judgment criteria, not Criminal Procedures Law or constitution
Kim Jong-il Succeeds Kim Il-sung	1994	Great famine (“Arduous March”) begins	North Koreans outside Pyongyang deprioritized for food, products, and services
Kim Jong-un Consolidates Power	2013	Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology rewritten	Kim Jong-un confirms policy of human rights denial to continue

The regime’s recruitment of North Korea’s elite is designed to uphold its own values. By selecting and employing Pyongyang residents through the KWP, the Supreme Leader is able to make his political, physical, and ideological environment unassailable. To support the recruitment of the elite, Pyongyang offers the best education available in North Korea. The city also offers the best food security and housing, the most comfortable lifestyle, and most importantly, the best opportunities for professional advancement. To receive these advantages, the residents of Pyongyang strive to serve the regime, even at the cost of denying human rights to themselves and others.

Pyongyang seems like a dream to North Koreans in the provinces. The city has stores with stocked shelves and entertainment complexes such as aquariums, water parks, high-rise modern apartments, an equestrian riding club, and upscale restaurants. In the provinces, there is very little awareness that such facilities even exist in Pyongyang. According to one high-profile defector, “Pyongyang is a city of privileged people, and there is [a] saying that only those who give orders live there, not those who actually work. Those 500,000 people will support the Kim family until the end.”<sup>14</sup>

To protect itself from changes to this contradictory reality, the Pyongyang Republic isolates itself from international laws and norms. While foreign humanitarian organizations seek to relieve the pain and suffering associated with food shortages and the collapse of North Korea’s healthcare system, the Pyongyang Republic manipulates international aid organizations to provide sustenance for the citizens of Pyongyang through diversion and deception.<sup>15</sup> Most countries use inter-state relations to further economic goals or improve national security, but the Kim regime uses the DPRK’s state activities to further the security of the Supreme Leader.

The DPRK acts as the “front man” for the Kim family regime when dealing with the international community. Agencies, laws, and official titles conform to international norms, just enough to uphold the illusion of normalcy in statehood. However, the Kim regime vests all power and authority in the KWP, through which it ensures that all government agencies conform to the Kim family regime’s objectives. These same agencies are required to shield the regime from external interference while manipulating international sympathy to obtain humanitarian assistance and other concessions. These dynamics exist because the Party is above the law, as acknowledged in North Korea’s constitution. The state subjugates itself to the Party, thus negating its own authority. Quoting or citing the constitution as a lawful practice inside North Korea is regarded as frivolous, or worse, unjustified.

The development of Pyongyang into the Kim family regime’s power base began with the founding of a revolutionary Party and the establishment of socialist institutions, which was supported by the design and construction of a model city. The capital city has since been constantly improved through the construction of housing and other related facilities for the privileged classes. Perhaps in no other city in the world is there such a direct association between the center of dictatorial power and the physical benefits of ensuring the dictator’s security and denying human rights to the people.

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14 “Pyongyang Elite Key to Regime's Survival,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, January 4, 2012.

15 See Andrew Natsios, *The Great North Korean Famine: Famine, Politics, and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001), 34.

During this process, Pyongyang also became a showcase of ostentatious architecture. It displays grandiose socialist art and bold monuments dedicated to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, the revolution, and the KWP. The monuments to Kim Il-sung in Pyongyang alone are overwhelming in size and number.<sup>16</sup> Pyongyang is the shrine of the national ideology of *Juche* (Self-reliance); it is the “heart of the Korean people.”<sup>17</sup> Its architecture represents North Korea’s socialist revolution and the Kim family regime’s leadership of the same. Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il built the *Juche* Tower, dedicated to the Kim regime’s philosophy of self-reliance; the Arch of Triumph, dedicated to Kim Il-sung’s presumed leadership of the anti-Japanese partisans’ victory;<sup>18</sup> Kumsusan Palace, once Kim Il-sung’s residence and now Kim Il-sung’s and Kim Jong-il’s mausoleum; and the Socialist Revolution Monument. Kim Jong-il saw these monuments as great examples of building socialism.<sup>19</sup> Kim Il-sung Square on Seungri (Victory) Street, at the heart of Pyongyang, is the site of massive military parades designed to influence domestic and international audiences with images of power and discipline.<sup>20</sup> Pyongyang is a testament to the power and dominance of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. It is indeed a showcase city, and this is fully intentional.<sup>21</sup>

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16 There are 35,000 statues of Kim Il-sung in North Korea. An interesting note is that Kim Il-sung’s statue in Mansudae sits on the location of a famous revival church named Changdaehyon Church, where there was a famous revival in 1907. See Kim Jeong-Eun, “평양 도착하면 김일성 동상으로 직행” [When One Arrives in Pyongyang, One Goes Directly to Kim Il-sung’s Statue], *Future Korea*, September 24, 2006. (The journalist coincidentally bears the same name as the North Korean ruler.)

17 *Pyongyang Review*, 2.

18 This is the interpretation of North Korean historians, who distort facts to create a narrative supporting the Kim family regime’s personality cult.

19 Cho Seong-Hoon, “Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu: Pyonyangsi-reul jungsimeuro” [Study of North Korea’s Urban Development: Focus on Pyongyang], *Guksagwan-nonchong* 70 (1996): 236.

20 Formerly known as Stalin Street from the 1940s into the 1960s, Seungri Street runs through Kim Il-sung Square, where the Kim regime stages large-scale military parades to celebrate KWP Foundation Day (October 10), the founding of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (September 9), KPA Foundation Day (April 25), Victory Day (July 27), and other Party and state holidays. See Charles K. Armstrong, “‘Fraternal Socialism’: The International Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953–62,” *Cold War History* 5.2 (2005): 161-87. Photos of Stalin Street are available at <http://bestan.tistory.com/510>.

21 Life in Pyongyang is surrounded by ideology both in physical and cultural terms. Visitors to Pyongyang are required to bow in front of Kim Il-sung’s statue in front of the Korean Revolution Museum. There are numerous other museums and monuments dedicated to some aspect of the socialist revolution, liberation from Japan, or the Korean War. See Pyongyang monuments map at <http://www.pyongyang-metro.com/metromaps.html>.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE SURYONG & HUMAN RIGHTS DENIAL—POWER IN THE PYONGYANG REPUBLIC

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There has been considerable discussion about the suffering of the North Korean people under a regime that denies human rights at every turn. However, there has been little explanation of the causes behind this reality. The answer lies in the configuration of political power within the Kim family regime, which is built to ensure that only the leader possesses authority. There are no checks and balances that ensure the protection of human rights, and the concept of human rights is seen as a direct challenge to the leader's authority.

North Korea's human rights policy is not a separate and distinct policy with its own processes, institutions, and support groups. Rather, it is an integral component of the regime's Monolithic Ideology System and Monolithic Guidance System, as well as the internal security apparatus. The Monolithic Ideology System emphasizes there is no other leader than the Supreme Leader. It compels complete loyalty to the Supreme Leader's decisions and directives. Subordinate organizations and personnel strive to support the Supreme Leader's guidance, and they are judged by their ability to do so. The Monolithic Guidance System reinforces the above. Given this reality, adjustments to the Kim regime's current human rights policy would require the deconstruction of the regime's ideological foundations. Any in-depth analysis of the North Korean political system would lead to the conclusion that the Kim regime is as unlikely to do this just as the United States is unlikely to dispose of its own Constitution.

Under the supervision of the KWP Science and Education Department and the Education Ministry, North Korea teaches "human rights" as an individual's contribution to the revolution and the state. The intent is to revolutionize and "communize" the individual's human rights,<sup>22</sup> a direct contradiction to human rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this manner, the party-state inculcates the concept of a collective led by the *Suryong* (Supreme Leader) who provides guidance and ideology.

### 3.1 *Suryong, Juche, and Human Rights Denial*

As in any governing structure, the distribution of power affects the extent to which human rights are observed. In North Korea, political power is centered on the concept of *Suryong*. The *Suryong* is at the core of a centralized North Korean society. He is responsible for aligning the political, social,

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22 *Bukan gaeyo* [Overview of North Korea] (Seoul: KINU, 2009), 385.

economic, and cultural sectors of North Korea to advance the socialist revolution. He is not seen as a mere “leader” by the population, but as a “Supreme Leader” with absolute authority. He is the mind that brings the Party together, and he leads the dictatorship of the proletariat. He is responsible for carrying out the revolution and represents the interests of the world’s laborers.<sup>23</sup> Everyone must follow his guidance and directives; in no way can an individual’s rights interfere with his authority.<sup>24</sup> The *Suryong* leads the Party and the labor class in the constant effort towards the victory of the revolution, and the common man must steadfastly recognize the Supreme Leader’s role.<sup>25</sup> The *Suryong* is always correct in his wisdom, directions, and decisions.

The concept of the *Suryong* was—and still is—to portray Kim Il-sung and his successors as the ultimate leader of all Koreans. This narrative began with Kim Il-sung’s leadership of the anti-Japanese partisan movement and included the establishment of the North Korean state, the construction of North Korean society, and its ideological revolution. Kim Jong-il, Kim Il-sung’s son and successor, directed the creation of all propaganda to shape North Koreans’ understanding of the Supreme Leader. The development of the *Suryong* concept, a glorification process supporting a cult of personality that became institutionalized doctrine, does not tolerate superiority over, or equality with, Kim Il-sung or Kim Jong-il.<sup>26</sup> The *Suryong* concept paved the way for hereditary succession, which was accomplished after two decades of serious challenges to Kim Il-sung’s rule in the late 1950s and late 1960s.<sup>27</sup> The *Suryong* concept was developed against the backdrop of these

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23 Jeon Yeong-Seon, *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukan-ui sahoe-wa munhwa* [Revised North Korean Society and Culture] (Seoul: Yeongnak Publishing, 2006), 75; Unification Education Institute, 2012 *Bukan e-hae* [Understanding North Korea: 2012] (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2012), 30; Young Chul Chung, “The *Suryong* System as the Center of *Juche* Institution: Politics of Development Strategy in Postwar North Korea,” in *Origins of North Korea’s Juche: Colonialism, War, and Development*, ed. Jae-Sung Suh (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013).

24 “The Role of Chuch’e,” in *North Korea: A Country Study*, ed. Andrea Matles Savada (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1993). <http://countrystudies.us/north-korea/60.htm>.

25 Park Hyeong-Jung et al., *Kim Jong-il sidae Bukan-ui jeongchicheje: Tongchi ideollogi, gwollyeok ellipseu, gwollyeok gujo-ui jisokseong-gwa byeonhwa* [North Korea’s Political System in the Kim Jong-il Era: Ruling Ideology, Power Elite, and Power Structure’s Continuity and Change] (Seoul: KINU, 2004), 113.

26 The foundation of Kim Il-sung’s personality cult is the “Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology.” See Joanna Hosaniak, *Prisoners of Their Own Country: North Korea in the Eyes of Witnesses* (Seoul: Citizens’ Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, 2004), 39-44.

27 During 1956–58, Kim Il-sung fought off Russian-Korean, Chinese-Korean, and South Korean factions to secure power. See Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea 1945–1960* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 154-97. In the 1960s, Kim Il-sung fought off challenges from Pak Kum-chol, the Kapsan faction, and the Kim Chang-bong / Heo Bong-hak military incident. See Lim, *Kim Jong Il’s Leadership of North Korea*, 48-50.

challenges to complete and solidify Kim Il-sung's power base. In doing so, these efforts laid the basis for the Pyongyang Republic.

To justify the authority of the *Suryong*, the Kim regime leadership also developed the overarching ideology of *Suryong-juui* (Supreme Leader-ism). Under this doctrine, the Kim regime established a pyramid of political power that creates extreme political centralization. Political power in its purest form resides in the person of the *Suryong*, who rules at the top of this pyramid. Another key element of *Suryong-juui* is the Kim family regime's succession system. It insists that the North Korean revolution cannot be completed in one generation. The *Suryong* system thus gives North Korea "a degree of durability, grounded in a collectivistic solidarity, an organic social structure, and *Suryong*-centered social values."<sup>28</sup> The Party and military are the two pillars of support for upholding *Suryong-juui*. Kim Il-sung used the Party to enforce *Suryong-juui*, and Kim Jong-il relied more on the military.<sup>29</sup> That was, and is, the "high end" of political enforcement. However, the "street end" of enforcement has always been conducted by the internal security agencies.

*Suryong-juui* supplements the national ideology of *Juche* (Self-reliance) to ensure that no one in North Korea can challenge the Supreme Leader. *Juche* is a political doctrine formulated by Kim Il-sung that states that the Korean masses are the masters of the country's development. It is employed by the party-state to justify its decisions. First introduced by Kim Il-sung as a national political doctrine in a 1955 speech,<sup>30</sup> *Juche* emphasizes national independence. Political independence, military independence, and economic self-sufficiency can be understood as subordinate principles of *Juche*. Referred to as "the Monolithic Ideology of the Party," *Juche* is the ideological foundation of the Kim family regime. It was created by Kim Il-sung as an original "encyclopedic thought which provides a complete answer to any question that arises in the struggle for national liberation and class emancipation, in the building of socialism and communism," and it is "exemplified in countless speeches and 'on-the-spot guidance.'"<sup>31</sup>

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28 Chung, "The *Suryong* System as the Center of *Juche* Institution," 89-118.

29 See Park et al., *Kim Jong-il sidae Bukan-ui jeongchicheje*, 99-144.

30 See Kim Il-sung, "On Eliminating Dogmatism And Formalism And Establishing *Juche* In Ideological Work," in *Kim Il-sung Works*, Vol. 9 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 395-417. Speech to Party propagandists and agitators on December 28, 1955.

31 "The Role of Chuch'e," in *North Korea: A Country Study*. It is well argued by B. R. Myers that the *Juche* ideology is a sham political thought that provides no constructive contribution to the effectiveness of the North Korean political economy. See B. R. Myers, *North Korea's Juche Myth* (Seattle: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 2-3.

The U.S. State Department's 1999 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* explains *Juche* as follows:

*As defined by Kim Il-sung, Juche is a quasi-mystical concept in which the collective will of the people is distilled into a Supreme Leader whose every act exemplifies the State and society's needs. Opposition to such a leader or the rules, regulations, and goals established by the regime is thus in itself opposition to the national interest. The regime therefore claims a social interest in identifying and isolating all opposition.*<sup>32</sup>

As explained by North Korea's own scholars, *Juche* is the *Suryong's* revolutionary ideology that gives a monolithic direction for the regime and enables a leadership system that brings the entire Party, population, and military under the *Suryong*. The KWP is the political weapon that actualizes the ideology and the leadership of the *Suryong*.<sup>33</sup> With an emphasis on controlling the physical power of the military, the security services, and the general population, the *Suryong* employs the political engine of the KWP to impose control over every sector of North Korean society. To maintain such control, the regime uses several core organizing principles: the absolute authority of the *Suryong*, KWP supervision of all aspects of North Korean society, constant ideological indoctrination from pre-school to the grave, and the socio-political classification of every individual in North Korea. These principles facilitate political control of all forms of power, ensure compliance with *Suryong* directives and Party guidance, and deny human rights as an absolute objective.

The *Suryong* holds the highest positions of authority in North Korea: KWP First Secretary, the highest position within the Party; Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA), the highest position within the active military; and Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC), designated by the constitution as the highest position in the state. These positions oversee the institutions through which power is exercised—the KWP, the military, and the intelligence and security agencies—all of which enforce human rights denial. The KWP is responsible for overseeing the development and approval of all policies, practices, and procedures, including those relating to human rights.

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32 U.S. Department of State, "Democratic People's Republic of Korea," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1999* (Feb. 2000). <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/1999/291.htm>.

33 Kim Min and Han Bong-so, *Ryongdocheje [Leadership System]* (Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing Company, 1985) as cited in Cheong Seong-Chang, *The Contemporary North Korean Politics: History, Ideology and Power System* (Seoul: Hanul Publishing, 2011), 223.

The concept of equality is incompatible with the concept of the *Suryong*. The former developed in societies over millennia, while the latter developed during over almost seventy years of Kim family rule to justify their leadership of an isolated state. The *Suryong*'s interests are projected through policy, practice, and propaganda as the supreme wisdom of the party-state. Thus, the idea that another individual could act contrary to the *Suryong* and be correct is anathema to the entire doctrine of the *Suryong*. Any insistence on one's own ideas as being a superior option to that of the *Suryong* is treated by the regime and its leaders as treasonous. It is from this perspective that the *Suryong* is able to prioritize all national resources to the Pyongyang Republic at the expense of the rest of the country.

The principles of *Suryong-juui* conflict with human rights. To adhere to *Suryong-juui*, individuals must sacrifice themselves completely to the service of the *Suryong*. They must accept a common destiny led in totality by the Supreme Leader. In doing so, each individual becomes constrained in what he or she can do or say. This results in the self-sacrifice of human rights to maintain personal and family safety in the face of political terror that targets individual expression. In North Korea, there is no right to oppose the Supreme Leader. There is no right to form an organization that does not show loyalty to the Supreme Leader. Both are labeled as reactionary, anti-state activities. Violating these principles is considered a crime with penalties much harsher than those for non-political crimes. North Korea's security services prioritize individuals' adherence to these principles, which leaves no room for individual human rights in a North Korean's life.

### 3.2 The Monolithic Guidance System

When North Korean revolutionaries began developing a new socialist society, they found it imperative to ensure popular compliance with their revolutionary objectives by politically educating a population that had received relatively little formal education. Thoroughly indoctrinating the population to develop loyalty to the regime and its leader was the foremost goal.<sup>34</sup> Beginning in 1956, Kim Il-sung instituted the "central party collection guidance project," designed to strengthen the ideology of lower Party elements and to weaken reactionary elements.<sup>35</sup> Developing ideological foundations for the continued rule of the *Suryong* took decades. By the end of the 1960s, these foundations had taken root in North Korea's political sphere, with an emphasis not only on the national ideology of *Juche*, but also on the concept of the *Suryong*. To achieve this, the Kim regime and the KWP developed the ideological components of *Suryong-juui*: the Monolithic Guidance System, the Monolithic Ideology System, and the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology.

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34 Cheong, *The Contemporary North Korean Politics*, 312.

35 Park et al., *Kim Jong-il sidae Bukan-ui jeongchicheje*, 55.

The Monolithic Guidance System is designed to ensure that all guidance, directives, and major decisions stem from the *Suryong* and that such guidance is carried out “absolutely and completely.” This system was “constructed methodically [by Kim Jong-il], beginning with the Party, continuing with the military, and then expanding into other governmental sectors.”<sup>36</sup> It is through this leadership system that the Kim regime protected itself from collapse during the great famine of the 1990s and prioritized national resources to Pyongyang, thus creating the phenomenon of the Pyongyang Republic. Kim Jong-il shaped the regime’s political system to define itself as dependent on a Supreme Leader who symbolized not only the Party or the state, but also the North Korean experience as a whole. In this process, human rights were marginalized to the extreme, while collective support of the *Suryong* was expected and enforced.

Those with dissenting opinions cannot participate in policymaking due to the requirements of the Monolithic Guidance System, which only permits opinions consistent with that of the *Suryong*. No personalities or institutions can openly oppose the *Suryong*, and the decision-making process provides no room for input from the people. Policy is determined first by the interests of the *Suryong*, particularly in security-related issues. It is formed according to security interests and information collected by the security agencies and the Party, not according to informed opinion or what benefits the population at large. Policy is formed first, and then the environment is shaped to fit that policy. The Party does not formulate policy; it decides on policy and oversees its implementation. It decides the final disposition of legislative actions, even those concerning the constitution.<sup>37</sup> The authority to alter laws in North Korea lies in the Party Charter, the Monolithic Guidance System, and the Monolithic Ideology System.<sup>38</sup> The obvious consequence is that those who prepare policy proposals must be wary of what they propose, lest they be purged.

The Monolithic Guidance System is incompatible with human rights observance. It has created conditions whereby human rights abuses are the norm, since human rights considerations run counter to the totalitarian nature of the Monolithic Guidance System. Support for human rights within the current political system implies dissent, reform, and plurality of power, all of which directly threaten a system designed to place all power in the hands of one person. If the regime begins to protect

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36 Lim, *Kim Jong Il's Leadership of North Korea*, 66.

37 Policies begin with the Party leadership the announcement of policy objectives, which is followed by policy drafts and consultation with the appropriate agencies. Decisions are then made, and policy is executed and monitored.

38 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo elliteu*, 400-403.

human rights, the people may become a challenge to the authority and safety of the Suryong.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the concept of committing all efforts to carry out the policies and practices of the Supreme Leader is counter to the observance of human rights. On the other hand, committing to the Monolithic Guidance System creates opportunity for personal success through advancement within the Party and securing and maintaining a better quality of life. The Monolithic Guidance System was intended to bring all Party personnel under Kim Jong-il's leadership.<sup>40</sup>

### 3.3 The Monolithic Ideology System

In 1967, KWP General Secretary Kim Il-sung introduced the Monolithic Ideology System, which became known as “Kim Il-sung’s revolutionary thought.” This ideology compels Party organizations and personnel to comply with an ideology that eliminates consideration of all others except that of the Supreme Leader.<sup>41</sup> The Monolithic Ideology System is directly linked to the Kim family dictatorship, as explained in Kim Il-sung’s December 16, 1967 speech to the SPA. Entitled “Let Us Embody the Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance, and Self-Defense More Thoroughly in all Branches of State Activity,” the speech employs *Juche* as the foundation for the Monolithic Ideology,<sup>42</sup> which outlines “political, economic and military independence.”<sup>43</sup>

Kim Jong-il explained the Monolithic Ideology System in a 1995 speech, in which he stated:

*The monolithic ideological system of the party is the leader’s ideological system and his leadership system. Establishing the monolithic ideological system is the basic way to build the party as the leader’s party. Only when the monolith of ideology and leadership is ensured through the establishment of the leader’s ideological system and his leadership system is it possible to achieve the ideological unity and organizational cohesion of the party ranks and make the party play its role satisfactorily as a political leadership body.... Our Party’s struggle to establish the monolithic ideological system has been a struggle to equip Party members thoroughly with the leader’s*

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39 Ibid., 400. See also Dongsoo Kim and Yongseok Choy, “The Impact of Domestic Politics on North Korea’s Foreign Policy,” *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 21.2 (2012): 61-84.

40 Lim, *Kim Jong Il’s Leadership of North Korea*, 66.

41 Park et al., *Kim Jong-il sidae Bukan-ui jeongchicheje*, 56.

42 James F. Person, “The 1967 Purge of the Gapsan Faction and Establishment of the Monolithic Ideological System,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, December 14, 2013.

43 Grace Lee, “The Political Philosophy of *Juche*,” *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 3.1 (Spring 2003): 105-106.

*ideas and unite them firmly behind the leader in ideology and purpose; at the same time, it has been a struggle to overcome the heterogeneous ideas and factional elements which conflict with the leader's idea and guidance and disturb unity and cohesion.*<sup>44</sup>

That Kim Jong-il made this speech after he had become the Supreme Leader indicates he feared human nature's inherent resistance to being told what to believe. The speech was designed to neutralize all independent thinking, whether contrarian, personally inspired, or politically motivated. The Monolithic Ideology System shapes what every North Korean is permitted to think and say.

In unsurprising praise of Kim Jong-il's approach to ideology, North Korean media have continued to promote his ideological strategy under Kim Jong-un:

*The great Comrade Kim Jong-il formulated Comrade Kim Il-sung's revolutionary ideology as Kimilsungism and developed our Party into an ideologically pure and organizationally integrated body in which monolithic ideological and leadership systems are firmly established, into a motherly Party which has formed a harmonious whole with the masses and serves them, into a seasoned and experienced Party which is possessed of a high level of leadership art, and into a promising Party which has definitely been assured of the leadership being inherited...*<sup>45</sup>

### **3.4 Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology**

The Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology are the primary creed of the Kim regime. In practice, the Ten Principles have a greater impact on the daily lives of every North Korean than the KWP Charter, the constitution, or civil law. North Korea's own political dictionary describes the principles as "the ideological system by which the whole Party and people is firmly armed with the revolutionary ideology of the Suryeong [Suryong] and united solidly around him, carrying out the revolutionary battle and construction battle under the sole leadership of the Suryeong."<sup>46</sup> Each of the Ten Principles is further elaborated with sub-principles, which number sixty-five in total. All North Koreans

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44 Kim Jong-il, "The Workers' Party of Korea is the Party of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung," in a speech given on October 2, 1995. The full text of the speech is available at <http://korea-dpr.com/lib/109.pdf>.

45 "Political Bureau of C.C. WPK Adopts Resolution," KCNA, February 13, 2015.

46 Kang Mi-Jin, "NK Adds Kim Jong-il to 'Ten Principles'," *Daily NK*, September 13, 2013.

are required to memorize and strictly comply with the Ten Principles. Failure to do so is seen as treason, and results in severe punishment, incarceration, or banishment to political prison camps.

The principles are as follows:

- **Struggle with all your life** to paint the entire society with the one color of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung's revolutionary thought.
- **Respect and revere** highly and with loyalty the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.
- **Make absolute the authority** of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.
- **Accept the Great Leader Kim Il-sung's revolutionary thought** as your belief and take the Great Leader's instructions as your creed.
- **Observe absolutely** the principle of unconditional execution in carrying out the instructions of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.
- **Rally the unity** of ideological intellect and revolutionary solidarity around the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.
- **Learn from the Great Leader Kim Il-sung** and master communist dignity, the methods of revolutionary projects, and the people's work styles.
- **Preserve dearly the political life** the Great Leader Kim Il-sung has bestowed upon you, and repay loyally for the Great Leader's boundless political trust and considerations with high political awareness and skill.
- **Establish a strong organizational discipline** so that the entire Party, the entire people, and the entire military will operate uniformly under the sole leadership of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.
- **The great revolutionary accomplishments pioneered by the Great Leader Kim Il-sung must be succeeded and perfected by hereditary successions until the end.**<sup>47</sup>

These principles are the most dominating guidance from the Suryong, and they reflect four principles: deification of the Supreme Leader, accepting the prestige of the Supreme Leader as absolute, treating the Supreme Leader's directives as religious dogma, and unconditional implementation of the Supreme Leader's commands.<sup>48</sup>

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47 For a complete listing of all sixty-five sub-principles of the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology, see Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, "Ten Principles of the Establishment of the Unitary Ideology System." [https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs\\_view.php?no=3&board\\_table=bbs\\_literature&page=1&word=&searchItem=&cate\\_id=](https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs_view.php?no=3&board_table=bbs_literature&page=1&word=&searchItem=&cate_id=). See also Jeong-Ho Roh, "Ten Principles for the Establishment of the One-Ideology System." Columbia Law School (2006). [http://www2.law.columbia.edu/course\\_0oS\\_L9436\\_001/North%20Korea%20materials/10%20principles%20of%20juche.html](http://www2.law.columbia.edu/course_0oS_L9436_001/North%20Korea%20materials/10%20principles%20of%20juche.html).

48 Author notes on public briefing by Hyun Seong-II, a former North Korean diplomat who defected to the Republic of Korea.

The Ten Principles are designed to govern the daily life, activities, consciousness, and personal management of all North Koreans.<sup>49</sup> The Kim regime's elite are required to carry out the tasks necessary in supporting these doctrines. Kim Il-sung's younger brother Kim Yong-ju initially developed the Ten Principles in 1967, but they were overtaken and publicly promulgated by Kim Jong-il in 1974. By requiring every North Korean to study and memorize the Ten Principles regardless of class or age, Kim Jong-il shaped what each individual North Korean is permitted to think and say. These ideological tenets underpin the regime's justification for its rule and control of the North Korean populace. At no time are ordinary North Koreans permitted to study any other ideology, with the exception of studying the evils of capitalism. Moreover, violations of the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology are the reason most people are sent to political prison camps, not violations of the Criminal Code.<sup>50</sup>

To ensure that every North Korean was inculcated with the Ten Principles, Kim Il-sung promulgated a September 5, 1977 thesis entitled "Thesis on Socialist Education," in which he stated the premise of socialist education as "revolution, 'labor classization,' and communization of the individual."<sup>51</sup>

### 3.5 Centralization of Ideological Authority in Pyongyang

The Kim regime's core organizing principle is the KWP's supervision of all sectors of society. To implement this principle, Pyongyang serves as the epicenter of all political, economic, and social decision-making. It is the base of operations for *Suryong-juui*. All organizations or their lead organizations are based in Pyongyang to ensure centralized political control of all of society. To implement this strategy, all senior power elite are based in Pyongyang with the exception of military field commanders and provincial Party and administrative leaders.<sup>52</sup> The KWP leads, indoctrinates, and enforces all ideological concepts to compel the North Korean population to focus on loyalty to the *Suryong*, the Kim regime's nationalistic values, and independence from foreign influence. According to North Korea's social scientists:

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49 Ibid.

50 Hyun Seong-II, "Bukan sahoe-e daehan nodongdang-ui tongjecheje" [KWP's Control System over North Korean Society], *Bukan josa yeongu* (Aug. 1998), North Korean Issues Research Center.

51 *Bukan gaeyo* [Overview of North Korea] (Seoul: KINU, 2009), 385.

52 Most general and flag-grade officers in the KPA do not live in Pyongyang because they are stationed with their individual units across the country, many of them located near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). There are approximately 1,400 general and flag-grade officers in the North Korean military. See Jeong Cheol-Soon, "北 병력 한국 2배인데... 장성수 '北 1400명>南 450명'" [North Korea Military Strength Twice That of South Korea, but North has 1400 generals, whereas South has 450], *Munhwa Ilbo*, June 18, 2014.

*The important purpose of population policies is to rationally control the existing conditions and changing process of the population to fit into people's autonomous and creative real characters and thus make the population suitable for the development of society and economy to press for the construction of socialism and communism.*<sup>53</sup>

Kim Jong-un has inherited and fully assumed all of the responsibilities and policies of the Suryong. In a public statement by Korea Central News Agency (KCNA), North Korea's main news outlet to the international community, Kim was credited with as much: "By formulating Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism as the eternal guiding ideology of our Party and revolution, he [Kim Jong-un] has provided a fundamental guarantee for developing ours into the party of the great Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il..."<sup>54</sup>

It is not difficult to assess that any retreat from the Pyongyang Republic would be impractical for Kim Jong-un. The same can be said of his approach to human rights and his resistance to efforts at the United Nations (UN) to sanction North Korea for its human rights abuses. All personnel involved in maintaining the integrity of the Kim family regime are leaders and supporters of human rights denial. They are rewarded for their support with privileges. The more zeal they demonstrate in support of the regime's policies, including human rights denial, the greater the privileges they receive. In a country that is rated the least economically free in the world,<sup>55</sup> the elite are offered privileges that nobody outside Pyongyang is allowed, except for high-ranking Party and military leaders and high-level scientific researchers.<sup>56</sup> The privileges awarded to the power elite are of far

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53 *Introduction to Demography* (Pyongyang: Science and Encyclopedia Publishing House, 1996) as quoted in Yonhap News Agency, *North Korea Handbook* (Seoul: M.E. Sharpe Publishing, 2002), 86.

54 "Kim Jong Un's Ideological, Theoretical Exploits Praised," KCNA, April 14, 2014.

55 The Heritage Foundation rated North Korea last out of 178 countries in economic freedom, with extremely high levels of corruption primarily to blame. See Oliver Hotham, "DPRK Least Economically Free Country in World, Says Think Tank," *NK News*, January 15, 2014.

56 According to one defector, the privileged class also gives diamonds as wedding gifts, something of which the vast majority of North Koreans cannot even dream. Extremely few defectors have ever visited the Kim Il-sung Mausoleum at Kumsusan Memorial Palace. When Kim Il-sung died, the privileged individuals of Pyongyang gave 2.5 kilograms of diamonds at the Palace site out of respect for the Supreme Leader. See Jang Jin-Sung, "북한의 '천국' 특권계급의 내막 (1)" [The Inside Story of North Korea's 'Heaven' and the Privileged Class], *New Daily*, March 15, 2010.

greater concern to those elite than the rights of a common citizen. This system fundamentally affects the regime's national priorities, which enables the existence of the Pyongyang Republic and justifies human rights denial in the minds of regime leadership in North Korea today.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PYONGYANG REPUBLIC'S POWER ELITE<sup>57</sup>

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The existence of a power elite in North Korea enables the development of the Pyongyang Republic. This power elite implements the policies, procedures, and practices that sustain the lives of the privileged in Pyongyang and perpetuate the deprivation of those in the provinces. Yet, North Korea denies the existence of an elite class. North Korea officially defines “elite” as “reactionary bourgeois exploiting the masses.”<sup>58</sup> Admitting the existence of an elite class in North Korean society would be contrary to the political philosophy of collectivism, the revolution, and the national ideology of *Juche* (Self-reliance), which state that man is master of all things and, by extension, that the Korean masses are the masters of the country’s development. Nonetheless, the Kim regime has hundreds of identifiable power elite members and others who contribute directly to the centralization of Pyongyang and enforce human rights denial.

The power elite of the Pyongyang Republic are essentially the power elite of the Kim family regime. They dominate policymaking and policy implementation.<sup>59</sup> As in any other nation-state, the power elite recommend policy, supervise its implementation, evaluate the success of implementation, and suggest adjustments to policy. In North Korea, the KWP OGD vets all policy before Kim Jong-un, the *Suryong* (Supreme Leader), gives his final approval. This also applies to the regime’s policy of human rights denial. In general, those identified as belonging to the power elite are the same individuals who serve to ensure that North Korea’s human rights policy does not change.<sup>60</sup>

### 4.1 Identifying the Elite

Many scholars have attempted to define and describe the size and composition of North Korea’s elite. There are several numbers one can cite, although many lack sufficient explanation. However, there are several statistics that contribute to an understanding of how many elite there are, particularly if one focuses on each individual’s organizational affiliations.

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57 This chapter is an edited version of a paper previously published by the author: Robert Collins, “Regime Leadership and Human Rights in North Korea,” *International Journal of Korean Studies* 19.1 (Spring 2015): 62-96.

58 *Chosun-mal Daesajeon* [Great Dictionary of the Chosun Language] Vol. 2 (Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing House, 1992), 1757.

59 Lee Kyo-Duk et al., *Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime* (Seoul: KINU, 2013).

60 “Bukan-ui gwollyeok seoyeol” [North Korea’s Power Ranking], Korea Dictionary Research Publishing, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=727469&cid=485&categoryId=485>.

Protocol rankings in North Korea have given the outside world a window into who is among the most influential within the Kim regime. These rankings, prepared by the OGD, have long been a tool of the Supreme Leader to publicly identify senior leaders and their proximity to the Supreme Leader. The rankings are announced for state and Party functions and anniversaries, Kim Il-sung birth and death anniversaries, funeral committees of deceased senior leaders, and other public gatherings. Under Kim Il-sung, this ranking was dominated by members of the KWP Politburo at positions 1-13, candidate members of the Politburo at positions 14-23, and KWP secretaries at positions 24-29. After Kim Il-sung died in 1994, NDC membership also became a dominant criterion in ranking.<sup>61</sup>

Another way to identify the most influential individuals in the regime is to observe who stands with the Supreme Leader during public appearances and political events. These individuals are invariably Politburo members, Party secretaries, NDC cadre, and senior military generals—mostly vice-marshals. All of them maintain a significant degree of power and influence within the Kim regime. Researchers at the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU), a government-affiliated think tank in South Korea, assess that there are between thirty and fifty individuals who are considered the regime’s “brain trust of the revolution.”<sup>62</sup>

Another study by KINU puts the number of power elites at more than 680, all assigned to critical positions in the “Organization and Guidance Department, Propaganda and Agitation Department, South Korean Affairs Department, Foreign Relations Commission,<sup>63</sup> People’s Armed Forces Department Political Bureau [GPB], and the [KPA] General Staff Department.”<sup>64</sup> This does not seem adequate, as it does not include all of the members of the KWP Politburo, KWP Central Military Commission (CMC), or NDC. However, this estimate demonstrates who has influence within North Korea’s power structure.

According to the *Chosun Ilbo*, the South Korean government believes there are 500,000 core members of the Pyongyang elite who are “the North Korean regime’s last bastion of power.” It cites a South Korean official as saying that these members are comprised of high-ranking members

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61 “Bukan-ui gwollyeok seoyeol” [North Korea’s Power Ranking], Korea Dictionary Research Publishing, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=727469&cid=485&categoryId=485>.

62 Park et al., *Kim Jong-il sidae Bukan-ui jeongchicheje*, 52.

63 The direct quote is taken from an official English translation. The original Korean-language report refers to the “KWP department in charge of foreign relations.” This is likely a reference to the KWP International Department. See Cho Jeong-Ah et al., *Bukan jum-in-ui Ilsangsaenghwal* [The Everyday Lives of North Koreans] (Seoul: KINU, 2008), 305.

64 Cho Jeong-Ah et al., *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans* (Seoul: KINU, 2009), 24-25.

of the KWP, military, and government. The article observes that the fate of these individuals is tied directly to that of the Kim regime because of their special housing and rations privileges.<sup>65</sup>

An estimate can also be made based on social class. A special class in North Korea is the ruling Kim family and its extended family, those with close contact to the Kim family due to political, governmental, or military positions, and *Chosen Soren* leaders.<sup>66</sup> The Korean War had a major impact on the establishment of the North Korean elite and the population of Pyongyang. As much as twenty-five to thirty percent of the North Korean population suffered some sort of casualty during the Korean War, and the descendants of this group make up the majority of the core workers in support of the regime.<sup>67</sup> Other elite primarily consist of family members of anti-Japanese partisans, revolutionaries that set up the Party and government after liberation in 1945, Korean War survivors, and anti-South Korean spies and related South Korean revolutionaries. These individuals and their families receive the best privileges in education, housing, food rations, employment, promotions, and Party-sponsored positions. The leadership of this group of families at the very top is comprised of between 10,000 and 20,000 personnel. If one includes collateral family links, the number increases to between 40,000 and 80,000. In all, this would be 200,000 persons at most.<sup>68</sup> Special families at the top of the social classification make up 0.8-1.2% of North Korea's population, and families of revolutionary heroes make up 1-2%.<sup>69</sup>

The variety of estimates above reflects several definitions of "elite" in North Korea. There are differences within the elite in who has access to the Supreme Leader, who are the most privileged because of current or past position and loyalties, who makes and implements policy, and who performs the day-to-day work of maintaining the regime. Each of these differences is complemented by privilege that is tempered by both incentives and punishments under the *Suryong's* patronage system.

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65 "Pyongyang Elite Key to Regime's Survival," *The Chosun Ilbo*, January 4, 2012.

66 *Chosen Soren* is the Japanese term for the Korean term "Jo-cheong-ryon." Generally translated into English as the "General Association of Korean Residents in Japan," the *Chosen Soren* is a pro-North Korean organization in Japan that organizes political and financial support for the KWP. That support, once without question, has waned over the decades since World War II as younger Koreans living in Japan began to identify more as Japanese than Korean.

67 Kim, Byeong-Ro and Kim Seong-Cheol, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui* [The Structure of Inequality in North Korean Society and its Political-Social Implications] (Seoul: KINU, 1998), 24.

68 *Ibid.*, 29.

69 Testimony of North Korean defector Lee Sun-ok, as cited in *Ibid.*, 30.

## 4.2 Power Elite, Cadre Elite, Lesser Elite

There are socio-political gradations of elite. While it is critical to be a Party member to become an elite,<sup>70</sup> it is clear that there are three levels of elite in the Pyongyang Republic: the power elite, cadre elite, and lesser elite.<sup>71</sup> The “power elite” are in key positions and directly influence decision-making of national significance. Except for OGD officers, this group does not include officers who prepare policy proposals for consideration by their supervisors, who in turn offer recommendations to decision-makers. The “cadre elite” are professional high-to-middle-grade leaders within the Party, government, military, economic enterprises, and social organizations who implement Party policy or serve as immediate supervisors of those that do. The “lesser elite” are Party members that serve in Pyongyang within the Party, government, military, and other socio-economic positions, albeit at a lower level. They consist of office workers and individuals in menial labor positions and factory and agricultural positions.

The power elite, considered to be North Korea’s upper class, are primarily identified by their political power. They are at the top of the “core class” as defined by the regime. They provide leadership for the regime in all core institutions: the Party, government, military, security agencies, and socio-cultural organizations.<sup>72</sup> The core class consists of individuals with the highest *songbun* (socio-political background),<sup>73</sup> which is synonymous with political authority and influence, economic dominance, and privilege. These individuals control all public distribution, including that of food and other necessities, thereby ensuring the stability of the Pyongyang Republic.<sup>74</sup> This privileged class also has access to the Supreme Leader, with opportunities to directly convey their opinions. However, they must be very careful what they say and how they say it. Their power and privilege are usually passed on to their children, but the wrong word could sentence even their children to death. The most powerful are heavily monitored by the internal security services.<sup>75</sup> Policy recommendations are shaped by fear of political misstep as much as, if not more than, the need to find acceptable solutions to issues.

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70 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo elliteu*, 20.

71 This is also generally true for the rest of North Korea, although the percentages of elite in the provinces are significantly lower than in Pyongyang.

72 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 92.

73 See Collins, *Marked for Life*.

74 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 30.

75 The power elite do not receive particular leniency for remarks criticizing the regime. In the past, political offenders from the power elite usually ended up in political prison camp #22 in Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province. See Yoon Yeo-Sang, Lee Ja-Eun, and Han Sun-Young, *Political Prison Camps in North Korea Today* (Seoul: Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, 2011), 131-32.

North Korea's power elite are generally members and candidate members of the KWP Central Committee and generals serving in the military and security agencies. Key leadership positions in the regime include Central Committee department directors, provincial Party responsible secretaries, four and five-star generals, and government ministers. North Korean terminology frequently refers to core leadership cadre as KWP Central Committee "responsible workers."<sup>76</sup> The highest elite of the Kim regime are the members of the KWP Politburo, KWP CMC, and NDC.<sup>77</sup> All of them serve in the KWP Central Committee, which has 124 full members and 105 alternate members.<sup>78</sup>

Article 23 of the KWP Charter describes the function of the Central Committee as follows:

*The Party Central Committee directs the work of the party between party congresses. The Party Central Committee firmly establishes the monolithic ideological system for the entire party, organizes and directs the Party to carry out party policies, strengthens the rank and file of the Party, directs and supervises the administrative and economic work of the Party committees at every level, organizes revolutionary armed forces and enhances their fighting capabilities, represents the Party in its external relations with other political parties within and outside the country and manages the finances of the Party.*<sup>79</sup>

Central Committee members are diverse in regional origin, alma mater, and blood ties. Less than five percent are female. Most are over 70 years old and have witnessed North Korea's history firsthand from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-un; Kim Jong-un is the youngest member.<sup>80</sup> However, the Central Committee should not be viewed as a complete list of the power elite, as many of its members hold honorary posts in recognition of decades of service to the Party. These individuals do not exercise meaningful political influence. When identifying core leaders, membership in the Central

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76 Park et al., *Kim Jong-il sidae Bukan-ui jeongchicheje*, 52.

77 In this chapter, there are personnel charts of the KWP Politburo, KWP Central Committee, and the National Defense Commission. They are compiled by Michael Madden and displayed at his website, North Korea Leadership Watch, <https://nkleadershipwatch.wordpress.com/>. The charts have been slightly modified by the author to reflect recent changes.

78 The exact number depends on deaths, purges, and new appointments. See Bureau of Political Analysis, *Bukan juyo gigwan danche-byeol inmyeongjip 2015* [Directory of Key Individuals and Organizations in North Korea: 2015] (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2015).

79 The KWP Charter as of 2010 can be accessed at <http://world.moleg.go.kr/KP/law/33758?pageIndex=6>.

80 Lee et al., *Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime*, 26-29.

Committee should be seen in relation to membership in other influential Party, military, and government organizations.

### **4.3 Political Bureau (Politburo)**

The KWP Politburo is ostensibly the highest collective decision-making body in the Kim regime. Politburo members are the most successful within the highly competitive field of domestic politics. The expertise and experience of Politburo members encompass all professional fields. Although some have greater access to Kim Jong-un than others, all members generally have direct access as needed. Membership includes representatives from the military, government, security agencies, and the Party. All are Party members. Most, if not all, are key advisers to Kim Jong-un. Politburo members include the KWP First Secretary, Kim Jong-un; specific members of the CMC and NDC; deputy directors of various KWP departments; and KWP Secretariat secretaries, directors, and deputy directors.<sup>81</sup> Most of these power elite serve in multiple positions in the Party or state, and all of them have a direct impact on the regime's implementation of human rights denial.

*Please refer to Appendix A.1 for an updated chart of the Politburo.*

### **4.4 Central Military Commission (CMC)**

The KWP CMC is the Party's highest body of military decision-making addressing military policy issues and the defense-industrial complex in North Korea. According to Article 27 of the KWP Charter, the CMC leads Party efforts in deciding military lines and policy, fortifying the revolutionary armed forces, and developing military industries.<sup>82</sup> It is chaired by the KWP First Secretary. It is not a command organization that directly commands military units, but its directives are followed by Party, military, and government agencies alike. The primary political organizations within the military include the KPA General Political Bureau (GPB) and the KWP Military, Machine-Building, and Civil Defense Departments. Most, if not all, CMC members are key advisers to Kim Jong-un. Recent changes in membership include Jang Song-taek, who was executed, and General Kim Kyok-sik, who

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81 Oh Gyeong-Sub, *Jeongchielliteu eungjimnyeok-gwa Kim Jong-un jeonggwon anjeongseong* [Political Elite Cohesion and Kim Jong-un Regime's Stability] (Seoul: The Sejong Institute, 2012).

82 Article 27 of the KWP Charter as of 2010, available at <http://world.moleg.go.kr/KP/law/33758?pageIndex=6>.

died in May 2015. The CMC's influence on budget allocation ensures that there are insufficient funds to service the population's welfare needs, including healthcare.

*Please refer to Appendix A.2 for an updated chart of the CMC.*

## 4.5 National Defense Commission (NDC)

According to Article 106 of North Korea's constitution, the NDC is the supreme national defense guidance organ of state sovereignty. Article 100 states that the NDC Chairman is the Supreme Leader of the DPRK. Article 109 states that the duties and authority of the NDC are to:

1. Establish important policies of the state for carrying out the military-first revolutionary line;
2. Guide the overall armed forces and defense-building work of the state;
3. Supervise the status of executing the orders of the Chairman of the NDC and the decisions and directives of the NDC, and establish relevant measures;
4. Rescind the decisions and directives of state organs that run counter to the orders of the Chairman of the NDC and to NDC decisions and directives;
5. Establish or abolish central organs of the national defense sector;
6. Institute military titles and confer military titles above the general grade officer rank.<sup>83</sup>

Each NDC member represents a specialized field and advises Kim Jong-un accordingly. Recent changes in membership include Kim Chun-sop, who replaced Pak To-chun and is likely now the KWP Secretary for Machine Building. In this post, he is responsible for the research and development of all weapons, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD), through the Second Economic Committee.

*Please refer to Appendix A.3 for an updated chart of the NDC.*

Not everyone in Pyongyang is a member of the power elite. The lesser elite in Pyongyang endure their own struggles as they serve a political-economic system that provides them with minimal rewards. The lesser elite do not serve in positions of power and influence, but rather in positions that support the regime's powerful and influential, thereby enabling the Party's policies and practices. They are at the bottom of the core-class of *songbun* and provide labor to the city, govern-

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<sup>83</sup> This is based on an unofficial English translation of North Korea's 2009 constitution, available at <http://web.archive.org/web/20100519134107/http://asiamatters.blogspot.com/2009/10/north-korean-constitution-april-2009.html>.

ment, and Party.<sup>84</sup> They feel fortunate to live in Pyongyang because they know life in the provinces is much worse.<sup>85</sup> The lesser elite suffer what they must; they receive lesser food, housing, health-care, running water, electricity, and heating. Most importantly, they have fewer opportunities in life. They live under difficult circumstances, as the economic crisis of the 1990s has left them with inadequate resources. Nevertheless, “less” in Pyongyang is more than in the provinces.<sup>86</sup> The primary objective of the lesser elites is to maintain residence in Pyongyang. This is paramount in their calculus of survival, because of access to some food, healthcare, and higher quality education for their children.

John Everard, the former British Ambassador to North Korea, has employed the term “outer elite” to describe individuals in Pyongyang who are KWP members but do not hold high-ranking positions of influence or true political power.<sup>87</sup> It is these people who do the day-to-day work for the Party and the state government and receive minimal privileges in return. Without their contributions to maintaining the regime as the *Suryong* sees fit, human rights denial would not and could not be carried out, since there would be nobody to carry out the orders of the Supreme Leader, the Party, or the regime. Everard estimates that the “outer elite” make up about one million of Pyongyang’s population.<sup>88</sup>

Outside of Pyongyang, the power elite are in the leadership of the Party, military industry, major military units, and internal security agencies in the provinces. This also includes scientists who support the work of the Party, especially those leading WMD-related research. One of the most important roles of the regional leaders is to ensure that all organizations and personnel implement Party policy. In each province, the provincial Party committee chairman and his organizational secretary are the two most influential individuals. All county-level Party chairmen and their organizational secretaries work directly for the provincial secretaries. It is these two individuals who

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84 North Korea classifies 65% of its population as laborers. This is as applicable to Pyongyang residents as it is to elsewhere in North Korea. See Jeon, *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukanui sahoe-wa munhwa*, 24-25.

85 Author’s interviews with former Pyongyang residents.

86 Cho et al., *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans*.

87 John Everard, *Only Beautiful, Please: A British Diplomat in North Korea* (Stanford: Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, 2012), xvii.

88 Han Seung-Dong, “평양 장기 체류 서방 외교관 눈에 비친 북” [North Korea in the Eyes of a Western Diplomat Who Stayed in Pyongyang for a Long Time], *Hankyoreh*, August 17, 2014.

oversee the policies, procedures, and practices that ensure human rights denial in their area of responsibility.<sup>89</sup> Each of these individuals reports directly to the OGD.

Provincial Party chairmen are frequently promoted to critical positions in Pyongyang. The best example is Jo Yon-jun, formerly the Party Committee Chairman for South Hamgyong Province and currently a First Vice Director in the OGD. Jo is arguably the second most influential man in the KWP behind the First Secretary, Kim Jong-un. He also led the purge of Kim Jong-un's uncle, Jang Song-taek, a highly demanding task for any bureaucrat. Faithfully carrying out Party policies within their area of responsibility equates to human rights suppression, which enables promotion to a better position in Pyongyang with greater privileges.

Provincial, county, and city Party chairmen have direct responsibility for implementation of human rights denial within their jurisdiction and are thus as guilty of human rights abuses as anyone in North Korea. Although political prison camps fall under a different chain of command, the provincial Party chairman remains responsible for all external support to camps located in his province. The local courts, prosecutors, police, and internal security agencies within those jurisdictions are all under the direct influence of the local committee chairman and ultimately report to the First Vice Director of the OGD responsible for provincial Party bodies, who maintains authority over all supervisors involved.<sup>90</sup>

The privileges that the regional power elite enjoy in the provinces are unquestionably of lower quality compared to what they could enjoy in Pyongyang.<sup>91</sup> However, there are entire organizations, particularly those related to the military and WMDs, that are isolated from the local communities

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89 For example, the Party secretary for South Pyongan Province is Pak Tae-sung. There are two political prison camps in this province. The Party committee secretary for Pukchang County is Rim Jae-guk. He is directly responsible for support to political prison camp 18 in Pukchang County. Also, the Party secretary for Kaecheon City is Pak Jun-dam. He is directly responsible for support to political prison camp 14 in Kaecheon County. Therefore, along with their organization secretaries, these three individuals should be identified as among the biggest offenders of human rights abuses in that province and in those counties. The organizational secretaries for South Pyongan Province are Pak Bong-hyun, Bae Yoon-soon, Shin Ki-chan, and Han Bong-un.

90 See Chapter Eight on power institutions for a more detailed discussion.

91 Author's interview with defector Mr. R., former Pyongyang resident and Party member.

in terms of housing, food security, and even education.<sup>92</sup> Provincial Party leaders and senior Party personnel do not maintain dual residences in Pyongyang and the work site.<sup>93</sup>

#### 4.6 North Korea's Cadre Policy: Recruitment, Training, and Evaluation

North Korea uses the word *ganbu* (cadre) to refer to its leaders and primary staff. A “people’s cadre” is defined as one who serves to promote the people’s prosperity and development.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, cadre are referred to as “leaders of the revolution.”<sup>95</sup> They are the core workers carrying out the duties of the Party and government institutions. They lead the organization and implementation of the policies of the revolution, and they serve as teachers to the masses.

Although all cadre are Party members, not all Party members are cadre. Since entrance to the Party is only the first step in becoming a cadre, there is a direct relationship between being a Party member and being elite.<sup>96</sup> KWP membership stands at approximately 3.2 million, comprised of approximately 210,000 party cells.<sup>97</sup> Standing at approximately one-eighth of the population, KWP membership is the highest percentage of any communist country in history. Kim Il-sung referred to the Party as “those workers, agri-workers, working intellectuals that give their lives to the victory of socialism and communism and become a revolutionary organization for the advancement of the people.”<sup>98</sup> KWP membership is spread out across the entire country. Party members provide leadership to every community at every level in North Korea, including the government and military. All core government leaders and military officers are Party members. The majority of North Koreans want to be a member of the Party because it is the direct route to a better life, not necessarily because of political advantage. The majority of KWP members are not elite, much less power elite.

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92 Kim So-Jeong, “북 핵개발 알고보니 '101핵물리연구소'서 주도” [North Korea’s Nuclear Development is led by the ‘101 Nuclear Physics Research Institute’], *Dailian News*, February 6, 2013.

93 Author’s interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

94 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 21.

95 *Ibid.*, 19.

96 *Ibid.*, 21.

97 *Bukan gaeyo*, 48. This number has remained consistent, as Kim Jong-il prevented the Party from growing in size.

98 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 21.

The number of paid Party workers is only in the tens of thousands.<sup>99</sup> According to interviews with several former Pyongyang residents, central Party workers number approximately 20,000.<sup>100</sup>

North Korea's cadre policy consists of personnel policy, intelligentsia policy, and education policy. Personnel policy is comprised of cadre selection principles and cadre work principles. Intelligentsia policy is comprised of engagement into the Party, "revolutionizing" and "labor class-izing" the intelligentsia. Education policy is comprised of cadre training, education, and general education.<sup>101</sup> All North Korean cadre are recruited, trained, and evaluated based on their individual loyalty to the *Suryong*.<sup>102</sup> Talent and ability, at both the personal and organizational level, are secondary in daily performance. This emphasis on loyalty has hindered progress and modernization. Under Kim Jong-il's leadership, adherence to the *Suryong* doctrine led to inefficiencies in the economy, science, education, and other areas where professionalism and competence were sacrificed to ensure loyalty to the Supreme Leader. This was compounded by the concept that the labor class could accomplish its revolutionary tasks only under the *Suryong*'s leadership.<sup>103</sup> In particular, the economy suffered as leaders feared negative or even violent reactions to their decisions more than they devoted efforts to improving the economic sector. Also sacrificed was any concept of protecting human rights. North Korean cadre intentionally suppress human rights to comply with the requirements of the *Suryong*. This is emphasized constantly during Party life study sessions that all must attend.

The recruitment of the elite begins with revolutionary lineage, socio-political classification, and KWP membership. Being born into a prestigious political family has the greatest impact on whether one is eligible to be chosen to work for the regime. Those vetted by socio-political background investigations, particularly descendants of anti-Japanese partisans, dominate the leadership of Party, military, and state institutions.<sup>104</sup> Beyond lineage, the family's political performance is just as important.<sup>105</sup> The combination of these two political factors can easily propel one into the elite

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99 Hwang Jang-Yop, "군대와 인민이 손을 잡으면 김정일 체제 붕괴된다" [Kim Jong-il's Regime Will Collapse if the People and the Military Join Hands], *Monthly Chosun*, March 2000.

100 Author's interviews with former Pyongyang residents now residing in South Korea.

101 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 23.

102 *Ibid.*, 179.

103 Park et al., *Kim Jong-il sidae Bukan-ui jeongchicheje*, 113.

104 After Kim Il-sung's extended family, North Korea's elite are led by these Korean War veterans and surviving family members as well as families tied to anti-Japanese partisan history and other original revolutionaries. There is a significant history of these individuals being treated with exception rather than the socio-political norm of North Korea's strict social stratification.

105 The greatest benefit of good *songbun* is political influence. Out of everyone in North Korea, these privileged elite give the greatest effort towards protecting the regime. If they fail to do so, they will not

class. In addition, personal performance and demonstrated loyalty will enable promotion within the regime, resulting in greater personal power and influence. A laborer who wants to become a cadre must receive proper education, become a “people’s cadre,” and enter the Party. An intellectual must become “revolutionized” and “laborized,” and then become a “people’s cadre.” They must then enter the Party.<sup>106</sup>

Training the elite is critical to the success of the Party in asserting its dominance over North Korea and concentrating power in Pyongyang. Self-sacrifice among those that are successful in North Korea includes willingness to report on friends, associates, and even family. Loyalty to the Supreme Leader provides the building blocks of success: better housing, food, jobs, and greater opportunities for one’s family. Disloyalty by the power elite is the greatest threat to the regime and thus draws the greatest retaliation. The case of Kim Jong-un’s uncle, Jang Song-taek, is a prominent example. Within North Korea’s distinct social hierarchy, the price of success is submission to the loyalty-first political system.

Through lifelong indoctrination, the Kim regime shapes every North Korean from peasant to Politburo member regarding their loyalty to the leader, the Party, the socialist system, and the revolution. Leaders of every organization in North Korea receive increased indoctrination and individual surveillance while being subject to increased political expectations. Conforming to the unique elements of political power is a key component of personal success within the Kim regime, as it is in any state political system. To ensure compliance with directives and policies, all security agencies and Party organizations regularly assess every North Korean leader’s loyalty to the Supreme Leader.<sup>107</sup> Compliance with the Ten Principles of Monolithic Leadership shapes the day-to-day lives of every North Korean leader. Adherence to these principles serves as the basis for evaluation reports for all North Korean leaders, regardless of institution.

Every member of the elite, whether in the Party, government, military, economic enterprise, or social organizations, is evaluated daily by Party organizations embedded in every agency and organization at every level in North Korea. In that vein, the elite of Pyongyang live highly controlled lives where their daily professional performance, daily political performance, and personal lives

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advance within the system, resulting in a sense of personal loss. In contrast, ordinary North Koreans cannot expect many opportunities for advancement, and they therefore do not put in the same kind of effort. This creates a significant amount of resentment between the classes. See Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 92-93.

106 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 21.

107 This includes all leaders with a one-star military rank—or the civilian equivalent—and above.

are evaluated by KWP and security agency officials dedicated to judging individual loyalty to the Supreme Leader.<sup>108</sup> This evaluation process is a critical component of North Korea's human rights policies, as these evaluations have the effect of compelling North Korean officials to uphold Party policies, practices, and procedures relating to human rights denial. Self-protection is standard operating procedure for the elite who want to retain their position, privileges, and family's safety.<sup>109</sup>

Testimony by North Korean defectors indicates that leaders at the local level also stay in office by focusing on the study of ideology. Those leaders are evaluated on their leadership based on this aspect more than any other, even more so than professional performance and competence.<sup>110</sup> Local leaders who make mistakes are dismissed and banished to labor camps for several years along with their families, where they work on farms or in factories. Individuals who do not attend ideology study sessions are branded “counter-revolutionary.” Such accusations are the equivalent of a “scarlet letter,” and the accused can recover only with great difficulty. No one is exempt from ideology sessions. Political survival fundamentally depends on demonstrating loyalty, whether or not one truly believes the regime's ideology. Bribes can only go so far in making up for missing ideology sessions or self-critique sessions, because anyone who misses too many sessions is reported to the State Security Department's (SSD) informants with predictable consequences.<sup>111</sup> Applying this political dynamic at every administrative level of the provinces suppresses resistance to the “Pyongyang Republic.”

## 4.7 The Lives of the Elite: Loyalty, Survival, and Corruption

Life among the North Korean elite, particularly the power elite, is not a model of stability. Political loyalties, corruption, economic failures, political succession, and associational preferences all affect their position and how they are perceived by the KWP leadership. Career success within the Kim family regime is highly competitive, ruthless, and based on demonstrated loyalty to the Supreme Leader. This dynamic was created under Kim Il-sung and highly refined under Kim Jong-il, who centralized political authority, centralized leadership evaluations and promotions based on loyalty, and

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108 Lim, *Kim Jong Il's Leadership of North Korea*, 68-69.

109 Cho et al., *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans*.

110 This testimony is consistent with dozens of other testimonies by defectors that the author received during interviews, both from those who held high-level and lower-level occupations. Several former North Korean diplomats interviewed by the author also gave similar accounts.

111 “Horrors Of North Korea: Skipping Ideology Sessions Led To 'Counter-Revolutionary' Label,” *Asahi Shimbun*, January 10, 2015.

centralized reporting on all political, economic, military, and security issues. Any demonstration of self-interest over service to the Supreme Leader is immediately met with severe punishment.

Political accountability in North Korea is created by indoctrination, political terror, privilege-granting, and ideological study. North Korea's power elite understand that with the granting of greater privilege comes higher expectations to show loyalty to the *Suryong* and the Party. For example, Party cadre were ordered to earn 1,000 Chinese yuan by April 15, 2014 in order to support celebrations of Kim Il-sung's birthday.<sup>112</sup> This dynamic plays a significant role in human rights denial, as Party practices and policy relative to human rights denial are more vigorously enforced, if not supported, by the privileged.

However, the awarding of privileges does not necessarily guarantee all the needs of individual families. Those who are not bureau heads or higher in rank engage in corrupt practices to make money for their families.<sup>113</sup> Even in Pyongyang, there is not enough food for every resident. Misappropriation and the acceptance of bribes are seen as accepted practices necessary to ensure survival. Manipulation of the ever-growing marketplace is also a common practice. Most Party, state, and military institutions, almost all of which are headquartered in Pyongyang, run their own foreign currency operations, and the elite falsify records to embezzle profits.<sup>114</sup> These Party cadre, who are able to conduct foreign currency operations, are not well liked. Though they are respected, they are seen as exploiters.<sup>115</sup>

As in other societies, North Koreans network to advance their personal or professional lives. Personal networking and the use of *inmaek* (personal "lines") are significant within the Kim regime, even though the internal security agencies seek to investigate and eliminate any factions. These *inmaek* are made up of individuals whom one has known or worked with over the years. Through shared work or experience, individuals develop cooperative relations with friends or work associates. This creates elite coherence, which is important during external crises or internal strife. Gaining personal reciprocity within these links is critical to survival.<sup>116</sup> During college, Kim Jong-il

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112 Choi Da-Mi, "北, 당원들에게 '천 위안 벌기 운동' 지시" [North Korea's Party Cadre Ordered to Earn One Thousand Yuan], *New Focus*, March 6, 2014.

113 A recent socio-political trend in the Pyongyang Republic is the phenomenon of "golden couples," which consist of a government-official husband and an entrepreneur wife that can use the influence of one to further the profits of the other. See "Also available to earthlings," *The Economist*, February 11, 2012.

114 Cho et al., *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans*, 26.

115 Author's interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

116 Lee et al., *Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime*, 45.

formed an *inmaek* among fellow students that came to be known as the “Yongnamsan Line,” named after Mount Yongnam behind Kim Il-sung University. This line experienced favor from Kim Jong-il during his rise to power. This is a far lesser version of Kim Il-sung’s “Paekdusan Line,” which initially included Kim Il-sung and his anti-Japanese partisans but later became associated with the Kim family itself.<sup>117</sup>

Another issue that affects the power elite is generational differences. The connection between the first, second, and third generational elite has proven to be a chain of custody to deny human rights that enables the power and lifestyle of the elites. Nearly all first-generation revolutionaries have passed away, and second- and third-generation elites compete for positions of power. There are now four generations of revolutionaries, including the youngest elite.<sup>118</sup> There have been generational changes in the past. In 1998, Kim Jong-il replaced the cadre of the government and mass organizations, and made some changes in the Party and military.<sup>119</sup> A generational turnover took place in the OGD between 2009 and 2011. The KWP Inspections Committee,<sup>120</sup> and likely the OGD Inspections Section, were involved in investigations to determine such personnel changes.<sup>121</sup>

As third-generation elites increasingly assume higher and more influential positions under North Korea’s third-generation Supreme Leader, second-generation leaders with more experience are being pushed aside.<sup>122</sup> Kim Jong-un has also made significant changes in all leadership areas among the power elite since succeeding his father. His execution of Jang Song-taek clearly demonstrates that nobody is immune from changes deemed necessary to maintain power. Indeed, the numerous and brutal executions of members of the power elite since Kim Jong-un took power are apparently being used by the regime to maximize the power elite’s fear of the young Supreme Leader.<sup>123</sup>

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117 Testimony by Mr. K., author’s interview.

118 Lee et al., *Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime*, 26-29.

119 Park et al., *Kim Jong-il sidae Bukan-ui jeongchicheje*, 60.

120 Lee et al., *Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime*, 56.

121 The OGD Inspections Section—not the KWP Inspection Committee—inspects senior leaders.

122 Cho et al., *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans*, 27-28.

123 See discussion at Tim Macfarlan, “Brutally executed, banished or ‘disappeared’: The grim fate of top North Korean officials purged by Kim Jong-un four years after they were pallbearers at his father’s funeral,” *Daily Mail*, May 14, 2015; Yeom Yu-Seop, “장성택·리영호 지고 김여정·황병서 핵심 부상” [As Jang Song-taek and Ri Yong-ho fade, Kim Yo-jong and Hwang Byong-so Become Core], *Segye Ilbo*, May 13, 2015; Gu Bon-Dan, “장군님 고사포 쓰신다’... 김정은 처형 3대 특징” [The General Uses Anti-aircraft Guns: Three characteristics of executions under Kim Jong-un], *Herald Economics*, May 23, 2015.

Under Kim Jong-un's rule, the children of North Korea's power elite, particularly those of the most elite families with ties to the founding of North Korea, have used their positions to earn significant amounts of money. As a result, they have developed undue levels of influence among the core class of the Party and the government. Kim Chol, the son of SSD Director Kim Won-hong, is well known to be a millionaire who carries enormous influence among core decision-makers, even though the concept of a financial elite is counter to everything a socialist society ideologically stands for. Other children of the power elite with substantial assets and significant influence include Choe Ryong-hae's son, Choe Hyun-chul, and Ri Yong-ran, the eldest daughter of deceased OGD First Vice Director for military affairs, General Ri Yong-chol.<sup>124</sup>

The new elite under Kim Jong-un is called the "8030 generation." These are individuals born in the 1980s who have graduated from Kim Il-sung University. Some also belong to a group called the *Bonghwajo*, which means "smoke of battle" or "advance guard." Reportedly founded in 2000, it is regarded as a "group of princes" in North Korea who now hold key positions in the Party, government, and military. It is the name of an area in central Pyongyang from where Kang Pan-sok, Kim Il-sung's mother, hails. One report states that the leader of the *Bonghwajo* is Kim Jong-chol, Kim Jong-un's older brother. This report claims that Kim Jong-chol orchestrated the execution of Jang Su-gil and Ri Ryong-ha—Jang Song-taek's top lieutenants. Another report states that the leaders of the *Bonghwajo* are O Se-hyon, son of NDC member General O Kuk-ryol, and Kim Chol, son of General Kim Won-hong, Director of the SSD.<sup>125</sup>

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124 "The emergence of an elite more feared than the Supreme Leader," *New Focus International*, December 9, 2014.

125 Shin Dae-Won, "롤러코스터 인사로 권력구도 재편... '8030세대 · 봉화조' 新엘리트 세력" [Reshuffling the Power Structure with Frequent Appointments: 8030 Generation and *Bonghwajo* are the New Elite], *Herald Economic News*, December 11, 2013. See also Michael Rank, "The Ponghwa Behind Pyongyang's Throne," *Asia Times*, January 19, 2012.

## 4.8 Current Leaders of the Pyongyang Republic & Their Role In Human Rights Denial



Upon assuming the position of leader of the Kim family regime, **Kim Jong-un** inherited all responsibility for North Korea's totalitarian dictatorship and its policies and strategies. This includes the processes that establish human rights denial and uphold the Pyongyang Republic. Indeed, he has invested significantly in solidifying both policies.

Kim's youth and inexperience make him unpredictable in decision-making situations. More significantly, Kim's closest advisers, those that brief him on the regime's pre-eminent operating principle of loyalty to Kim and the regime, are political commissars who focus on regime continuity on the domestic front. These officials, which include foreign affairs experts, mostly do not have a military background. They brief Kim Jong-un on who can be trusted and control who has access to the Supreme Leader. Since he became Supreme Leader in December 2011, Kim has focused on purging high-ranking officials whom he suspects of distrust,<sup>126</sup> securing the border with China to reduce defections,<sup>127</sup> and achieving generational change.<sup>128</sup>

The personnel listed below are Kim Jong-un's most senior advisers, who are full or alternate members of the KWP Central Committee. All have proven their loyalty to the Supreme Leader countless times and receive the highest privileges available. Furthermore, there are other advisers at each echelon or area of expertise. They cover a variety of issue areas, but all of them would advise the North Korean leader during a domestic crisis. All of Kim Jong-un's top advisers belong to major committees in the Party, military, and government.

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126 There is considerable reporting on this issue. A good synopsis of purges since 2011 can be found at Cho Sung-Eun, "[김정은 공포정치] 최측근 줄줄이 숙청... 北 권력구도 오리무중" [Kim Jong-un's Fearpolitik: North Korea's Power Structure Unclear as Close Aides Purged One After Another], *Kukmin Ilbo*, May 14, 2015. See also Gu Bon-Dan, "장군님 고사포 쓰신다'... 김정은 처형 3대 특징" [The General Uses Anti-aircraft Guns: Three characteristics of executions under Kim Jong-un], *Herald Economics*, May 23, 2015.

127 See, for example, Ju-Min Park and James Pearson, "Bugged phones and double barbed wire: far fewer North Koreans defect," *Reuters*, May 21, 2015.

128 Lee et al., *Study on the Power Elite of the Kim Jong Un Regime*, 56.



**Jo Yon-jun** serves in the extremely influential position of KWP OGD First Vice Director. As with other individuals in that position, Jo's access to Kim Jong-un is unsurpassed by anyone outside of Kim Jong-un's Personal Secretariat. This is because of the OGD's mission of maintaining the superiority of the *Suryong* system that keeps Kim Jong-un in power. All of Jo's predecessors have had this level of access since Kim Jong-il took over the OGD in 1974. Jo serves as the OGD Cadre Division Director as well as the "commandant of the KWP headquarters."<sup>129</sup> He is responsible for overseeing the political investigation and evaluation of everyone in North Korea except the Supreme Leader, and thus possesses the power to demote, hire, and transfer all high-ranking personnel except those that require Kim Jong-un's direct approval. Even then, Jo would present the case for or against the individual in question. Jo led the purge of Jang Song-taek at the Politburo meeting where Jang was arrested, as shown on multiple international media outlets. Jo also led the purge of former SSD leader Ryu Kyong in 2012. Jo is a KWP Politburo member and formerly the Responsible Secretary (Chairman) of the KWP committee for South Hamgyong Province. He is a lifelong OGD official who has worked his way up from the bottom.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Jo will ensure that all advisers and leaders maintain absolute loyalty to Kim Jong-un. Any of Kim Jong-un's advisers who are discredited would be thoroughly investigated by Jo without any due process, which does not exist in North Korea's legal system. No other person in the North Korean political system other than the Supreme Leader can turn an adviser's career and position into ruin faster than Jo. He ensures that all policies, practices, and procedures ensure the security of Pyongyang and that there are no changes to the Kim regime's policy of human rights denial.



**Vice Marshal Hwang Byong-so** is the Director of the KPA GPB, and serves as the military's senior political commissar in that role. He replaced Choe Ryong-hae in that position and as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, which is one of the regime's three top positions. Furthermore, he was also promoted to Vice Marshal in 2014. Hwang is responsible for not only the military security of the regime and the performance of every soldier in accomplishing this mission, but also for upholding Party doctrine and political life within the military. Hwang formerly oversaw all of the reporting concerning the military, and he

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129 Kim So-Jeong, "장성택 숙청 주도 북 인사권 쥔 조연준 알고보니..." [A Look Into Jo Yon-jun, Who Led the Purge of Jang Song-taek and Controls Personnel Appointments in North Korea], *Dalian News*, December 12, 2013.

maintains commanding influence on all of the military leaders' personal lives through evaluating and reporting on the professional, personal, and political aspects of every KPA officer.

**Assessment:** As a member of the KWP Politburo Standing Committee, Hwang will uphold all decisions that secure the regime and Pyongyang's integrity. He will also ensure that there are no changes to the policy of human rights denial.



**General Kim Kyong-ok** is also a First Vice Director of the KWP OGD. As a longtime political commissar within the KPA, he is not a military professional. He is a career officer with the GPB, with powers similar to that of Jo Yon-jun. His responsibility is maintaining Party integrity within the cities and provinces.

**Assessment:** During a domestic crisis, Kim will serve similar functions to that of Jo Yon-jun, as outlined above, but with a focus on how actions in the provinces help secure Pyongyang and provide continuity to human rights denial.



**General Ri Pyong-chol** rose through the ranks of the KPA Air Force to become the Commander of the KPA Aviation and Air Defense Command. In January 2015, KCNA stated that General Ri had been appointed a First Vice Director of the KWP OGD.<sup>130</sup> He has both political and military combat experience, making him the most unique adviser to Kim Jong-un, particularly in decision-making during a crisis.

**Assessment:** During a domestic crisis, Ri will serve as the primary balancer between the need for a military decision and the protection of Kim Jong-un and Pyongyang.



**Kim Ki-nam** is the primary propagandist for the Kim regime. As Director of the KWP PAD, it is his responsibility to inculcate the masses on loyalty to the Supreme Leader and the Party, and their dedication to the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology. He is a lifelong member of the PAD who has risen through the ranks since the 1960s. He is also a KWP Secretary and a member of the Politburo.

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130 “북한 리병철, 노동당 제1부부장으로 임명돼” [North Korea's Ri Pyong-chol Appointed KWP First Vice Director], *Yonhap News*, January 13, 2015.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Kim will advise on images and messages that will convince the North Korean populace of the justification behind the regime's decisions.



**General Kim Won-hong** is the Director of the extremely powerful SSD. He directs the 50,000-man secret police charged with regime security. General Kim formerly served as the Commander of the Military Security Command (MSC), and was the third-ranked individual in the GPB prior to being promoted to the head of the SSD. As the leader in the Kim regime's internal security apparatus, General Kim is the most experienced counterintelligence leader in North Korea. He is a full member of the KWP Politburo, KWP CMC, and KWP Central Committee. His role as a central figure in the Kim regime, as demonstrated in all of these appointments, indicates his full support of the regime's objectives. General Kim is likely the most hated man in North Korea because of his role as the leader of the secret police.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, General Kim will advise on social stability and personnel reliability. He will also provide assessments of those directly advising Kim Jong-un during a crisis. He is responsible for upholding the policy of human rights denial, and has the authority to apprehend, try, and execute anybody in North Korea except Central Committee members or specialized personnel, including scientists, military personnel, and senior government personnel. Even then, he has the authority to arrest.



**Major General Choe Pu-il** is a career military officer who leads the Ministry of People's Security (MPS) and is therefore the leader of North Korea's regular police. He commands a force of 300,000, of which approximately 60% are beat policemen. This force serves as the front line of human rights denial in North Korea. Choe was formerly the head of North Korea's Athletic League and ingratiated himself with Kim Jong-il's sons Kim Jong-chol and Kim Jong-un by ensuring they had the best training in basketball, one of Kim Jong-un's favorite pastimes. Based on a KCNA photograph from July 2014, Choe was demoted from four-star, a grade he made in 2010, to two-star after the collapse of a newly constructed apartment building for MPS personnel. The apartment had been constructed by personnel under Choe's command. As an alternate member of the KWP Politburo and a full member of the KWP CMC, KWP Central Committee, and the NDC, Choe has demonstrated complete loyalty to the Supreme Leader.



Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Choe will be responsible for immediate action against violators of the Supreme Leader’s directives and policies.



**Kim Yong-nam** is the Chairman of the SPA Standing Committee, the highest government position outside the Chairman of the NDC. More importantly, he has not only been a member of the KWP Politburo for over thirty years, but he is also a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, which makes him a top domestic adviser to Kim Jong-un. Kim Yong-nam also serves as the ceremonial leader for meeting foreign diplomats, a function for which he is very qualified due to his former position as Minister of Foreign Affairs and

Deputy Prime Minister.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Kim would advise the North Korean leadership on the reactions of the international community and how this would impact North Korean policy. His focus will be regime survival, and all policies and actions that support that objective.



**Choe Tae-bok** is Chairman of the SPA, where he leads work on domestic and legal issues. Choe is a lifelong educator and contributed significantly to creating a national curriculum that glorifies the Kim family regime. He is a full member of the KWP Politburo and KWP Central Committee.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Choe’s input would focus on the legal and legislative aspects of regime security and adjusting North Korea’s Criminal Code to support regime policy.



**Chang Pyong-kyu** is the Director of the State Prosecutor’s Office. As such, he is the regime’s lead prosecutor in accusing those suspected of crimes against the state and, in particular, political crimes against the Supreme Leader’s directives and policies. His duties, and the duties of all of the state prosecutors down to the county level, including his seven vice directors, are spelled out in the Criminal Procedures Law and the Prosecutor Supervision Law. Chang is also the Chairman of the SPA Legislation Committee and a key leader of human rights denial.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Chang’s advice will be vital for suppressing domestic dissent.



**Pak Myong-choi** was elected as President of the Supreme Court at the First Session of the 13th SPA. Little is known about Pak, and a picture is not available.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Pak will be instrumental in enforcing Kim Jong-un’s decisions on the domestic front through court decisions.



**Choe Ryong-hae** is a KWP Secretary and a member of the KWP Politburo. Choe is North Korean “royalty,” as his father, Choe Hyun, served alongside Kim Il-sung as an anti-Japanese partisan in the 1930s and 1940s and then served as North Korea’s Defense Minister. A lifelong Party man, Choe Ryong-hae was a friend of Kim Jong-il and serves in several key positions in the regime, including the KWP Politburo. He spent much of his career as the Chairman of the Socialist Labor Youth League, a Party organization designed to indoctrinate and mobilize North Korean youth. He was formerly one of only three members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the top political body in North Korea, and the KWP Central Committee. However, he was recently replaced as a Standing Committee member by Hwang Byong-so, who also replaced him as the Director of the KPA GPB. Choe’s influence has recently decreased as a result.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Choe would likely provide advice on Party mobilization and regime security.



**Yang Hyong-sop** is the Deputy Chairman of the SPA Presidium. He works hard domestic issues and occasionally hosts foreign diplomatic delegations. Professionally, he spent most of his life as a legal councilor and a spy chief. A long-time member of the KWP Central Committee, Yang has been a full member of the KWP Politburo for twenty years and has served a longer term as a SPA member. At the advanced age of 90, he is still quite active on the political scene.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Yang would be in the unique position of being able to advise on areas of correlation between North Korea's domestic issues and sympathetic elements of South Korean society. His lifelong commitment to the Kim family regime will likely lead him to promote regime survival at the sacrifice of the general population.



**Pak Pong-ju** is the North Korean Premier. He has led the North Korean state since 2013, and he previously served in the same position from 2003 to 2007. He is responsible for North Korea's economy; his career has focused on economic management as a Party functionary. He is a full member of the KWP Politburo and KWP Central Committee.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Pak will advise on economic sustainability and manpower issues to support the economic prioritization of the Pyongyang Republic.



**General O Kuk-ryol** is one of the most influential persons in the Kim regime. He has very close family ties to the ruling family, and he is a highly competent official with a diversified military career. He is the son of one of Kim Il-sung's co-partisans who fought against the Japanese in the 1930s and 1940s. When Kim Jong-il's mother died, he grew up under O Kuk-ryol's parents. O became an older brother to Kim Jong-il, which cemented their relationship. O graduated from the Soviet Union's Frunze Academy, Russia's Command and Staff College, and rose through the ranks as an Air Force officer, eventually becoming the KPA Air Force Commander. He then became the KPA Chief of General Staff in 1979. In that position, he was responsible for the founding of the Mirim Electronic Warfare College, which is now North Korea's premier cyber warfare school. Kim Il-sung dismissed O from this position in 1988 for arguing that political commissars in the military should be abolished due to their drag on efficiency. After undergoing re-education, O was assisted by Kim Jong-il in becoming the Director of the KWP Military Department in 1989, and then the Director of the KWP Operations Department in 1992. There,

General O directed the Operations Department’s mission of infiltrating North Korean agents into South Korea. Defectors who were in that department have described General O as a “soldier’s general.” Even though he was in his 60s at the time, O lived and worked in the same conditions as the infiltration personnel, surviving off of alternative food sources in natural surroundings. When the KWP Operations Department was merged into the KPA Reconnaissance General Bureau (RGB), General O was appointed one of the three Vice Chairmen of the NDC. An expert on “second front” operations, electronic warfare, and air operations, General O is North Korea’s leading expert on hybrid warfare. Despite his advanced age of 86, O is well known for maintaining a good health routine.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, General O would be one of Kim Jong-un’s most important advisors on regime security and the draconian tactics necessary for protecting Pyongyang and maintaining the status quo.



**General Ri Yong-gil** is the fourth KPA Chief of General Staff under Kim Jong-un. He was likely promoted to this post more for his political loyalty than his combat arms expertise. He served as the Fifth Corps Commander 2007 to 2012.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, General Ri would likely be the primary adviser on military tactics to protect the regime and Pyongyang.



**Colonel General Jo Kyong-choi** commands the MSC, which is directly responsible for personnel security in the military sector. He is General Kim Won-hong’s counterpart within the military. Colonel General Jo served the majority of his career as a political commissar. His last assignment was as the political officer of the KPA Air Force. Jo is primarily responsible for human rights denial within North Korea’s defense-industrial complex.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Jo would advise Kim Jong-un directly on the political reliability of senior military personnel and military units.



**Colonel General Yun Jong-rin** has been the commanding officer and Director of the Guard Command since 2003. In this post, he is responsible for the personal security of Kim Jong-un and core North Korean elites. Yun directs and manages the most powerful and technologically advanced of all of the country’s security services or military branches. Yun was promoted to full

general in 2010, but was demoted to three-star (Colonel General) in 2014 for unexplained reasons. Yun served as a bodyguard to Kim Jong-il and held various command positions in the bodyguard corps. He was elected to membership in the KWP Central Committee and CMC in September 2010.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Yun would advise on Kim Jong-un's personal security, including safe locations for the Supreme Leader.



**Kim Su-gil** is the Chairman of the Pyongyang KWP Committee. In that position, he is responsible for political events in the Pyongyang Republic and ensuring the loyalty of the Pyongyang populace.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Kim would advise on the stability of Pyongyang and supervise efforts to maintain the loyalty of Pyongyang residents, which would include cooperation with internal security agencies in suppressing resistance.



**Cha Hui-rim** is the Chairman of the Pyongyang People's Committee, responsible for everyday events in support of the Pyongyang Republic. This includes following local Party guidance as channeled through Kim Su-gil, the distribution of resources prioritized to Pyongyang, and providing support to KWP and internal security agency personnel and families, thus indirectly supporting human rights denial. Cha also serves on the SPA Legislative Committee.<sup>131</sup>

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Cha would advise on the stability of Pyongyang and supervise efforts to secure the loyalty of Pyongyang residents and controlling their actions.

## 4.9 Other Key Advisers



**Ri Su-yong** is a longtime trusted adviser to the Kim family. Most of his career has been in the foreign service, but he has also served in Kim Il-sung's Personal Secretariat. Currently the Foreign Minister, Ri has held three ambassadorial positions, two of which were tours as North Korea's Ambassador to Switzerland. This is a position that is responsible for the Kim regime's funds in Swiss banks and overseeing the education and security of the Kim family's children.

131 "Panel Committees of SPA of DPRK Elected," KCNA, April 9, 2014.

He also served an earlier tour in Switzerland.<sup>132</sup> In addition, he has served in senior economic positions, which indicates his talent in economics and in managing the Kim regime's funds in Switzerland. He supervised Kim Jong-un's lifestyle and security during his education in Switzerland.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Ri's advice will focus on personal consequences for the Kim family. Ri will not likely have much influence in negotiations with the United States or South Korea, since Kim Kye-gwan has greater experience in this regard. However, Ri is likely to voice caution with emphasis on Kim family funds and opportunities in the face of peril to the regime.



**Kim Kye-gwan** is First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. He continues to be North Korea's lead negotiator on discussions about its nuclear program with the United States. In doing so, he has accumulated more experience in dealing with American diplomats than any other North Korean.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Kim will advise on negotiations with the United States and interpret American actions from that viewpoint.



**Kang Sok-ju** is a fourth cousin to Kim Jong-un and one of his most trusted and experienced advisers. Well known to American diplomats, Kang has spent his career in the Foreign Ministry and in the KWP International Department. As the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, he is the person who admitted to then-Assistant Secretary of State Jim Kelly in 2002 that North Korea had a uranium program for nuclear weapons. Kang is concurrently a Party Secretary and the Director of the KWP International Affairs Department. Kang served for three decades as Kim Yong-nam's deputy. Born in 1939 in South Pyongan Province, Kang began his career as a cadre in the KWP International Department around 1972. In 2007, Kang was also appointed a councilor of the NDC. He is a full member of the KWP Politburo and KWP Central Committee.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Kang is likely the first non-military individual outside the OGD to whom Kim Jong-un would turn. Kang would be the lead adviser on how to respond to international backlash on the prioritization of resources to Pyongyang and on human rights issues.

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132 Bureau of Political Analysis, *Bukan juyo insa inmul jeongbo 2015* [Key Individuals in North Korea 2015] (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2015), 269.



**Jo Chun-ryong** is the Director of the Second Economic Committee (SEC), which leads North Korea's military-industrial complex and oversees the administration of all WMD research and development facilities. His relatively young age for such a prominent leadership position indicates both demonstrated loyalty to the regime and managerial capability. The SEC is responsible for resource allocation and expenditures related to the regime's military resources. The regime's prioritizing of resources to the military directly contributes to the plight of the average North Korean in terms of food security, healthcare, and the provision of basic utilities such as water, heat, and electricity.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Jo would likely advise on the preparation and management of resources necessary for wartime production.



**Kim Chun-sop** is the newest member of the NDC, appointed at an April 9, 2015 meeting of the Third Session of the 13th SPA. He was formerly the Responsible Secretary of the KWP Committee for Jagang Province, the heart of North Korea's defense industries. Kim appears to have replaced Pak To-chun as the KWP Secretary for Machine Industries, which oversees the research, development, and production of all weapons, including WMDs. As much as any other program in North Korea, the development of WMDs directly impacts the general welfare of every North Korean through the diversion of funds.

Assessment: During a domestic crisis, Kim will have little influence outside of advising on the security of facilities related to WMDs.

## CHAPTER FIVE: PRIVILEGE IN THE PYONGYANG REPUBLIC

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The Kim family regime has successfully employed political patronage on a national scale for over sixty years. The granting of privilege and positions of influence, disregard for formal rules of government, and the use of informal personal channels are all characteristics of the Kim regime's patronage system. The granting of privilege in return for unconditional loyalty is a strong motivator for those wishing to succeed within the Kim regime.<sup>133</sup>

### 5.1 Privilege and Human Rights Denial

For the purposes of this report, privilege is defined as a political, economic, or social benefit provided by the regime in return for loyalty and service to the regime. This can range from the smallest favor between a beat cop and a neighborhood informant to superior housing given by the Supreme Leader to a Party secretary. In general, privileges in North Korea are associated with food security, physical security, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. However, the highest privilege under the Kim regime is widely considered to be residence in Pyongyang, especially in high-quality housing within the city. Privilege in Pyongyang is directly tied to trust and confidence in the *Suryong*. Loyalty to the Supreme Leader, adherence to Party doctrine, and contributions to the regime—monetary, political, or otherwise—are gateways to greater privilege. By doing so, the regime provides strong incentives for loyalty. In turn, privilege fosters compliance with and support for the regime's priorities and objectives. Under the Kim regime, privilege replaces human rights as the foundation for societal support.<sup>134</sup>

The level of privilege is directly related to one's *songbun*, a socio-political classification that the regime assigns to every individual in North Korea. Based on a political assessment of one's family background when Japanese colonial rule ended in 1945, the Kim regime has classified every individual as a political friend, foe, or something in between. This profiling serves as a starting point for determining privilege eligibility. The regime applies this profile to its occupational assignments,

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133 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 67.

134 To some, greater privilege comes automatically from familial ties to or alliance with Kim Il-sung and his family. Members of these groups—anti-Japanese partisans, Korean War heroes, and their families—have historically supported the Kim regime and have received the best privileges the regime has to offer, generation after generation. Those designated *yeolsa*, meaning “patriot” or “hero,” are the privileged class of North Korea. They receive the highest recognition and treatment the Kim regime has to offer. However, even these families are not exempt from the prime requirement of political loyalty.

housing, education, healthcare, and food distribution policies, thus enabling social control.<sup>135</sup> It also affects an individual's ability to conduct foreign transactions and access to better stores, restaurants, entertainment, childcare, and leisure facilities that generally do not exist outside Pyongyang. By using the *songbun* system, the Kim regime has organized North Korean society into groups with distinctive political, social, economic, and motivational characteristics. While these groups are not mutually exclusive in political or geographical terms, it is possible to identify efforts at social exclusion.

Under the *songbun* system, socio-political dynamics within the Kim regime create tension between privilege and human rights. The elite in North Korea work within and without the political system to gain privilege at the expense of not only their own rights but by actively denying the rights of others. Pyongyang residents have to choose between privilege and human rights, and the price for privilege is loyalty to the regime and the Supreme Leader. This does not necessarily mean that individuals approve of the regime or have genuine respect or love for the regime's leaders. For most Pyongyang residents, it is a transactional choice. Families with higher status and privilege are perceived to have greater loyalty towards the regime, which leads to a greater requirement to demonstrate that loyalty. This leads to self-sacrifice in terms of personal ethics, a common issue for those living under an authoritarian system.

The clash between privilege and human rights is a dramatic confrontation framed by the ruling principles of the Kim family regime. Human rights are mentioned in the constitution, but no individual leader or organization in North Korea observes human rights in practice. Equality is an ideal of communism and the North Korean constitution, but it does not exist anywhere in North Korea. North Korean leaders and cadre must deny human rights to all North Korean citizens to achieve personal success within the Kim regime. Doing so results in the aforementioned privileges, while not doing so results in severe punishment. A privilege is a reward for "appropriate" political behavior, whereas a human right is an inherent, irrevocable entitlement held by all individuals. Under the Kim regime, individual citizens have no choice but to seek privilege through the denial of human rights.<sup>136</sup>

The fear of privilege denial can be a very strong incentive to be loyal. Those that conform to the regime and the Party's policies and practice are eligible to receive privileges, but those who do not show sufficient loyalty or fail to fulfill their responsibilities suffer personal consequences. Their priv-

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135 See Collins, *Marked for Life*.

136 Author's interviews with several mid-level defectors from North Korea.

ileges are suspended, usually permanently.<sup>137</sup> Even in free societies, losing wealth and status can be extremely demoralizing. In North Korea, the loss of privilege can result in not only losing one's office, but also the loss of better housing, healthcare, education, and food security. If the mistake is severe, the loss of privilege can extend to three generations of one's family. Family members may be imprisoned, and the family "leader" may also be executed.

No matter how high an individual rises in North Korea, one moment of distrust can result in death or imprisonment for oneself and three generations of one's family. The December 2013 execution of Kim Jong-un's uncle, Jang Song-taek, and the recent execution of the Minister of the People's Armed Forces, General Hyon Yong-chol,<sup>138</sup> are proof of this, but there are countless other examples. The regime employs draconian terror through pervasive internal security, state domination over the court and legal system, and Party-controlled personnel evaluations. Being judged loyal to the regime opens the opportunity to serve the Supreme Leader, while being judged disloyal closes the door to opportunity from the beginning, making it nearly impossible to gain privilege in any aspect. Those judged as disloyal to the Supreme Leader live life in North Korea at the level of feudal slaves.<sup>139</sup>

## 5.2 Housing in Pyongyang: the Ultimate Privilege

When they first meet, the adolescents of Pyongyang today ask each other where they live. By knowing the street and apartment complex someone lives in, it is possible to guess what his or her parents do for a living and how wealthy the family is.<sup>140</sup> In short, you are where you live.

In North Korea, housing assignment is based on status, position, and organization. Just as farmers in a state or cooperative farm are housed in the same farming village complex, so are the power elite, the cadre elite, and the lesser elite housed in complexes suited to their organization or

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137 Those that suffer purges or banishment to political prison camps are reinstated from time to time based on the personal feelings of the Supreme Leader. The best example is General Choe Kwang, who was purged from the position of KPA Chief of General Staff in 1968 for his involvement in a military challenge to Kim Il-sung's personal authority. As a fellow anti-Japanese partisan in the 1930s and 1940s, General Choe was not put to death and survived for twenty years in prison. He was rehabilitated and reappointed to the same position in 1988.

138 Anna Fifield and Yoonjung Seo, "N. Korea said to execute top official by antiaircraft gun," *Washington Post*, May 13, 2015.

139 See Collins, *Marked for Life*.

140 "'평양 아파트', 어떻게 지었고 누가 어디 사나" ['Pyongyang Apartments,' How Were They Built and Who Lives Where?], *SBS News*, May 29, 2014.

station in life. Party cadre working in the central Party organs of the KWP live in specific apartment complexes within Pyongyang. Each apartment complex is surrounded by a security fence, and the entrance to each complex is controlled by guards who record the comings and goings of every individual and family member who lives there.<sup>141</sup> As a result of the central Party's housing policies, addresses in Pyongyang are issues of great prestige. As former British Ambassador to North Korea John Everard observed, there is a strict identification of addresses among the social classes of Pyongyang.<sup>142</sup> The more powerful the position or influential the organization a Party member works in, the more prestigious the address and luxurious the accommodations. According to numerous former Party members now living in South Korea, most of the residential compounds are cordoned off from the general public.

Residency in Pyongyang is the pre-eminent privilege in North Korea. Occupying an apartment in Pyongyang is made possible by a combination of power, privilege, and money. The greater the combination of the three is, the better the accommodations are. While residency in Pyongyang is a measure of political success, the type, size, and quality of the assigned or purchased apartment one lives in are also significant. Housing assignments are generally based on class structure and occupation. Moreover, the greater their contribution to the implementation of regime policy, the better housing Party cadre receive.

When one sees what style of housing a North Korean lives in, one can guess the individual's occupation.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, some housing areas are designed to be organizational, where only families of personnel assigned to a specific organization live. Furthermore, apartments in Pyongyang are assigned not only by social status, but also by level of dedication to the regime. For those serving the regime, the quality of housing is directly commensurate to the power they wield within the regime. Just as there are gradations of individual power and influence, there are gradations of quality in housing as well. While the power elite live in excellent housing, some very luxurious, not all housing in Pyongyang is of the highest quality.

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141 The intent is to monitor everyone, regardless of rank, prestige, or position. This information is kept in the police surveillance file for each individual. See Kim Sang-son and Ri Song-hee, *Resident Registration Project Reference Manual* (Pyongyang: MPS Publishing Company, 1993), 143.

142 John Everard, *Only Beautiful, Please*, 1.

143 Chang Pyong-II, "Bukan jumin-ui jutaek iyonggwangye-wa minbeopsang-ui imdaecha gyeyak" [The Status of Housing Use of North Korean Residents and Lease in Civil Law], *Unification Policy Studies* 20.2 (2011): 87-88.

In general, there are five levels of housing in North Korea. However, there are four distinct levels of housing quality that reflect the different levels of the elite within Pyongyang. The highest level, “special-class housing,” is provided to Party vice directors and cabinet officials and above, as well as military generals. Central Committee members and their families live in housing that is essentially the best in North Korea. The power elite live in luxurious apartment complexes that house the senior work force and the families of the more powerful organizations within the regime. The next highest level is “fourth-class housing,” which is comprised of newer high-rise apartments approximately 121-182m<sup>2</sup> in size. Fifteen percent of North Korea’s population lives in fourth-level housing or above.<sup>144</sup> Apartment complexes for the elite are surrounded by high metal fences with gates guarded by personnel in military uniform.<sup>145</sup> The cadre elite live in average quality apartment complexes, while the lowest elite, those of the lower rungs of high *songbun*, live in poor housing that suffers from poor construction, older buildings, and even shanty towns called “moon villages.”<sup>146</sup> While Pyongyang citizens enjoy the privilege of claiming Pyongyang as their residence, whether affluent or poor, those in the provinces cannot enjoy the “Pyongyang privilege.”

Specific locations in Pyongyang are designed to reward higher elites with separate housing areas of higher quality or larger size. Because construction in Pyongyang is organized by streets rather than by districts, special or privileged areas are identified by street names. Some of the more famous residential areas are Changgwang Street, Munsu Street, Gwangbok Street, Tongil Street, Chongchun Street, Ansangtaek Street, Saesalim Street, Tongdaewon Street, and Daehak Street. Kim Jong-il insisted that Pyongyang streets all look like “people’s streets.”<sup>147</sup>

*Please refer to Appendix B.1 for a map of the perspective of Pyongyang and Munsu Street.*

At the top of North Korea’s most privileged is the Kim family. Besides his official residence in Pyongyang, Kim Jong-un has several villas located across the country that were built during Kim

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144 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 51-52.

145 Author’s interviews with former Pyongyang residents.

146 There are rare instances of “lesser” elite succeeding in obtaining high-quality housing. Famous athletes who earn international medals and labor heroes occasionally receive such rewards as a designation of superior performance given by the party-state. The story of Mun Kang-sun is one such example. An orphan at an early age, Mun worked at the Kim Jong-suk Textile Factory for thirteen years from the age of sixteen. At the factory, she exceeded her production quota by 200 percent by operating four or five machines at once. She was awarded an apartment in the new prestigious apartment complex on Changjeon Street. See Jean H. Lee, “Pyongyang glitters but most of NKorea still dark,” *Associated Press*, April 29, 2013.

147 Cho, “Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu,” 237.

Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's rule.<sup>148</sup> While the vast majority of North Koreans live in poverty, satellite images show that there are more than seventy luxury residences and villas for the North Korean leader and the ruling clique.<sup>149</sup> Kim Il-sung's own official residence was turned into his mausoleum after his death in 1994.

*Please refer to Appendix B.2 for a map of the proximity of Eundeok Village to the Iranian Embassy.*

The spectacular villas at Eundeok Village that Kim Jong-il rewarded to his closest friends are an example of how the uppermost elite are given the highest privileges. Eundeok Village is perhaps the most prestigious address in Pyongyang outside of the Kim family residences.<sup>150</sup> In 1992, Kim Jong-il built Eundeok Village, translated as "Favor Village," for thirty of his closest senior advisers at the north end of Munsu Street near the Iranian Embassy on the east bank of the Taedong River in Taedonggang District (*guyeok*),<sup>151</sup> as pictured in Appendix B.2. The occupants include Six Party Talks representative Kim Kye-gwan; KPA Generals Hyon Chol-hae, Kim Myong-kuk, Ri Myong-su, O Kuk-ryol, and Pak Jae-kyong; Kim Jong-il's cousin, Kang Sok-ju, First Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs; and the country's leading nuclear and missile scientists. Eundeok Village has six buildings that are five stories each, and each villa is one hundred *pyong* (3,558 square feet) in size.<sup>152</sup> According to a high-level defector, "only people that order others to work live there, not anybody that actually does work."<sup>153</sup> As can be seen on Google Earth, a trolley line directly connects the KWP central offices to Eundeok Village.

*Please refer to Appendix B.3 for a map of Changgwang Street.*

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148 Han Young-Jin, "Kim Jong Il, Where He Sleeps and Where He Works: Kim Jong Il's Underground Residence and Luxurious Chalets," *Daily NK*, March 15, 2005.

149 "The Luxury Homes of the N.Korean Elite," *The Chosun Ilbo*, January 5, 2011.

150 Mun Byeong-Gi, "北 대동강 옆 호화 빌라촌... '은덕촌'을 아십니까" [Do you know Eundeok Village, the Luxurious Villas next to Taedong River?], *Dong-A Ilbo*, September 27, 2009.

151 A *guyeok* in Pyongyang is the equivalent of a *gu* in Seoul. Both terms refer to an administrative subdivision of a city such as a borough, parish, ward, or district.

152 Mun Byeong-Gi, "北 대동강 옆 호화 빌라촌... '은덕촌'을 아십니까" [Do you know Eundeok Village, the Luxurious Villas next to Taedong River?], *Dong-A Ilbo*, September 27, 2009.

153 An Yong-Hyeon, "포스트 김정일 시대 金씨 왕조는 평양공화국, 두개의 나라 북한, "배급받는 평양 울고, 못받는 지방 가짜눈물" [Kim family regime post-Kim Jong-il is the Pyongyang Republic, a Nation of Two Countries: Pyongyang, which receives supplies, sheds tears, while deprived provinces shed crocodile tears], *The Chosun Ilbo*, December 22, 2011.

KWP department vice directors live on Mansudae Street in units called the vice directors' apartments. Across from the Koryo Hotel are three-story apartment buildings in Dongheung-dong, known as Dongheung-dong General Officers Apartment. KWP Secretariat workers work and live on Changgwang Street. Ministry of the People's Armed Forces (MPAF) general officers live in apartments at Sokbong-dong and Kinjae-dong in Sosong District, and in Kinmaul-dong in Moranbong District. Guard Command officers live in Misan-dong, Daesong District.<sup>154</sup> In general, the rich live on *Chollima* Street, Gwangbok Street, Munsu Street, Ansangtaek Street, and Kyongheung Street.<sup>155</sup>

*Please refer to Appendix B.4 for a closer look at the map of Changgwang Street to see the homes of party workers.*

After the great famine of the 1990s, many houses and apartments were for sale on the black market. At the time, they were on the market for one thousand to ten thousand dollars.<sup>156</sup> Since the turn of the century, house sales have increased dramatically in a country where such sales are theoretically forbidden. In the Mansudae District, euphemistically referred to as “Pyonghattan” or “mini Dubai” due to its ultra-modern housing, new apartments are sold at the highest prices going in Pyongyang. Some go for over \$400,000 on Mansudae District's Changjeon Street.<sup>157</sup> A 900 square foot apartment in Pyongyang worth \$5,000 in the mid-1990s is now worth \$160,000.<sup>158</sup> Pyongyang's elite and new rich brag amongst themselves on who has better accommodations, including marble and wood floors, double windows, high-class curtains, and custom furniture.<sup>159</sup> In far less expensive areas at the other end of the black market, apartments on the lower floors are preferred. Electricity is inconsistent due to blackouts, making apartments on the lower floors more desirable. Upper-story apartments in buildings without elevators go for as little as \$3,000 to \$4,000.<sup>160</sup> The “flipping”

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154 The Guard Command is a military unit that performs the mission of protecting the Supreme Leader and other high-ranking personnel.

155 “‘평양 아파트’, 어떻게 지었고 누가 어디 사나” [‘Pyongyang Apartments,’ How Were They Built and Who Lives Where?], *SBS News*, May 29, 2014.

156 *Ibid.*

157 Hwang Dae-Jin and Kim Myong-Song, “北은 ‘평양 공화국’... 평양엔 시민證, 지방엔 공민證” [North Korea is the Republic of Pyongyang... Citizen IDs in Pyongyang, Resident IDs in the Provinces], *Premium Chosun*, March 19, 2014.

158 Joo Seong-Ha, “‘혁명의 도시’에서 ‘욕망의 도시’로 변한 평양” [Pyongyang Has Changed From the ‘City of the Revolution’ to the ‘City of Greed’], *Dong-A Ilbo*, July 24, 2014.

159 Hong Min, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi” [North Korea's Apartment Construction Market and Urban Politics], *KDI Review of the North Korean Economy* (Aug. 2014): 43.

160 Daniel Tudor and James Pearson, “North Korea is undergoing some startling developments,” *Business Insider*, April 2, 2015.

of apartments, in which apartments are remodeled and then resold for a profit, has also begun under Kim Jong-un's watch.<sup>161</sup> According to several North Korean defectors, the Kim regime has also opened a housing sales office in Pyongyang without fanfare. Information about its existence and effectiveness has spread by word of mouth.<sup>162</sup> This implies that the regime now tolerates the concept of private real estate holdings to some degree, a situation that has not existed since the land reforms of 1946.

*Please refer to Appendix B.5 for a map of new Party housing built by Kim Jong-un.*

In the past fifteen years, all residential construction has been based on national authority, individual wealth, the market, and city bureaucrats. Today, agencies and organizations with significant influence can build large apartment complexes, as they have the ability to access scarce resources. Other new investors use those with money or “Hwakyō” (Korean-Chinese) entrepreneurs. Once apartment complexes are completed, two-thirds of the apartments are allocated according to policy and the remainder is sold.<sup>163</sup> After the turn of the 21st century, the KWP Administration Department began to get involved in apartment construction in a significant way. The immense authority of the Administration Department gave it an advantage in gaining contracts for the MPS and the KWP's Socialist Labor Youth League. The MPAF also became involved in apartment construction. Construction support units include the MPS Korean People's Internal Security Force's (KPISF) Seventh Bureau (guard post construction), Eighth Bureau (road construction and traffic management), Ninth Bureau (special facilities security), 11th Mobile Unit, 324th Guards Brigade, the Pyongyang Subway Operations Bureau, and the 225th Guards Bureau (gold mining). Of these bureaus, the Eighth Bureau is most involved in apartment construction.<sup>164</sup>

The housing domain in North Korea is not exempt from the corruption that is rampant throughout the country. According to one source, if a Pyongyang resident dies, bureaucrats in charge of city housing look for a family outside Pyongyang of the same age and family size who are willing to pay an appropriate bribe to move to Pyongyang.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, if there is sufficient room, individuals can invite a second family, usually their son or daughter's family, to live with them in their

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161 Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 43.

162 Joo Seong-Ha, “평양에 생긴 주택거래소, 사적 소유 인정 신호탄인가” [Housing Market in Pyongyang, the First Sign of Privately-Owned Housing?], *Dong-A Ilbo*, December 16, 2014.

163 Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 44.

164 *Ibid.*, 43.

165 *Ibid.*

Pyongyang apartment. If they have enough money to buy another apartment, they could have the second family move into the assigned apartment.<sup>166</sup>

For those in the provinces, one's *songbun*, economic situation, and the local political situation determine where one lives. Local elite in the provinces usually live near train stations for the convenience of travel to and from Pyongyang. Government workers tend to live on the same street, and markets are usually close by.<sup>167</sup>

### 5.3 Food Security in Pyongyang

Article 25 of North Korea's constitution, as revised in 2009, stipulates "The state shall provide all the working people with every condition for obtaining food, clothing, and housing."<sup>168</sup> However, the quality of food, clothing, and housing one is given depends on one's role in supporting the Kim regime. The greater or more significant an individual's support for the regime, the better the food, clothing, and housing. The prioritization of food to the elite in Pyongyang has been known for a long time, and food distribution is known by international human rights organizations to be a major tool of political control.<sup>169</sup> In 2011, on the same day the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that North Korea was suffering from floods, extreme cold, foot and mouth disease, and high levels of malnutrition, *Reuters* reported that Pyongyang residents were enjoying a "life of luxury."<sup>170</sup> The same article carried Chinese media footage of Pyongyang citizens enjoying a beer drinking party and enjoying themselves at a downtown Pyongyang amusement park riding roller coasters. This lifestyle takes place while the rate of abnormally short children is 50% higher in one provincial city than around Pyongyang.<sup>171</sup> Another survey in 2011 by the World Food Program (WFP), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)

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166 Ibid., 40, note 24.

167 Ibid., 55-57.

168 An unofficial English translation of North Korea's 2009 constitution can be accessed at <http://web.archive.org/web/20100519134107/http://asiamatters.blogspot.com/2009/10/north-korean-constitution-april-2009.html>.

169 Kim Jong-il diverted international humanitarian aid to Pyongyang and its Party elite, as well as the military, to reward those who supported the regime. See Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Hunger and Human Rights: The Politics of Famine in North Korea* (Washington, D.C.: HRNK, 2005); also see Paul French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula: A Modern History*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 107-11.

170 Choi Jeong-Ah, "주민 600만명 굶어죽는데, 평양 특권층 호화 생활" [While 6 Million North Koreans Starve, The Pyongyang Privileged Class Live 'Lives of Luxury'], *DongA.com*, September 3, 2011.

171 Tim Sullivan, "North Korea, The Mystery Of Pyongyang As Oz And The Rest, Forgotten Cities," *Huffington Post*, October 12, 2012.

found Pyongyang to be the most food-secure location in North Korea, “as it has low prevalence of malnutrition and is a major beneficiary of food transfers from surplus counties.”<sup>172</sup> A 2014 WFP report stated that five of seven food factories that the WFP supports have been closed; it is no coincidence that the two remaining operational factories are in downtown Pyongyang.<sup>173</sup> Another example of prioritization to Pyongyang is Russia’s provision to North Korea of 50,000 tons of food aid in August 2011, of which 40,000 tons went to the citizens of Pyongyang. This was a result of Kim Jong-il ordering the Cabinet in 2011 to place the highest priority on resolving Pyongyang’s food and electricity problems.<sup>174</sup>

For decades, the Kim regime has violated Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) by denying food to its citizens.<sup>175</sup> Prior to the great famine of the mid-to-late 1990s, food was unevenly distributed, with an emphasis on provision to the elite. The transportation of food between North Korean provinces takes place by train, and the majority of shipments must first travel through Pyongyang. According to a 2013 FAO-WFP survey, the Ministry of Food Administration and Procurement makes food distribution decisions in Pyongyang.<sup>176</sup> It is not a leap to assume that this Ministry follows Party directives. Moreover, the elite in Pyongyang also receive food produced at farms within political prison camps.<sup>177</sup>

The public distribution system, created by Cabinet Decrees 96 and 102 in November 1957,<sup>178</sup> collapsed during the famine. Recovery efforts failed, leaving those in the provinces to fend for themselves. Those conditions essentially remain today. Citing a WFP report, *Voice of America* has reported that food distribution to ordinary North Korean citizens hit a three-year low in August 2014, with only

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172 WFP, FAO and UNICEF, “Special Report: WFP/FAO/UNICEF Rapid Food Security Assessment Mission To The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” (March 24, 2011), <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp233442.pdf>, 29.

173 Eric Talmadge, “Foreign Food Aid Drying Up in North Korea,” *Associated Press*, April 25, 2014.

174 “N.Korea concentrates efforts, resources in Pyongyang,” *Dong-A Ilbo*, November 14, 2011.

175 North Korea Now, “International Law: International Treaties And Associated Bodies: Understanding The Human Rights Violations Perpetrated In North Korea,” accessed June 11, 2015. <http://www.northkoreanow.org/international-law/>; Natsios, *The Great North Korean Famine*; Haggard and Noland, *Hunger and Human Rights*; Stephen Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Famine in North Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

176 FAO and WFP, “Special Report: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” (November 28, 2013), <http://www.fao.org/docrep/019/aq118e/aq118e.pdf>, 30-31.

177 Yoon, Lee and Han, *Political Prison Camps in North Korea Today*, 335-49.

178 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 53.

250 grams out of a target of 573 grams.<sup>179</sup> An astounding 84.4% of North Korean households suffer from poor or borderline food consumption.<sup>180</sup> A 2013 joint survey by the FAO and the WFP found a “greater percentage of children in Pyongyang had a minimum dietary diversity (59.4 percent) than in any other part of the country, with ranges outside Pyongyang from 15.6 percent in Ryanggang Province to 25.8 percent in South Pyongan Province (including the city of Nampo).”<sup>181</sup>

However, even in Pyongyang, there are gradations of priority depending on how one serves the regime. The lesser elite in Pyongyang do not eat well. According to John Everard, it was apparent that those that he considered “executives,” who carried out the decisions of the senior elite, did not eat well at all.<sup>182</sup> This was also true during the great famine of the 1990s. North Korean defector Kim Chun-Ae explained that when food distribution points closed in Pyongyang during the famine, those at the lower end of Pyongyang’s social pyramid went to the hills to collect grass to eat.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, food prices are remarkably high for the average Pyongyang resident, negating some of the advantage of living in Pyongyang. Prices paid in rural markets compared to Pyongyang’s Tongil market were found by the WFP-FAO-UNICEF joint survey to be extraordinary; “a bundle of spinach that cost KPW [North Korean Won] 20 in rural market was being sold for KPW 1000 in Tongil market—50 times more.”<sup>184</sup>

## 5.4 Privileged Education in Pyongyang

Education, an important avenue of advancement in all societies, is as important in North Korea as it is anywhere else. In a society like North Korea where personal assets are not the primary deter-

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179 “N. Korea's daily food ration hits 3-year low in August,” *Yonhap News*, September 24, 2014.

180 FAO and WFP, “Special Report,” 28.

181 *Ibid.*, 41.

182 John Everard, “The Secret Lives of North Korea,” *The Independent*, January 27, 2013.

183 Eom Jeong-Seop, *Wiseong yeongsangeul hwalyonghan Bukhan juyo dosi-ui jayeonhwangyeong byeonhwajeongbo sujib: Pyongyangsi-reul saryero* [Collecting Information on Changes to the Natural Environment of North Korea’s Key Cities: Pyongyang as a Case Study] (Seoul: Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2012), 52.

184 WFP, FAO and UNICEF, “Special Report,” 21.

minant of social class, education is particularly important.<sup>185</sup> However, the KWP controls access to educational opportunities, thereby limiting social mobility within and across generations.<sup>186</sup>

All educational institutions receive supervision and guidance from the KWP.<sup>187</sup> Although the general North Korean population attends schools in an education system with uniform national standards, the elite in Pyongyang are able to send their children to special schools for the elite from kindergarten onward.<sup>188</sup> Elite families seek entrance for their children to the best kindergartens to secure their childrens' future. Unsurprisingly, the best schools in North Korea are in Pyongyang. Among the best kindergartens are Kyongsang Kindergarten, Pyongyang Changgwang Kindergarten, and Kim Jong-suk Day Care Center.<sup>189</sup> These are located at the traditionally preferred address of Changgwang Street or the newly preferred address of Changjeon Street. Kyongsang Kindergarten gained fame after Kim Jong-un visited it twice. Pyongyang Changgwang Kindergarten is a favorite of Pyongyang's Party committee and central Party cadre because of its proximity to their places of residence.<sup>190</sup>

The best high school in North Korea is Pyongyang Number 1 High School. This school specializes in training the top students in North Korea in math and science. The Party's Science Education Department identifies talented students and channels them into specialized programs to further North Korea's science and technology research, particularly in relation to the defense industries. However, academic success at schools in Pyongyang does not guarantee permanent residence in Pyongyang for oneself or one's family. After their education, the vast majority of scientists move on to defense industry locales, the majority of which are in the provinces.<sup>191</sup>

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185 However, the Western norm of wealth for determining class is gradually becoming an indicator for success, particularly in Pyongyang, and generally narrowed to the elite. The North Korean population, as a whole, is made up of 60-70% lower class, where there is a direct correlation between social class and wealth. There are distinctive parallels between social class and wealth due to opportunity. See Cho et al., *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans*, 38-39.

186 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 67.

187 Vice principals are responsible for schools' Party cells, the Children's League, and the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League. See Hyung-Chan Kim and Dong-Kyu Kim, *Human Remodeling in North Korea: A Social History of Education* (New York: University Press of America, 2005), 226 and 244.

188 Pak Joo-Hee, "북 특권층, 유치원부터 학군 따져" [North Korean Elite Quibble Over Schools Beginning With Kindergarten], *New Focus*, March 21, 2014.

189 Kim Jong-suk was Kim Jong-il's mother.

190 Pak Joo-Hee, "북 특권층, 유치원부터 학군 따져" [North Korean Elite Quibble Over Schools Beginning With Kindergarten], *New Focus*, March 21, 2014.

191 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 65.

The best universities in North Korea are Kim Il-sung University, Kimchaek University of Engineering, Pyongyang University of Foreign Languages, the Kim Il-sung Senior Party School, Pyongyang Foreign Language College, and the International Relations College. A Kim Il-sung University graduate and recent defector, Kang Ji-Hoon, states that North Korean students take pride not in their academic achievement, but in having parents that are from a higher political class. He refers to the family-tree factor as the primary enabler in entrance to a top university.<sup>192</sup> Schools are also important to elite recruitment. According to a 2012 analysis by South Korea's Ministry of Unification, among 106 core cadres in the military and KWP, 35.5 percent were graduates of Kim Il-sung University, Kim Jong-il's alma mater, followed by Kim Jong-un's alma mater Kim Il-sung Military University with 17.7 percent, and Kimchaek University of Technology with 9.7 percent.<sup>193</sup>

There is also a special elite school called the Mangyongdae Revolutionary Academy, which was established near Pyongyang in 1947 at Kim Il-sung's birth site exclusively for the bereaved children of fallen revolutionary fighters in the anti-Japan partisan wars. It also accepts children of revolutionaries and privileged children with revolutionary family backgrounds.<sup>194</sup> Special education for gifted children is only available to those from cadre families. Kim Jong-il is a graduate of this school, and it is likely that his children are also graduates.

Based on Kim Il-sung's instructions, the objectives of education in North Korea are to increase knowledge of modern science and technology, enhance ideological commitment to the regime, and further the people's mental and physical strength for national construction and defense.<sup>195</sup> Nevertheless, the bulk of education is designed to focus on the teachings of Kim Il-sung and to inculcate students against "imperialist aggressors" such as the United States. The regime's intent is not to teach Confucian values but to further its own objectives of revolution, social stability, and subjugation.<sup>196</sup> Core courses at colleges include Kim Il-sung's Revolutionary History, Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's Youth, *Juche* Philosophy, and Psychology.<sup>197</sup> Current curriculum topics in senior and middle school include: The Respected Supreme Leader Generalissimo Kim Il Sung' Revolution-

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192 "North Korean Universities are 'Top-Class'," *New Focus International*, April 26, 2013.

193 Kim Gwang-Su, "김정은 체제 파워엘리트 '김·평·남'" [Kim Il-sung University Graduates and South Pyongan Province Natives Lead the Power Elite of the Kim Jong-un Regime], *Hanguk Ilbo*, July 18, 2012.

194 Kwon Suyoung, "Changes in the Composition and Structures of the North Korean Elite," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 12.2 (2003): 95.

195 Kim and Kim, *Human Remodeling in North Korea*, 225.

196 Unification Education Institute, 2012 *Bukan e-hae*, 234-36.

197 Kim Hae-Won, "북, 당에 충성할 수재교육-차별교육 만연" (North Korea, Gifted Education-Discriminatory Education Is Expanding Based On Loyalty To The Party), *Dailian News*, September 2, 2013. See also Kim and Kim, *Human Remodeling in North Korea*, 222-29.

ary Activities; The Respected Supreme Leader Generalissimo Kim Il Sung's Revolutionary History; The Great Leader Marshal Kim Jong-il's Revolutionary Activities; The Great Leader Marshal Kim Jong-il's Revolutionary History; Communist Morals; and Present Party Policies.<sup>198</sup> A North Korean grammar teacher who defected to the South insists that North Korean education is all about the Party and the Supreme Leader. She states that the twenty teacher's colleges in North Korea are designed to produce professional revolutionaries, and that all teachers attend a six-month military training course with a local training unit. Although the teacher's college runs a three-year curriculum, only one year is devoted to courses on teaching. The rest is spent on military and other public service experience.<sup>199</sup>

North Korean students who have defected to South Korea state that advanced education includes indoctrination. For example, they are taught that the Korean War was started by an American invasion of North Korea.<sup>200</sup> Grade schools teach hatred of the Japanese, while senior and middle schools teach how Americans kill and maim North Koreans.<sup>201</sup> Indoctrination within the North Korean education system also makes use of the omission of information. In an interview, a former factory manager said "I didn't even know the word *Hanguk* when I was in Chosun." *Hanguk* is the South Korean term for Korea, while *Chosun* is the North Korean term for Korea.<sup>202</sup> This is just one example of how isolated the average North Korean is from the rest of the world. The intentional exclusion of information that the regime does not want taught in schools is a major component of the regime's isolationist policies.

*Please refer to Appendix C.1 to see an image of how North Korean children are taught to hate Americans in kindergarten.*

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198 Kim and Kim, *Human Remodeling in North Korea*, 222.

199 Kim Hae-Won, "북, 당에 충성할 수재교육-차별교육 만연" (North Korea, Gifted Education-Discriminatory Education Is Expanding Based On Loyalty To The Party), *Dailian News*, September 2, 2013.

200 Ibid.

201 Kim and Kim, *Human Remodeling in North Korea*, 249.

202 "NK People Speak, 2011," ed. Chris Green. *Daily NK*, 2011. <http://www.nkeconwatch.com/nk-uploads/NK-People-Speak-2011.pdf>.

## 5.5 Affluence in the Pyongyang Republic

Most of the affluent in the Pyongyang Republic live in the Chung, Potonggang, Mansudae, and Mangyongdae districts. They are senior executives employed by the Party, the government, military, and trading companies. According to one source, “[t]he ones who ride a Mercedes and live in gorgeous homes live a life of luxury that is beyond the imagination of the people at the bottom of the pyramid.”<sup>203</sup>

*Please refer to Appendix B.6 for a map to see a map that shows where the rich in Pyongyang live.*

According to a South Korean intelligence official, about 240,000 North Koreans, or one percent of the population, own between \$50,000 and \$100,000 or more in assets, with most living in Pyongyang. The gentry class of the Pyongyang Republic live in 60-70 *pyong* (198-231m<sup>2</sup>) apartments worth between \$30,000 and \$100,000, and hire maids and tutors for their children. This upper class uses foreign products, drinks coffee, and owns pets. They buy Chanel and Dior brand clothes and handbags, dine at expensive restaurants, and exercise at gyms. South Korean government sources also state that there has been a rise in the number of automobiles, stores, and cell phones in North Korea, although this primarily applies to Pyongyang.<sup>204</sup>

*Please refer to Appendix C.2 to see an image of Pyongyang apartments for the elite.*

Kim Jong-il allowed the use of dollars by the privileged class early on. The use of U.S. dollars had been highly restricted up to the early 1990s. The impetus for change came from many directions, but the emergence of *jangmadang* markets during the famine of the 1990s, the preferences of the younger generations, and the inflow of dollars from overseas Koreans, some of which became presents to Kim Jong-il, contributed to this shift. Only hard currency such as U.S. dollars, euros or Chinese renminbi is accepted at these markets.<sup>205</sup> The regime once tried to open foreign currency

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203 Gu Gwang-ho, “Living in Pyongyang - The Real Story (2), Losing the Struggle to Survive Leads to Suicides and Homeless People,” *Rimjin-gang*, August 9, 2013.

204 Hwang Dae-Jin and Kim Myong-Song, “北은 '평양 공화국'... 평양엔 시민證, 지방엔 공민證” [North Korea is the Republic of Pyongyang...Citizen IDs in Pyongyang, Resident IDs in the Provinces], *Premium Chosun*, March 19, 2014. See also “Pyongyang Booms at the Expense of the Rest of N.Korea,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, March 20, 2014.

205 Kate Whitehead, “While the Rest of North Korea Struggles, Pyongyang’s Fortunate Few Go Shopping,” *Time*, August 19, 2013. See also data charts showing new affluence in Pyongyang at “The Pyongyangites of Pyonghattan,” *The Economist*, August 12, 2015. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2015/08/daily-chart-1>.

exchange kiosks in Pyongyang, but they could not compete with individual brokers who did most of the business.<sup>206</sup> In capitalist systems, people expect a response in the local currency when they ask about an item's price. This is not the case in North Korea, especially in Pyongyang. Party and government cadre or officials involved in earning foreign currency do not use the North Korean won when they ask how much something costs. Instead, they use U.S. dollars. For those at the middle level of society, the price is requested in Chinese currency. Only the poor use the local currency when inquiring about prices. The poorest in society ask "how many ears of corn does that cost?" because they have no money.<sup>207</sup>

Today, the elite are able to shop at their own exclusive department stores, of which there are "about ten" in Pyongyang, while shelves are usually empty at department stores in the provinces.<sup>208</sup> While Pyongyang residents shop for world-renowned brand names such as Chanel and Armani, those outside of Pyongyang can only buy low-quality domestic products.<sup>209</sup>

On Ansangtaek Street in Pyongyang there is a Foreign Commodities Store that was formerly operated under Jang Song-taek. At this store, women among the elite can purchase "Chanel stockings at U.S. \$250 per pair and perfumes at around U.S. \$300 per bottle, while men were buying up Rolex watches at more than U.S. \$10,000 a piece."<sup>210</sup> In comparison, an ordinary North Korean can buy two tons of rice or five tons of corn for \$2,000.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, "[a] one-piece dress from U.S. fashion house St. John is in vogue among rich women in Pyongyang ... [and] there is a shortage even though it costs U.S. \$2,000."<sup>212</sup>

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206 Joo Seong-Ha, "평양에 생긴 주택거래소, 사적 소유 인정 신호탄인가" (Housing Market in Pyongyang, the First Sign of Privately-Owned Housing?), *Dong-A Ilbo*, December 16, 2014.

207 So Young-Sok, "북한에는 계급별로 사용하는 돈이 다르다" [In North Korea, different social classes use different money], *New Focus*, April 10, 2014.

208 "강성대국' 앞둔 北, 핵심계층거주 평양 특별대우" [North Korea Tries to Become A Strong and Powerful State While The Core Class Receives Special Treatment in Pyongyang], *Yonhap News*, November 13, 2011.

209 Jang Jin-Bok, "北, 평양-지방 격차확대... '평양공화국' 불만증대" [Gap Between Pyongyang and the Outer Regions in North Korea Is Expanding... Complaints About the Republic of Pyongyang Rising], *Newsis*, November 13, 2011.

210 "Elite North Koreans Buy Out Luxury Shops in Pyongyang," *Radio Free Asia*, September 13, 2013.

211 Kim Min-Seo, "평양 특권층 호화 생활... 명품점엔 2000弗짜리 美원피스 '불티'" [Pyongyang Privileged Class' Luxurious Lifestyle... U.S. One-Piece Dresses Costing \$2,000 Are 'Flying Off the Shelves'], *North Korea Strategy Center*, November 27, 2013.

212 "Elite North Koreans Buy Out Luxury Shops in Pyongyang," *Radio Free Asia*, September 13, 2013.

The Haedanghwa Mall sells world-class luxury items to the Pyongyang power elite and their families. Brand names such as Chanel, Lancome, L’Oreal’s, Cartier, Swarovski, Rolex, and Omega are readily available, as are Italian-designed clothes with suits costing up to \$700. This modern shopping complex also houses “restaurants, karaoke rooms, a massage parlor, sauna, cafe, cyber cafe, billiard hall, hair salon and gym.” None of this was openly allowed before the year 2000, indicating a distinct decision to permit open markets to go far beyond the “Arduous March survival strategies” of the day.<sup>213</sup>

All of this very localized affluence among the Kim regime’s power elite takes place despite the international community’s attempts to curtail such practices. UN Security Council resolutions 1695, 1718, 1874, 2087, and 2094 are designed to target North Korea’s WMD programs, but they also include components that prevent the sales and export of luxury items. However, these sanctions have not been effective. North Korea imported \$644.3 million worth of luxury goods in 2013, which is reportedly more than twice the amount Kim Jong-il imported during his rule.<sup>214</sup> The items include watches, liquor, handbags, cosmetics, jewelry, and carpets. Chinese customs data show that “China exported USD\$77.5 million worth of pearls, precious stones, precious metals and coins to North Korea last year. It also exported \$266.9 million worth of sound and television equipment in 2012, more than triple the amount it sent there in 2007.”<sup>215</sup> This may be because of a lack of willingness to comply with the resolutions by some countries, primarily China, or the skillful manipulation of front companies and illicit trade practices by personnel and organizations specifically commissioned to do so, such as KWP Office 39.<sup>216</sup> It is a safe assumption that luxury items continue to flow into Pyongyang today.

## 5.6 The Poor in Pyongyang

Not everybody in Pyongyang is well off. The less affluent districts of Pyongyang, as identified by former Pyongyang residents in interviews, are shown in the two charts in Appendix A.4 and A.5. The first chart shows that the poor live in the districts of Mangyongdae, Samsok, Tongdaewon,

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<sup>213</sup> “New Pyongyang Mall Breaks Every Capitalist Taboo,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, August 6, 2013.

<sup>214</sup> “N.Korea’s Luxury Goods Imports Soar Despite Sanctions,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, October 8, 2014. See also “Kim Jong-un Spends \$600 Million on Luxury Goods a Year,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, February 19, 2014.

<sup>215</sup> Megha Rajagopalan, “North Korean elite beating sanctions, one plasma TV at a time,” *Reuters*, March 19, 2013.

<sup>216</sup> For more information on the Kim regime’s palace economy, see Paul Kan, Bruce E. Bechtol Jr., and Robert Collins, “Criminal Sovereignty: Understanding North Korea’s Illicit International Activities,” *Strategic Studies Institute* (March 2010).

Ryokpo, Rakrang, and Sonkyo, as well as Sangwon and Kangnam Counties. The second chart shows the ranking of Pyongyang's districts from richest to poorest. Chung District is the most affluent.

Life is difficult for the lesser elite in Pyongyang, many of whom are poor. The difference between the power elite and the lesser elite is extreme. One report from a source in Pyongyang states that ordinary North Koreans are fortunate to earn \$30 per mon, while senior officials make more than \$100 per day through corrupt activities, as those in power prey on the powerless.<sup>217</sup> One report quoting a North Korean defector states that “ten percent of North Koreans are rich, ten percent are middle class and almost 80 percent are poor.”<sup>218</sup>

The lesser elite in Pyongyang live in lesser quality housing, receive less food than the power and cadre elite, enjoy lesser quality healthcare, and work in less desirable jobs. Some live in single-story houses, which can be found in Sadong District, Hyongjesan District, and Utmae-dong in Sonkyo District. These houses are much older than the recently built apartments.<sup>219</sup> Access to food by the poor in Pyongyang, though greater than the provinces in terms of distribution, is not supplemented adequately by wild plant sources from the countryside. With such a large population density, Pyongyang's local mountain areas are developed quickly for the alternative foods such as grasses that those areas normally provide. Prices are higher in Pyongyang, as is the cost of living. Moreover, political control is severe in the capital city, and it is difficult for the average person to engage in market activity. The average Pyongyang resident also has to participate in political event mobilization and street cleaning chores far more than those in the provinces.<sup>220</sup>

*Please refer to Appendix C.3 for an image of housing for the poor in Pyongyang.*

The difficulties of living in Pyongyang as a lesser elite are illustrated in an interview with one Pyongyang resident who lives in a fifteen-story apartment building on Gwangbok Street. He tells of having to go outside at 4am with a bucket to retrieve water from a public spigot. In the winter, he must wait thirty to forty minutes in line. When the electricity is turned off, residents must use

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217 “N.Koreans Tell of Rampant Corruption in Crumbling State,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, July 12, 2014.

218 Ibid.

219 Author's interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

220 Author's interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

the stairs instead of the elevator. On some days, there is no water either. When water is available, residents must store it in a tank to conserve for drinking, personal hygiene, and toilet use.<sup>221</sup>

*Please refer to Appendix C.4 for an image of housing for the “poorer” in Pyongyang.*

There are also beggars in Pyongyang, particularly those orphaned or abandoned children known as *kotchebi*. When asked about the existence of beggars, a mid-ranking Party official in Pyongyang stated:

*Yes, there are. During the day, they cannot walk the streets. That is because they will be caught immediately and taken away. So at night after dark, they wander around for example around the station. In the regions they are left as they are, but things are different in Pyongyang. If you are caught begging dressed in rags, you will be sent to a kotchebi detention camp. This happens in the suburbs as well, not just in the central part of the city. So the kotchebi in Pyongyang are careful about their appearances.<sup>222</sup>*

While privilege varies for different socio-political classifications within Pyongyang—that is, the higher the classification the greater the privilege—the receipt or access to those privileges remains a primary motivator for North Koreans who seek to improve their lifestyle through service to the regime and the Supreme Leader. It is the “cost of doing business” in North Korea.

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221 Republic of Korea Small and Medium Business Administration, “중 언론 ‘금보다 귀한 평양호구’ <평양시민>” [Chinese Media: Pyongyang Citizens Regard Residence in Pyongyang as More Precious than Gold], September 3, 2012.

222 Gu Gwang-ho, “Living in Pyongyang - The Real Story (2), Losing the Struggle to Survive Leads to Suicides and Homeless People,” *Rimjin-gang*, August 9, 2013.

## CHAPTER SIX: LIFE IN THE PYONGYANG REPUBLIC

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Residency in Pyongyang is a major desire of nearly every North Korean. Those in the provinces want to become residents of Pyongyang because of superior living conditions. Supplies of all sorts are greater in Pyongyang, including food, electricity, and water, although these are by no means abundant or consistent. Considerable favoritism in Pyongyang toward the power elite leaves significant numbers of Pyongyang residents with reduced provisions and utilities. Although the poor cannot always participate in market activities, they still feel it is better than living in the provinces.<sup>223</sup> Cultural life in Pyongyang is better as well, since the city offers numerous gyms, museums, ceremonial and functional palaces for the Supreme Leader, playgrounds, and exhibition halls, as well as better schools and entertainment facilities.<sup>224</sup> There is even a 3D movie theater in Pyongyang.<sup>225</sup> Such facilities are rare or non-existent in the provinces.

Pyongyang citizens enjoy the privilege of claiming the capital city as their residence. According to a report by Chinese media, they see residency in Pyongyang as more desirable than being an Olympic gold medalist. This report also states that Pyongyang residents make a distinction between the “Pyongyang Republic” and the “Regional Republics.”<sup>226</sup> The socio-political elite of Pyongyang have little in common with the non-elite of the provinces. However, individuals in both groups pay a price for being North Koreans. Those in the provinces struggle to survive day-to-day under a variety of challenging circumstances as their health deteriorates. Those in Pyongyang flourish at the cost of doing whatever they have to in order to demonstrate loyalty to an unforgiving system centered on the Supreme Leader. Neither of these groups is permitted to experience the human rights ostensibly guaranteed by their constitution, since the constitution is more a document for external advertisement than a meaningful guarantor of individual rights.<sup>227</sup>

There are a number of aspects of residency in Pyongyang that make it unusual. These include: the disparity of the elite classes in terms of differences between socio-political rankings; the socio-political requirements for residency; affluence versus poverty; water shortages and selective and

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223 Author's interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

224 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 66.

225 Yoo Un-Sil, “평양과 지방의 차이” [Gap Between Pyongyang and the Outer Regions], Ministry of Unification (blog), January 21, 2014, <http://blog.unikorea.go.kr/3928>.

226 Republic of Korea Small and Medium Business Administration, “중 언론 ‘금보다 귀한 평양호구’ <평양시민>” [Chinese Media: Pyongyang Citizens Regard Residence in Pyongyang as More Precious than Gold], September 3, 2012.

227 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 400-403.

rolling blackouts;<sup>228</sup> requirements for parade and rally attendance; and uneven food distribution. One cannot live in Pyongyang if one has a low socio-political background or a criminal record. Other than these factors, complete loyalty to the Supreme Leader, and the proper individual and family *songbun* (socio-political classification), there are no special rules for Pyongyang residents.<sup>229</sup>

## 6.1 Residency Requirements

Any individual moving into Pyongyang must obtain permission from the appropriate authorities. According to the Pyongyang City Management Law, all Pyongyang residents are required to register with the Pyongyang City People's Committee and other relevant authorities to reside in Pyongyang.<sup>230</sup> To obtain residence in Pyongyang, the KWP or one's place of work must issue a cadre order or labor deployment certificate from the Ministry of Labor. Former Pyongyang residents state that the KWP certificate is better than the Ministry of Labor certificate. When citizens receive housing, the Housing Assignment Section of the City Management Bureau of the local People's Committee presents them a National Housing Utilization Permission Certificate. The citizen must pass an examination concerning his or her *songbun*, residency registration, occupation, marriage status, family revolutionary history status, political organization affiliation, and criminal record.<sup>231</sup>

In general, all North Korean citizens receive a citizenship identification card. However, Pyongyang residents receive a separate Pyongyang identification card. This became domestic law when the SPA passed the Citizens Registration Law on November 26, 1997.<sup>232</sup> Temporary Pyongyang residency permits, which are different from Pyongyang identification cards, are issued to university students, Pyongyang Number 1 High School students,<sup>233</sup> soldiers stationed in Pyongyang, government workers, and economic enterprise workers temporarily deployed to Pyongyang. All have specifically assigned dates of validity.<sup>234</sup> Those individuals with a Pyongyang identification card can

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228 Only a few housing complexes for the power elite always have electrical power.

229 Author's interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

230 Sudo Pyongyang-si gwalli-beob [Pyongyang City Management Law], Art. 1. Republic of Korea Unification Law Database, last updated August 12, 2014. [http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttlId=222&bbsId=BBSMSTR\\_00000000021](http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttlId=222&bbsId=BBSMSTR_00000000021).

231 Ryu Kyong-Won, *Jutaekgeorae-wa geu bujeongbupae-ui naemak* [Inside Story on Housing Deals and Related Corruption] (Seoul: Rimjingang Publishing, 2007), 13.

232 Cho Jung-Hyon et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2013* (Seoul: KINU, 2013), 235, note 187.

233 Students at this school are the most talented in the country. Students that excel in math and science are brought to this school to receive the best possible education.

234 Cho et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2013*, 235, note 188.

travel to the provinces with little difficulty, but those from outside Pyongyang must obtain an entry permit to visit the capital.<sup>235</sup>

Every resident of Pyongyang must obtain a Pyongyang identification card at the age of 17. This parallels the requirement of every 17 year-old in North Korea obtaining an identification card. Since the MPS issues the Pyongyang identification card, the MPS Resident Registration Section chief has enormous influence on the process of moving to and residing in Pyongyang.<sup>236</sup> Pyongyang residents must uphold all national policies at all times. Should they violate national laws, their Pyongyang identification card is confiscated.<sup>237</sup>

Marriage issues, physical disabilities, and committing a crime—even misdemeanors—are all barriers to residency in Pyongyang. Marrying a spouse who lived in Pyongyang was formerly a route to Pyongyang residency, but this is no longer the case, as the regime’s policy has become stricter. Anyone living in Pyongyang marrying someone in the provinces is forced to move to the provinces, although this is likely not true of the power elite. Those with physical disabilities are generally not permitted to live in Pyongyang or other cities visited by foreign tourists. The disabled are branded as “deformed” or “cripples” and expelled from the city along with their families.<sup>238</sup> North Korea’s constitution includes healthcare provisions for disabled persons,<sup>239</sup> but these provisions carry little weight in reality.<sup>240</sup>

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235 Joo Seong-Ha, “평양공화국의 이중생활” [Republic of Pyongyang’s Double Life], *Dong-A Ilbo*, June 24, 2010.

236 Author’s interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

237 Pyongyang City Management Law, Art. 30-32. Republic of Korea Unification Law Database, last updated August 12, 2014. [http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttId=222&bbsId=BBSM-STR\\_00000000021](http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttId=222&bbsId=BBSM-STR_00000000021).

238 Seol Song-Ah, “No Concept of Welfare for the Disabled in NK,” *Daily NK*, December 4, 2014.

239 An unofficial English translation of North Korea’s 2009 constitution can be accessed at <http://web.archive.org/web/20100519134107/http://asiamatters.blogspot.com/2009/10/north-korean-constitution-april-2009.html>; see Art. 72 on healthcare for the disabled.

240 See Do Kyung-Ok et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2015* (Seoul: KINU, 2015), 204 and 402-25. As presented in this very credible report, there is conflicting testimony on the existence, or at least national policy on existence, of disabled persons living in Pyongyang. It is highly likely that a family’s political position in Pyongyang serves as sufficient influence for a disabled family member to live in Pyongyang.

## 6.2 Wealth Disparity

Life in Pyongyang offers significant advantages over the life in the provinces. Prices for goods and services in Pyongyang are similar to that found in China's three northeastern provinces. Housing construction using private, civilian capital is "booming," and the gap between the haves and have-nots is rapidly expanding. The construction of the Mirim Equestrian Club in Pyongyang is another indication of the gap between the rich and poor, which is primarily a gap between the power elite and those in the provinces.<sup>241</sup> Other newer entertainment facilities include Munsu Water Park on Munsu Street and Rungra Theme Park. These venues influence the power elite to support the Kim Jong-un regime. When inspecting the construction of Munsu Water Park in 2013, Kim Jong-un stated that "We must give every effort to constructing Pyongyang City to be big, bright and beautiful as befitting the capital of the revolution and a civilized socialist country."<sup>242</sup>

Please refer to Appendix C.5 for an image of the Mirim Equestrian Club in Pyongyang and Appendix C.6 for an image of the Munsu Water Park.

For many, life in Pyongyang is saddled with significant challenges.<sup>243</sup> According to John Everard, "Westerners would find the lives led by the majority of Pyongyang inhabitants numbingly boring."<sup>244</sup> The greatest privilege the poor of Pyongyang receive for their dedication to the regime is residency

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241 Kim Min-Seo, "[한반도 리포트] 평양 특권층 호화 생활... 명품점엔 2000弗짜리 美원피스 '불티'" [Pyongyang Privileged Class' Luxurious Lifestyle... U.S. One-Piece Dresses Costing \$2,000 Are 'Flying Off the Shelves'], *Segye Ilbo*, November 26, 2013.

242 Hwang Dae-Jin and Kim Myong-Song. "北은 '평양 공화국'... 평양엔 시민證, 지방엔 공민證" [North Korea is the Republic of Pyongyang... Citizen IDs in Pyongyang, Resident IDs in the Provinces]. *Premium Chosun*, March 19, 2014. These words were apparently taken from a speech Kim Il-sung made in July 1958 in preparation for the 15th anniversary of Korean liberation in 1960. See Cho, "Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu," 221.

243 According to one Pyongyang resident, "[e]ven in Pyongyang, there are suicides by people who lose the struggle to survive. They have no means of making a living. Once you run out of money, you sell your TV or clothes or chest of drawers or other household goods. After you have sold everything off, then you have nothing to exchange for food. Those kinds of people commit suicide. One family had nothing more they could do, so they decided to have one last feast then die. So they went to the *jangmadang* [marketplace] and bought rice and meat and other foods on credit and feasted on it, then mixed rat poison in the final dish and ate it. But they didn't die. That's because the rat poison they had bought was fake. They weren't able to die, and from the following day they just had more debt. There was a family like that in my neighborhood." See Gu Gwang-ho, "Living in Pyongyang - The Real Story (2), Losing the Struggle to Survive Leads to Suicides and Homeless People," *Rimjin-gang*, August 9, 2013.

244 John Everard, *Only Beautiful, Please*, 1.

in Pyongyang. Their housing is not as luxurious as that of the power elite, and they face electricity and water shortages.<sup>245</sup> Their food supply is somewhat steady, although by no means plentiful. The family leader is invariably a Party member, but family members may not be. Family privilege is based upon the status of the family leader, who is usually the father. The mother tries to make money on the side through small business efforts. Healthcare and education are commensurate with status and position, and the poor receive far lower quality healthcare. Occupational security is directly related to privilege through one's socio-political standing and is critically important for the whole family. Nevertheless, the privileges of these lesser elite are regarded by the average North Korean as something to be envied.

### 6.3 Public Services & Utilities

Although Pyongyang generally has better healthcare than the provinces, tuberculosis is a major problem. According to Stephen Linton, Founder and Chairman of the Eugene Bell Foundation that does considerable humanitarian work in North Korea, “Pyongyang is the worst place [for tuberculosis incidence] in the country and their relative economic advantage has also given them the opportunity to develop an MDR [multi-drug resistant tuberculosis], and they are dying.”<sup>246</sup> A number of foreign organizations such as the WHO, Stanford University, Christian Friends of Korea, and the Eugene Bell Foundation have established offices in Pyongyang to try and resolve the rampant spread of tuberculosis throughout the country.

In a country where winters can be especially harsh, most Pyongyang residents face difficult times in the winter when heating their home or apartment. Most apartments are designed to use hot water heated by electricity at thermoelectric power plants for heating, but these power plants are not always operational. Living in the center of Pyongyang, where most cadre reside, does not provide opportunities for alternative sources of heating, such as collecting and burning firewood from the countryside. Some try to change the structure of their homes to use coal if they have the means to buy coal. However, the average Pyongyang resident does not have these funds, and suffers from

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245 The Bureau of Electricity Distribution plays a major role in distributing electricity in North Korea. People who want to use electricity beyond allotment must pay a bribe to receive a supply of electricity. Since there is no system of electricity rates in North Korea, if the electricity distribution office doesn't receive bribes, then their life is hard. However, the only people who pay the bribe are those that can afford it. See No Jeong-Min, “암흑 속 신의주, 전력 사정 악화” [Sinuiju in Darkness as Power Situation Worsens], *Radio Free Asia*, August 28, 2015.

246 Cho Chung-Un, “Koreas One in TB Fight,” *Korea Herald*, December 1, 2012.

inadequate heating.<sup>247</sup> During the winter, the lack of electricity in most Pyongyang housing requires people to cover themselves in a blanket, just like the majority of North Koreans in the provinces.<sup>248</sup>

Water in Pyongyang is also in shortage. The Kim Jong-un regime has prioritized water provision to Munsu Water Park and Rungra Theme Park, regarded as legacies of Kim Jong-un, over housing complexes in central Pyongyang.<sup>249</sup> This affects not only the lesser elite of Pyongyang, but also the cadre elite.

## 6.4 Law & Order in Pyongyang

There are strict policies within the city to maintain order. Although there are no areas where residents are restricted from going in Pyongyang, housing complexes, factories, enterprises, and official buildings are fenced off with sentries posted at the entrances to control access.<sup>250</sup>

Traffic is highly restricted in Pyongyang, and major thoroughfares have lanes designated for the elite and their organizations. The majority of cars in Pyongyang belong to the KWP, SSD, MPS, or MPAF and their officials. License plates beginning with “01” are for cars of KWP Central Committee members who serve as Party secretaries or Party department and government ministry directors and deputy directors. Those that start with “02” belong to KWP Central Committee section chiefs. Those that start with “03”-“06” belong to the Guard Command. “07” belongs to the KWP Operations Department, which is now part of the RGB. “11” license plates belong to provincial, city and country Party committees. “13” license plates belong to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. License numbers “15” through “17” belong to the MPS at the provincial, city, and country levels respectively. License numbers “18” through “20” belong to the SSD at the provincial, city and country levels respectively. License numbers beginning with “21” belong to court judges and prosecutors, whereas license numbers “22” through “50” are reserved for economic enterprises.<sup>251</sup>

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247 Lee Sang-Yong, “Residents in NK Devise Own Methods to Survive Harsh Winters,” *Daily NK*, December 1, 2014.

248 Joo Seong-Ha, “평양공화국의 이중생활” [Republic of Pyongyang’s Double Life], *Dong-A Ilbo*, June 24, 2010.

249 Lee Sang-Yong, “Munsu Saturated While Homes Run Dry,” *Daily NK*, October 30, 2014.

250 Author’s interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

251 Jeon, *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukan-ui sahoe-wa munhwa*, 133-34.

Committing crimes in Pyongyang holds the potential for serious consequences. According to a *Rimjin-gang* reporter living in Pyongyang:

*There are often cases where residents are banished for next to no reason at all. If you commit a crime, you are banished immediately. Be it a financial crime or a political crime, in all cases you are banished. It's much stricter than in the regions [provinces]. So everyone is constantly careful about how they act and what they say. And because everyone is scared of being banished, the crime rate is lower than in the regions. The surveillance of residents is much stricter. Being banished from Pyongyang to the regions is a major, earth-shattering event, and signifies one's downfall socially.*<sup>252</sup>

The regime frequently carries out initiatives to find those that can be banished from Pyongyang.<sup>253</sup>

## 6.5 Public Mobilization

Demonstrations of loyalty are a constant imperative in the Pyongyang Republic. There is constant fear of the pervasive internal security networks. People are afraid of the Party, SSD, MPS, and KPA in that order.<sup>254</sup> An example of demonstrating loyalty is crying on cue to express their loyalty to the Supreme Leader. The intent is to show trust that the Supreme Leader will solve their problems, whether food security, healthcare shortages, or otherwise.<sup>255</sup> Along with the privilege of being a Pyongyang resident comes the burden of supporting parades and ceremonies as commonly shown on North Korean media.<sup>256</sup> A typical example is War Victory Day, a celebration of North Korea's "victory" during the Korean War celebrated on July 27.<sup>257</sup> Pyongyang residents

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252 Gu Gwang-ho, "Living in Pyongyang - The Real Story (3), Pyongyang City Shrinking," *Rimjin-gang*, August 11, 2013.

253 See discussion of Supreme Leader Directives in Chapter Eight.

254 Author's interviews with medium mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

255 Republic of Korea Small and Medium Business Administration, "중 언론 '금보다 귀한 평양호구' <평양시민>" [Chinese Media: Pyongyang Citizens Regard Residence in Pyongyang as More Precious than Gold], September 3, 2012.

256 Residents also have to complete cleaning chores on their local street and at living compounds. These efforts are organized and supervised by the local neighborhood chief (*inminbanjang*), an employee of the Party-state.

257 Author's interview with Mr. K. Also see Lee Jung-Hyun, "북, 군'열병식'훈련 지원에 허리 휘는 평양 시민들" [Supporting Army Parades a Heavy Burden for Pyongyang Residents], *NKRadio.org*, July 25, 2013.

are required to provide meals for attending soldiers at parades. This is organized through the Women's League, which provides 10,000 meals daily to soldiers training for the parade in Pyongyang at Mirim Airfield.<sup>258</sup>

The central Party and the Pyongyang People's Committee Events Section organize local mobilization in Pyongyang for public event participation, which is mandatory for every citizen. Different organizations get involved depending on the event. At major parades for national events, an organizing committee is established months ahead of time. Specific Party offices decide how many people are required and which districts and organizations in Pyongyang are to be mobilized. The Party decides when, where, and how to mobilize citizens. Local administrators lead event mobilization, but they operate under Party control. The SSD and MPS check everybody's identification cards on site to ensure that those of poor *songbun* cannot attend. The Party organizes parades and military demonstrations, while local administrators arrange event details. All organizations, factories, and district offices obey Party directives.<sup>259</sup> Whenever a directive is received, work is stopped and people are mobilized. North Koreans find these events boring and dislike them, but they have no choice. Workers' unions can organize at their work place and go straight to the event location instead of reporting for work.

## 6.6 Demographics of Pyongyang

Pyongyang was three times the size of Seoul in geographic terms prior to 2010, but it has always been less populous than Seoul. The primary reason for the greater land area was the inclusion of four counties that served as agricultural zones to support the food needs of Pyongyang residents. Pyongyang residents numbered 450,000 in 1949, one million in 1960, 1,842,000 in 1980, 2,355,000 in 1987, and 3,289,000 in May 1990, comprising 15.2 percent of the entire population of North Korea in 1990.<sup>260</sup>

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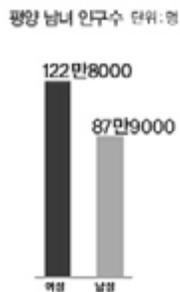
July 27 is when the Armistice Agreement between the Commander of the UN Command, the Commander of the Chinese People's Volunteers, and the Supreme Commander of the KPA was signed in 1953.

258 Lee Jung-Hyun, “북, 군‘열병식’훈련 지원에 허리 휘는 평양 시민들” [Supporting Army Parades a Heavy Burden for Pyongyang Residents], *NKRadio.org*, July 25, 2013.

259 Author's interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

260 Cho, “Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu,” 208.

Comparison of females  
(1,228,000) to males  
(879,000) in Pyongyang



According to UN data, Pyongyang had a population of 2,581,076 in 2008.<sup>261</sup> According to North Korea's 2008 census, Pyongyang maintained 813,957 households with 1,549,721 males and 1,705,667 females, for a total population of 3,255,388.<sup>262</sup> In 1981, Pyongyang had a population of 2,180,000. In 1965, the population was 1,221,300. In 1945, at the time of liberation from Japanese colonialism, the population was under 400,000.<sup>263</sup> Despite being devastated during the Korean War, the rapid expansion at the outset of the DPRK is an indicator of how the party-state focused on the development of the centralized socialist system.

In October 2011, the *Weekly Chosun* obtained a copy of a North Korean internal security document called the “North Korean State Security Department’s Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents.”<sup>264</sup> Although the data cannot be independently confirmed, the significance of this document is that it is a profile of Pyongyang residents compiled by North Korea’s top security agency. There are other sources addressing the number of residents in Pyongyang, but none of them include such detailed information.<sup>265</sup>

The information was originally obtained by South Korea’s National Intelligence Service, which collected intelligence on the Sino-North Korean border and secured a data file the SSD created in 2005. The file lists Pyongyang’s population as 2,108,032 residents over the age of 17, and includes each individual resident’s name, date of birth, address, and other personal data. However, soldiers stationed in Pyongyang and the North Korean elite class, which includes the ruling Kim family and

261 United Nations Statistics Division, “8. Population of capital cities and cities of 100 000 or more inhabitants: latest available year, 1994–2013,” in *Demographic Yearbook 2013*, 25. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2013/Table08.pdf>.

262 United Nations Statistics Division, “Preliminary results of the 2008 Census of Population of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea conducted 1-15 October 2008.” [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010\\_PHC/North\\_Korea/2008\\_North\\_Korea\\_Census.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/North_Korea/2008_North_Korea_Census.pdf).

263 Jan Lahmeyer, “Populstat: North Korea—Urban Population,” University of Utrecht, August 27, 2004, <http://www.populstat.info/Asia/nkoreat.htm>.

264 Kim Dae-Hyun, “北 보위부 작성 평양 성인 210만명 신상정보 단독 입수” [North Korean State Security Department’s Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents], *Weekly Chosun*, October 17, 2011. The remainder of this chapter, including all charts and graphs, is a close translation of this article from Korean into English. The content is used here with the permission of the author.

265 Interestingly, high-ranking North Korean refugees now living in the Republic of Korea have confirmed through this data that their parents were still alive even though others told them that their parents had passed away.

is estimated to be about 10,000, are excluded from this data. According to assessments by intelligence sources, even if one includes Pyongyang residents that are not registered in this data, Pyongyang's population would not have exceeded 2.6 million at the time.<sup>266</sup>

This is the first time that detailed administrative data on the adult population of Pyongyang collected by the North Korean authorities has been exposed to the outside world. The file not only includes their name, date of birth, and address, but also each resident's party affiliation, hometown, present address, spouse name and marriage date, workplace and position, blood type, and nationality. In particular, data on workplace and position is further classified into civil servant, doctor, nurse, Socialist Labor Youth League member, laborer, agricultural worker, or student. Those from among Pyongyang residents that entered the military or were serving as soldiers in other areas were also included.

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266 Kim Dae-Hyun, “北 보위부 작성 평양 성인 210만명 신상정보 단독 입수” [North Korean State Security Department's Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents], *Weekly Chosun*, October 17, 2011.

Table 2: Population of Pyongyang by District<sup>267</sup>

	<u>District</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Male %</u>	<u>Female %</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Mangyongdae</u>	<u>209,901</u>	<u>86,568</u>	<u>123,333</u>	<u>41.242</u>	<u>58.758</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Rankrang</u>	<u>191,238</u>	<u>82,633</u>	<u>108,605</u>	<u>43.210</u>	<u>56.790</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Taedonggang</u>	<u>158,684</u>	<u>68,462</u>	<u>90,222</u>	<u>43.144</u>	<u>56.856</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Kangdong</u>	<u>135,920</u>	<u>57,967</u>	<u>77,953</u>	<u>42.648</u>	<u>57.352</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>Ryongsong</u>	<u>135,633</u>	<u>52,450</u>	<u>83,183</u>	<u>38.671</u>	<u>61.329</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>Pyongchon</u>	<u>129,586</u>	<u>56,805</u>	<u>72,781</u>	<u>43.836</u>	<u>56.164</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>Sonkyo</u>	<u>99,953</u>	<u>42,880</u>	<u>57,073</u>	<u>42.900</u>	<u>57.100</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>Hyongjesan</u>	<u>99,342</u>	<u>39,104</u>	<u>60,238</u>	<u>39.442</u>	<u>60.758</u>
<u>9</u>	<u>Sosong</u>	<u>95,615</u>	<u>38,902</u>	<u>56,713</u>	<u>40.686</u>	<u>59.314</u>
<u>10</u>	<u>Moranbong</u>	<u>91,925</u>	<u>36,756</u>	<u>55,169</u>	<u>39.985</u>	<u>60.015</u>
<u>11</u>	<u>Sadong</u>	<u>88,503</u>	<u>36,208</u>	<u>52,295</u>	<u>40.912</u>	<u>59.088</u>
<u>12</u>	<u>Dongdaewon</u>	<u>83,154</u>	<u>35,772</u>	<u>47,382</u>	<u>43.019</u>	<u>56.981</u>
<u>13</u>	<u>Taesong</u>	<u>73,865</u>	<u>30,461</u>	<u>43,404</u>	<u>41.239</u>	<u>58.761</u>
<u>14</u>	<u>Potonggang</u>	<u>71,251</u>	<u>29,406</u>	<u>41,845</u>	<u>41.271</u>	<u>58.729</u>
<u>15</u>	<u>Chung</u>	<u>65,933</u>	<u>29,129</u>	<u>36,804</u>	<u>44.180</u>	<u>55.820</u>
<u>16</u>	<u>Sunan</u>	<u>60,725</u>	<u>24,243</u>	<u>36,482</u>	<u>39.923</u>	<u>60.077</u>
<u>17</u>	<u>Sangwon</u>	<u>54,262</u>	<u>22,337</u>	<u>31,925</u>	<u>41.165</u>	<u>58.835</u>
<u>18</u>	<u>Ryokpo</u>	<u>52,704</u>	<u>22,271</u>	<u>30,433</u>	<u>42.257</u>	<u>57.743</u>
<u>19</u>	<u>Seungho</u>	<u>52,616</u>	<u>22,193</u>	<u>30,432</u>	<u>42.172</u>	<u>57.828</u>
<u>20</u>	<u>Chunghwa</u>	<u>45,774</u>	<u>17,594</u>	<u>28,180</u>	<u>38.437</u>	<u>61.563</u>
<u>21</u>	<u>Kangnam</u>	<u>44,652</u>	<u>20,055</u>	<u>24,597</u>	<u>44.914</u>	<u>55.086</u>
<u>22</u>	<u>Samsok</u>	<u>37,703</u>	<u>14,841</u>	<u>22,862</u>	<u>39.363</u>	<u>60.637</u>
<u>23</u>	<u>Unjong</u>	<u>29,093</u>	<u>12,497</u>	<u>16,596</u>	<u>42.955</u>	<u>57.045</u>
<u>Total</u>		<u>2,108,032</u>	<u>879,534</u>	<u>1,228,507</u>	<u>41.727</u>	<u>58.273</u>

267 Kim Dae-Hyun, “北 보위부 작성 평양 성인 210만명 신상정보 단독 입수” [North Korean State Security Department’s Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents], *Weekly Chosun*, October 17, 2011.

## 평양과 서울 인구 분석

Pyongyang and  
Seoul Population  
Comparison

■ 평양 Pyongyang  
■ 서울 Seoul

평균연령 Age



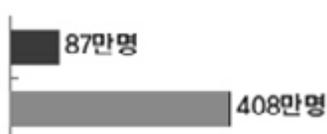
결혼연령 Marriage



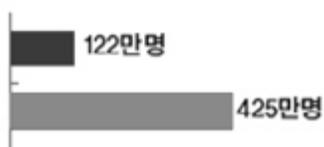
인구수 Population



남성인구 Male Numbers



여성인구 Female Numbers



These data were collected through the Resident Registration Card program on September 9, 2004.<sup>268</sup> As of this date, all Pyongyang residents were issued new citizenship cards. The data include residents of four administrative districts that were re-zoned out of Pyongyang city limits in 2013. According to South Korea's Ministry of Unification, the exclusion of Kangnam County, Chunghwa County, Sangwon County, and Seungho District from Pyongyang's city limits resulted in the reduction of the Pyongyang population by approximately 500,000. However, according to other sources accessed by the *Weekly Chosun*, in 2005 the population of these four districts was 197,000. The difference between these two figures cannot be reconciled even if one accounts for the exclusion of children from the SSD's file.<sup>269</sup>

Among Pyongyang's population of 2.1 million, there are 1.22 million females and 870,000 males. The gender ratio is 71 males for every 100 females, and there is no district in Pyongyang where males outnumber females. In Seoul, the ratio is 96 males to 100 females among adults, according to South Korean government statistics from 2010. This is a clear difference between Seoul and Pyongyang. It is difficult to know the exact reason for the gender imbalance in Pyongyang, but the *Weekly Chosun* assesses that it may be due to individuals who are on active military duty and deployed outside

268 The Resident Registration Bureau under the Ministry of People's Security (MPS), North Korea's national police, conducts the Resident Registration Card program. See Collins, *Marked For Life*, 39.

269 Kim Dae-Hyun, "北 보위부 작성 평양 성인 210만명 신상정보 단독 입수" [North Korean State Security Department's Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents], *Weekly Chosun*, October 17, 2011.

Pyongyang. According to testimony by former Pyongyang residents, after liberation in 1945, so many men served in the military in areas outside Pyongyang that it was difficult to see males in the city. Another factor is that women are frequently mobilized for public events in Pyongyang. According to a high-level North Korean cadre in his 40s who left Pyongyang in 2007, “more than six out of ten Pyongyang residents were female. Pyongyang was primarily populated by cadre. Many men were deployed outside of Pyongyang city limits, while a large number of women were mobilized for events held in Pyongyang, resulting in the gender imbalance.”<sup>270</sup>

### Political Party Affiliation in Pyongyang



Another characteristic of Pyongyang’s adult population is that the average age is higher than that of Seoul. Based on analysis of this data, the average age of the adult population over 17 years of age is 47. In comparison, the average age of the adult residents of Seoul over 18 years of age is 44. The age difference is also related to the gender ratio. The average age of a male marrying for the first time in Pyongyang is 27, which is three years younger than the same average age in Seoul. Eighty percent of Pyongyang adults are registered as married. This is different from South Korean society, where the number of unmarried and single adults is rapidly rising.

Unmarried persons account for 20% of Pyongyang’s adult population at 410,000, and most of them are under the age of 27. Divorced adults make up only one percent of the city’s population at 21,000. Numerous North Korean refugees state that “recently, family instability is on the rise in North Korea and the divorce rate is going up accordingly. As a result, the re-marriage rate is also on the rise.” The divorce rate in Seoul was five percent in 2010.<sup>271</sup>

One third of Pyongyang’s adult population held membership in the KWP, totaling 830,000 residents. About 41.5% of the KWP membership lives in Pyongyang.<sup>272</sup> The 1.28 million who are not Party members are likely Party member candidates or Party members’ family members. They participate in activities of lower-level political organizations, such as the Women’s League and the Farmer-Laborer League, before becoming KWP members. Most family heads who are Pyongyang residents

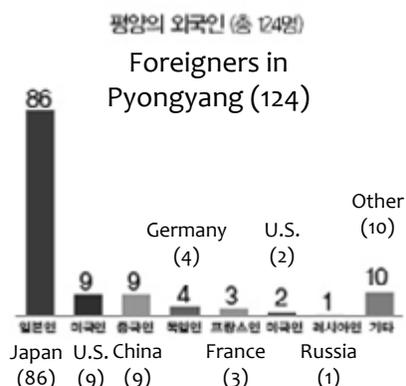
270 Kim Dae-Hyun, “北 보위부 작성 평양 성인 210만명 신상정보 단독 입수” [North Korean State Security Department’s Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents], *Weekly Chosun*, October 17, 2011.

271 Ibid.

272 This figure is inconsistent with many other estimates, which put total KWP membership at 3.2 million, meaning one-fourth of the membership lives in Pyongyang if the 830,000 figure is accurate.

are KWP members and identify socially as such more than any other area in North Korea.<sup>273</sup> One North Korean defector born in Pyongyang stated that it is difficult to live in Pyongyang unless one is a Party member. He also stated that even if one is not a Party member, many are in the process of becoming Party members, which is seen as an honorable thing. Consequently, the majority of Pyongyang residents can be considered Party members. The data also shows that Pyongyang is heavily populated with residents originally from Pyongan Province and Hamgyong Province. Those who were born and raised in the city make up only half of the population. This shows that those from other regions of North Korea who are regarded as loyal continue to move into Pyongyang.<sup>274</sup>

Interestingly, the file also lists four parties other than the KWP. Among Pyongyang residents, the second largest Party by membership is the South Korean Workers' Party, with 108 registered members. The Communist Party has 106 members. There are fifty-two Pyongyang residents that are Chong-u Party members and eight people are members of the Democratic Party.<sup>275</sup> These are “front” political parties designed to demonstrate political diversity and liaison with parties from other countries.



According to this document, there are 124 foreigners living in Pyongyang. This includes people from the U.S., Japan, China, Russia, the Czech Republic, Canada, France, and Lebanon. Among them, Japanese nationals make up the largest group at eighty-six residents, and there is at least one individual from most European countries. Among the foreigners living in Pyongyang, there are thirty-four males and seventy-eight females.<sup>276</sup>

It was widely believed that all adult Pyongyang residents held occupations, but the data reveal otherwise. The number of women whose occupation was listed as “housewife” was not insignificant, and those over the age of 70 were listed as retired. In some cases, the details of an individual’s

273 Kim Dae-Hyun, “北 보위부 작성 평양 성인 210만명 신상정보 단독 입수” [North Korean State Security Department’s Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents], *Weekly Chosun*, October 17, 2011.

274 Ibid.

275 Ibid. The Chong-u Party is a party with religious ties.

276 Ibid. This likely excludes foreign diplomats residing in Pyongyang.

position and title were omitted. For example, the North Korean Chief of Central Broadcasting was not listed by his full title but merely as an office worker.<sup>277</sup>

Lastly, there are 126 Pyongyang residents who are over the age of 100. The oldest is Rim Su-ok, a grandmother who is 109 years old. Although the data were compiled around a decade ago, it is reasonable to assume that there are still a large number of Pyongyang residents who are over 100 years old.

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277 Kim Dae-Hyun, “北 보위부 작성 평양 성인 210만명 신상정보 단독 입수” [North Korean State Security Department’s Demographic Data of 2,100,000 Pyongyang Residents], *Weekly Chosun*, October 17, 2011.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: BUILDING THE PYONGYANG REPUBLIC

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There is an interesting comparison of how the three North Korean leaders have approached the physical and ideological construction of Pyongyang. Under Kim Il-sung, North Korea became the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Under Kim Jong-il, North Korea became the "Pyongyang Republic." Under Kim Jong-un, North Korea has become the "Republic of Changjeon Street."<sup>278</sup>

This chapter discusses each North Korean leader's impact on Pyongyang, assesses faulty construction in Pyongyang, and provides an overview of the Pyongyang City Management Law. The city's evolution over the past seven decades from a regional capital into the "face of the revolution" required resource prioritization to the city on a national scale, with far-reaching consequences for human rights in terms of food security and the general welfare of the rest of North Korea. Supporting the Pyongyang Republic entails far more than prioritizing domestic and international resources to Pyongyang.<sup>279</sup> Building power plants to support Pyongyang, rather than to support mines or industrial centers in the provinces, contributes to not only national economic hardship, but also increases the isolation of Pyongyang from the provinces, which is enforced by the Party. In a March 18, 2014 editorial, *Rodong Sinmun* stated that each county must use its own resources to carry out its tasks.<sup>280</sup> This leaves the people in the provinces with poor to non-existent national support and subject to exploitation by the state and provincial cadre.

### 7.1 Pyongyang before the Kim Regime

Pyongyang has a 4,000-year history, much of it as the capital of early Korean states. It has been known by various names during its history, including *Wanggeomseong*, *Giseong*, *Hwangseong*, *Rakrang*, *Seogyong*, *Sodo*, *Hogyeong*, and *Jang-an*. During the Japanese colonial period, it was referred to as Heijo. The city was founded in 1122 B.C. during the Wiman Chosun era of the ancient Gojeoson period of Korea. Geographically, it is defined by the Taedong, Hapjang, and Sunhwa rivers and the hills of Moran-bong, Mount Taesong, and Mount Ryongak. It has served as a state or regional capital for various Korean dynasties, including the Goguryeo dynasty, for nearly two

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278 Choi Da-Mi, "조선민주주의인민공화국이 작아지고 있다" [Democratic People's Republic of Korea is Getting Smaller], *New Focus*, January 16, 2014.

279 "N. Korea Building New Thermal Power Plant To Meet Energy Shortages," *Yonhap News*, November 26, 2014.

280 According to South Korea's Ministry of the Interior, there were 145 counties in North Korea as of December 2011. See Ministry of the Interior, "2012년도 지방자치단체 행정구역 및 인구현황" [Status of Administrative Areas and Population Statistics: 2012], March 8, 2012.

millennia prior to its establishment as the capital city of North Korea under the 1972 constitution.<sup>281</sup> The founding constitution of the DPRK in 1948 had established Seoul as the capital city.<sup>282</sup>

Several important battles occurred in Pyongyang over the centuries. These battles were for state survival or regional hegemony, and involved rival Korean kingdoms or invasions by numerous Chinese, Manchurian, and Japanese forces. Prior to the 20th century, the most recent major battle in Pyongyang was the Battle of Pyongyang on September 15, 1894 during the first Sino-Japanese War.<sup>283</sup> At the time, Pyongyang's population was approximately 40,000,<sup>284</sup> but most of the population dispersed during the battle. Japan's victory was the beginning of its military occupation of the city, which continued after its colonial annexation of Korea and the entire peninsula from 1910 to 1945. Under Japanese rule, Protestantism became so popular in Pyongyang that the city became known as the "Jerusalem of the East."<sup>285</sup> Kim Il-sung's family was influenced to some degree by local Christians.<sup>286</sup>

Kim Il-sung was born under Japanese occupation in 1912 and left at an early age to move to Manchuria, returning only once before joining anti-Japanese partisans in Manchuria as a young teenager. In Manchuria, he eventually became a communist under Chinese revolutionary influence and formed his views of foreign imperialism. He was chased out of Manchuria by the Japanese to the Soviet Union, where he served nearly four years as a battalion commander in the Soviet Army's 88th Reconnaissance Brigade. He finally returned to Pyongyang in 1945 during the Soviet occupation, becoming the Soviet Union's designated leader of a new North Korean administration. Kim Il-sung and numerous other Korean communist revolutionaries began to revolutionize Korean

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281 The official English translation of North Korea's constitution, as revised in 1972, can be found at [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution\\_of\\_North\\_Korea\\_\(1972\)](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_North_Korea_(1972)). This source cites Naenara, a North Korean portal site.

282 *Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, September 8, 1948 (Pyongyang: New Korea Press, 1956).

283 S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895: Perception, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 165–96.

284 Jan Lahmeyer, "Populstat: North Korea—Urban Population," University of Utrecht, August 27, 2004, <http://www.populstat.info/Asia/nkoreat.htm>.

285 Protestant missionary presence was established soon after the United States and Korea signed the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation in 1882 and continued until the advancement of the Soviet 25th Army into North Korea in August 1945. Christian evangelist Billy Graham's wife Ruth spent her teen years in Pyongyang with her father Eugene Bell during his missionary work there.

286 Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 4–5.

society in the northern half of the peninsula under Soviet tutelage, even though there were few educated leaders among those revolutionaries.

Referred to as Pyongyang-bu and the capital of South Pyongan Province before liberation from Japanese colonial rule on August 15, 1945, Pyongyang was separated from South Pyongan Province and elevated to special city status with five subordinate districts in September 1946 while under the administrative authority of Soviet occupation forces.<sup>287</sup> Pyongyang soon became the political, economic, social, and cultural center of North Korean society.

## 7.2 Kim Il-sung's Pyongyang

Kim Il-sung saw Pyongyang through both mythical and ideological lens. Under his leadership and direction, North Korean historians and propagandists linked Pyongyang's existence as the capital of the Korean warrior state of Goguryeo to the anti-Japanese partisan spirit of North Korea's founding leaders. Under Kim Il-sung, the Party and the government developed together to create a socialist state similar to other communist nation-states.<sup>288</sup> Kim sought to rapidly transform North Korea from an agricultural society into an urbanized one as a foundation for further development. In that context, not only did he see Pyongyang as the face of North Korea, but he also saw the capital's center and Kim Il-sung Square in particular as the face of Pyongyang.<sup>289</sup> He believed that the proper construction of the capital city would advance the nation, while poor construction would not.

When Kim Il-sung and others began the North Korean revolution in 1945, they had four lines of revolutionary action: establishing a democratic people's unification front; cleansing society of reactionary elements; organizing a government and people's reform and reconstructing the economy; and strengthening the Communist Party.<sup>290</sup> This served as the basis of North Korea's first Party strategy and laid the foundation for focusing all power in Pyongyang and preventing undesirable

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287 In September 1959, Pyongyang was reorganized with eleven districts. In October 1960, this was expanded to eighteen districts and three counties, eventually becoming nineteen districts and four counties. The counties' role has been to provide food for the citizens of Pyongyang. See "Pyongyang teukbyeol-si" [Pyongyang City], The Academy of Korean Studies. <http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?cid=1599&docId=531421&mobile&categoryId=1599>; Cho, "Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu," 212.

288 Choi Jin-Wook, *Hyeondae Bukan Haengjeong-ron* [Modern North Korean Administration Theory] (Seoul: Myeongin Munhwasa, 2008), 57.

289 Cho, "Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu," 235.

290 "On Constructing A Marxist-Leninist Party and Party Tasks," in *Kim Il-sung's Collected Works*, Vol. 1. (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1979), 319-20. Report at the Founding Conference of the Central Committee of the North Korean Workers' Party, October 10, 1945.

elements from residing in the city. In Kim's mind, Pyongyang was for the revolutionaries, not the reactionaries who served religion, capitalism, or the Japanese colonial government.

This practice continued after the Korean War. For Kim Il-sung, ideology was critical to rebuilding Pyongyang, which quickly became a city of exclusion. There was no place in Pyongyang for those who were not of the right social class or had little to offer to the regime's political success or image.<sup>291</sup> The Kim regime began politically classifying all citizens in 1958 to complete its social revolution, a process greatly affected by the Korean War. War veterans and their families were directly classified to a higher *songbun* (socio-political classification) because of their sacrifices for the party-state. This process served as the basis for both the inclusion of the trusted and exclusion from Pyongyang of those classified in the lower socio-political classes. Through this process, the Kim Il-sung regime created a specific group of personnel for preferred positions and thus residency in Pyongyang.<sup>292</sup>

After being destroyed by American bombing during the Korean War, Pyongyang was rebuilt under Kim Il-sung's leadership in accordance with a strict design plan intended to recreate Pyongyang as the "face of the nation."<sup>293</sup> In May 1953, at Pyongyang's underground theater in Moranbong, the Pyongyang Recovery Design Conference led by Kim Il-sung drafted the Pyongyang Reconstruction Design Plan (PRDP). The PRDP was rewritten in 1960 to focus construction in central and eastern Pyongyang.<sup>294</sup> Under Kim Il-sung's direction, apartments were built in Pyongyang at the rapid pace of one every fourteen minutes, which was also known as "Pyongyang speed,"<sup>295</sup> a term favored thereafter.<sup>296</sup> Labor motivation propaganda focused on this concept to encourage workers and supervisors to build faster.<sup>297</sup> Since materials and personnel were in short supply, the reconstruction of Pyongyang required the national mobilization of students and soldiers. These two groups

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291 North Koreans that promote their country's image include Olympic medal winners, particularly gold medal winners, famous acting or musical performers, or other international competition winners.

292 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 64.

293 Cho, "Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu," 240.

294 Kang Song-san, *Suryeongnim-gwa Pyongyang [The Supreme Leader and Pyongyang]* (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1986), 10, as cited in Cho, "Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu," 220-21.

295 "'평양 아파트', 어떻게 지었고 누가 어디 사나" ['Pyongyang Apartments,' How Were They Built and Who Lives Where?], *SBS News*, May 29, 2014.

296 Kim Il-sung employed various "speed slogans" to motivate construction crews over the decades to quicken construction to meet unreasonable deadlines. These slogans and their programs were "loyalty speed" and "70-day speed battle" in 1974, "100-day speed battle" in 1971, 1978 and 1980, and "speed of the 1980s" in 1982. See Hong, "Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi," 38.

297 Cho, "Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu," 223-28.

have “always been a component of construction in Pyongyang.”<sup>298</sup> The Kim Il-sung regime did not rebuild Pyongyang by itself; East European countries all contributed to some aspect of rebuilding Pyongyang. Nevertheless, it was the North Koreans from Pyongyang and nearby counties who sacrificed and invested enormous physical effort to rebuild the “capital of the revolution.” Intensified construction in the years after the Korean War resulted in multiple families sharing kitchens and bathrooms in apartment complexes.<sup>299</sup>

Kim Il-sung wanted technology to keep pace with the need for construction, which demanded educating a poorly educated society. At the time of liberation from Japan in 1945, there were no colleges in northern Korea. By 1958, there were twenty-two colleges with 31,820 students. Kim Il-sung addressed the technology shortage with the KWP and the government cabinet and tied technological training to economic planning. There were seventy-six colleges by 1960 and ninety-two by 1961. There were 52,000 college students in North Korea in 1959, which increased to 182,000 in 1961.<sup>300</sup>

However, in the late 1950s, there were complaints from Kim Il-sung’s rivals within the Party that Pyongyang was being built based on ideology and propaganda rather than technology. Those complaints came to no avail, as challenges to Kim Il-sung’s authority were eliminated in the purges of 1956–58.<sup>301</sup> Construction slowed in the 1960s due to the Kim regime’s perception of the international security environment. In response to Park Chung-Hee’s military takeover of South Korea, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Vietnam War, North Korea concentrated its spending on defense. This lessened funds for domestic development and slowed construction in Pyongyang.<sup>302</sup>

Housing construction became part of national economic planning under Kim Il-sung. North Korea’s accelerated industrialization after the Korean War led to the prioritizing of housing in urban areas over rural villages, and Pyongyang was prioritized over all other cities. Urbanization in North Korea was much more rapid than in South Korea.<sup>303</sup> Housing construction in Pyongyang was organized by streets and not districts, with proximity to the workplace a major consideration.<sup>304</sup> In

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298 Cho, “Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu,” 239-40.

299 Armstrong, “‘Fraternal Socialism’,” 161-87.

300 Lee Choon-Geun, “Bukan gwahak gisul inlyeok yangseong cheje-ui byeoncheon mit teukjing” [Changes and characteristics of North Korea’s system for training science and technology personnel], *Gwahak Gisul Jeongchaek* 11.6 (2001): 89-99.

301 Cho, “Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu,” 224.

302 Ibid., 232.

303 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 64.

304 Cho, “Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu,” 240.

other words, personnel from a given organization were housed next to or near that organization's headquarters or offices.

Kim Il-sung rebuilt Pyongyang in both the physical and ideological image of the revolution. By portraying Pyongyang as the capital of the revolution, he shaped the thinking of every North Korean into seeing Pyongyang as the heart of the Kim family regime. Kim Il-sung also wanted to make Pyongyang beautiful. He described it as a city within a park, due to the construction of green belts by the city management for propaganda displays to the external world. These green belts are farmland that was intentionally included within Pyongyang's city limits to provide food to the city's population. For North Koreans, Pyongyang was the castle on the hill, the citadel of Korean purity, and the ultimate fortress of North Korea's defense against external enemies. While care was given to Pyongyang's appearance, the opposite was true in the provinces.<sup>305</sup>

Much of Pyongyang has become a shrine for Kim Il-sung. Kim's birthplace in Pyongyang, Mangyongdae, is considered the "cradle of the revolution" and every North Korean coming to Pyongyang is required to visit it, as are most foreign tourists to Pyongyang. Kim is admired everywhere as "the Korean people were accustomed to revere him [Kim Il-sung] as the head of a large family-society, their dearest kinsman."<sup>306</sup> All road distances to outlying areas are measured specifically from the president's pedestal in Kim Il-sung Square to the site in question.<sup>307</sup>

### 7.3 Kim Jong-il's Pyongyang Republic

Though Kim Il-sung is responsible for leading the rebuilding of Pyongyang after the war, it was his son, Kim Jong-il, who built the "political" Pyongyang that provided the foundation for the Pyongyang Republic. Once Kim Jong-il was appointed as the KWP Secretary for Organization, Director of the OGD, and Director of the PAD in 1974, he began to reshape Pyongyang both politically and physically with considerable speed.

Socio-political classification, political prison camps, and a highly political legal system were already in place when Kim Jong-il centralized authority in the Party under his control. He also centralized a patronage system under his control to motivate the power elite and North Korea's decision-makers. This was to guarantee that any consideration of rights only applied to the Supreme Leader through

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305 Eom, *Wiseong yeongsangeul hwalyonghan Bukhan juyo dosi-ui jayeonhwangyeong byeonhwajeongbo sujib*, 14-30.

306 *Pyongyang Review*, 44.

307 Jeon, *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukan-ui sahoe-wa munhwa*, 132.

the Monolithic Guidance System. Kim Jong-il transformed Party life and political surveillance to focus the loyalty of all Party members towards the Supreme Leader, Kim Il-sung. This was especially true for the military and internal security agencies. By doing so, Kim Jong-il laid the foundation for Party doctrine to compel every KWP member to comply with the Supreme Leader's directives, which enabled the transition of power from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il. In this manner, Kim Jong-il laid the political foundation for the Pyongyang Republic.

Upon this foundation, Kim Jong-il directed the political process of building a Pyongyang that rewarded loyalty. To reward Party personnel of higher *songbun* who furthered his political goals, Kim Jong-il ordered the construction of apartments, schools, and other support systems, and provided other luxuries, such as Mercedes Benz cars and Swiss gold watches.<sup>308</sup> Kim Jong-il controlled the privileged class through gifts; the receipt of gifts was a sign of trust. Individuals competed to show greater loyalty to receive more and greater gifts, and Kim Jong-il manipulated this competition.<sup>309</sup> Although the privileged few received extravagant gifts, all North Korean families received gifts from Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il on the birthdays of those two leaders. Such gifts included liquor, eggs, rice, meat, and cigarettes. This practice cemented these two birthdays as major holidays and contributed to the loyalty of all North Koreans to the Supreme Leader.<sup>310</sup> Cadre who are section chiefs and below receive gifts every holiday based on position. These gifts, when brought into the country, are stored in a 25,000 *pyong* (889,579 ft<sup>2</sup>) building called the Central Party Gift Factory in Sepo-dong, Hyongjesan District.<sup>311</sup>

After beginning his work in the OGD, Kim Jong-il had maximum influence on both the design and pace of construction.<sup>312</sup> Though Kim Il-sung's ideas were always foremost, Kim Jong-il directly supervised Pyongyang design, planning, and construction in the mid-1970s. To implement his own vision, Kim Jong-il authorized the next stage of design planning through the Pyongyang City Construction General Design Plan in September 1974.<sup>313</sup> He employed the propaganda slogan of "loyalty speed," implying that lack of dedication to construction plans meant disloyalty to the Supreme Leader and the nation-state.<sup>314</sup> He personally monitored apartment construction through the "Three Revolu-

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308 Hong, "Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi," 39.

309 See Hyun, *Bukan-ui Gukga Jeollyakgwa Pawo Elliteu*, 219-60; see also "N.Korean Regime's 'Gift Politics' Starts to Lose Its Luster," *The Chosun Ilbo*, February 2, 2011.

310 "N.Korean Regime's 'Gift Politics' Starts to Lose Its Luster," *The Chosun Ilbo*, February 2, 2011.

311 Jang Jin-Sung, "북한의 '천국' 특권 계급의 내막 (1)" [The Inside Story of North Korea's 'Heaven' and the Privileged Class], *New Daily*, March 15, 2010.

312 Cho, "Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu," 217.

313 *Ibid.*, 217 and 236.

314 *Ibid.*, 224-30.

tionary Teams”<sup>315</sup> during the 1970s and through the 1990s,<sup>316</sup> and oversaw earlier housing construction projects on Gwangbok Street and Tongil Street.<sup>317</sup> In the 1970s, he directed the construction of 20,000 apartment units along a six-kilometer stretch of Gwangbok Street near Kim Il-sung’s birthplace in Mangyongdae District. This was followed by 30,000 more units in 1989–92.<sup>318</sup>

*Please refer to Appendix B.7 for a map of the perspective of Pyongyang and Gwangbok Street. For a closer look at Gwangbok Street and the homes of older Party cadre, please refer to Appendix B.8. For images of the apartments on Gwangbok Street, please refer to Appendix C.7.*

In the 1980s, Kim Jong-il focused on creating the “capital of the revolution,” as he began building monuments to *Juche* ideology. During this period, he established stricter criteria for visiting Pyongyang and designated areas closed to foreigners. In three iterations, Kim Jong-il instituted moves out of Pyongyang for those of lower *songbun* and those with physical disabilities. Under the new policies, the qualifications needed to live in Pyongyang were “extreme loyalty to Kim Il-sung, those of favorable *songbun*, families of anti-Japan partisans, and Korean War participants.” These were core Party members.<sup>319</sup>

As Pyongyang became the capital of the revolution, it was important for construction to keep pace with propaganda. This began with the construction of the *Chollima* apartments in 1970. Kim Jong-il expanded the construction of major housing complexes as part of celebrations for Kim Il-sung’s 60th (1972) and 70th (1982) birthdays, such as the expansion of housing construction in 1980 to build 17,000-25,000 apartments on Munsu Street as part of a project to celebrate Kim Il-sung’s 70th birthday.<sup>320</sup> This was of great propaganda value for the Kim family’s personality cult. High-class apartments were constructed on Changgwang Street, Munsu Street, Ansangtaek Street, Chongchun Street, and *Chollima* Street. By the end of the 1980s, the second phase of construc-

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315 Kim Il-sung founded the Three Revolutions Team Movement in February 1973 to be “a powerful revolutionary method of guidance” to the masses regarding revolutions in the ideological, technical, and cultural aspects of social construction. Teams are sent to factories, enterprises, rural communities and fishing villages for on-the-spot guidance and problem solving. Kim Jong-il took over the movement in 1975 and expanded his power base in order to reinforce the political succession process. See Lim, *Kim Jong Il’s Leadership of North Korea*, 79-80.

316 Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 38.

317 Ibid., 40.

318 Cho, “Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu,” 238. Satellite photos from Google Earth.

319 Kim and Kim, *Bukan sahoe-ui bulpyeongdeung gujo-wa jeongchisahoejeok hamui*, 65. See also Do et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2015*, 402-25.

320 Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 37.

tion on Changgwang Street and the first phase of Gwangbok Street were completed. Construction along Tongil Street and the second phase of construction along Gwangbok Street in the early 1990s was delayed during the famine of the mid-1990s. It was then resumed and completed by the end of the decade. In 2009, Kim Jong-il ordered the construction of state-of-the-art apartments on Mansudae Street, which Kim Jong-un expanded upon.<sup>321</sup>

By focusing on Pyongyang and his succession, Kim Jong-il widened the wealth gap between Pyongyang and the provinces. One mid-level defector to South Korea believes the reason North Korea is so poor is that the dictator has too much.<sup>322</sup> He states that in North Korea, he had many opportunities to meet people with access to the Supreme Leader and the upper class. While attending Kim Il-sung University and working in the UFD, he had in-depth conversations with those sustaining the regime and gained a deeper understanding of North Korea's "heaven." While hundreds of thousands starved in the 1990s, the privileged class focused on Kim Jong-il's lifestyle.<sup>323</sup> He insisted that Kim Jong-il's luxurious lifestyle included exorbitant gift giving to the elite to ensure their loyalty, which contributed greatly to the extreme difference between the rich and the poor.

Kim Jong-il's housing policies had enormous consequences for the human rights situation in North Korea. His focus on the Monolithic Ideology System and Monolithic Guidance System, with a complementary patronage system, not only created a core working elite that guaranteed his succession, but also completely eliminated human rights.<sup>324</sup> The construction of housing complexes that compelled centralized housing for organizations and excluded those classified as disloyal directly reinforced this dynamic.

After designating Kim Jong-un as his successor, Kim Jong-il started to focus even more attention on Pyongyang. He developed a policy of favoritism towards Pyongyang's residents, so that the core class would support the transition to Kim Jong-un. He ordered the construction of Mangyongdae Water Park, which opened in August 2011, and decided to build 100,000 more apartments. Building construction in Pyongyang during this period was double that of the rest of the country.<sup>325</sup> To lead

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321 "평양 아파트, 어떻게 지었고 누가 어디 사나" ['Pyongyang Apartments,' How Were They Built and Who Lives Where?], SBS News, May 29, 2014.

322 Jang Jin-Sung, "북한의 '천국' 특권계급의 내막 (1)" [The Inside Story of North Korea's 'Heaven' and the Privileged Class], *New Daily*, March 15, 2010.

323 Ibid.

324 See Lim, *Kim Jong Il's Leadership of North Korea*, 66.

325 Kim Hwan-Seok, "Bukan sahoe-ui daepyojeok yanggeukhwa hyeonsangeuloseo Pyongyang-gwa jibang gyeokcha hyeonhwang mit geu wonin" [The Current Status and Causes of the Distinctive Phenom-

this effort to improve Pyongyang's image, Kim Jong-il appointed Ma Won-chun as the lead architect. Ma started his career in the Paektusan Construction Research Institute (PCRI) and advanced to become a Vice Director in the KWP Finance Department and concurrently the Chief of the Design Office.<sup>326</sup> His name first surfaced in North Korean media on May 9, 2012, when Kim Jong-un visited Mangyongdae Park and his name was listed as accompanying Kim. He accompanied Kim twenty times between then and July 2013. Ma designed the recently built Changjeon Street apartment complex, the Ryukyong Swimming Recreational Facility, the People's Skating Arena, and the Fatherland Liberation War Victory Memorial.<sup>327</sup>

Towards the end of his life, Kim Jong-il decreased the administrative size of Pyongyang. In February 2010, he reduced the size of Pyongyang by forty percent and its population by approximately 500,000 people. Sungho District, Kangnam County, Chungghwa County, and Sangwon County, which are located south of the Taedong River, were transferred to North Hwanghae Province.<sup>328</sup> Prior to these changes, Pyongyang was three times the size of its South Korean counterpart, Seoul, in land area.<sup>329</sup> This population decrease enabled the regime to divert food from international donors to more adequately support regime loyalists in the Pyongyang Republic.

However, Kangnam County was restored to Pyongyang on October 25, 2011.<sup>330</sup> The primary reason for doing so was to ensure that the residents of Pyongyang had access to sufficient fruits and vegetables, supplied directly from Pyongyang-administered farms.<sup>331</sup> Nevertheless, the overall reduction did not affect the core residential support to the regime. Although the population of

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enon of Polarization in North Korean Society], *Institute for National Security Strategy* (2012). Accessed January 20, 2014.

326 PCRI is North Korea's leading design organization. Founded in 1962 as the Design Research Institute, it publishes a magazine entitled *Chosun Construction*. Kim Jong-il renamed the institute to its current name in 1989 and assigned it responsibility for designing all structures in Chung District, Pyongyang's downtown. PCRI, which is under the KWP Finance Department's control, takes responsibility for all Kim family residences, all KWP propaganda-themed buildings, and KWP offices. See Hong, "Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi," 43.

327 Kim Jeong-Eun, "김정은 수행 새 얼굴 마원춘은 '북한 최고 건축가'" [Kim Jong-un's New Face Is Ma Won-chun, North Korea's Top Construction Expert], *Yonhap News*, July 5, 2013.

328 Kim, "Bukan sahoe-ui daepyojeok yanggeukhwa hyeonsangeuloseo Pyongyang-gwa jibang gyeokcha hyeonhwang mit geu wonin."

329 Cho, "Bukan-ui dosibaldal yeongu," 208.

330 Kim, "Bukan sahoe-ui daepyojeok yanggeukhwa hyeonsangeuloseo Pyongyang-gwa jibang gyeokcha hyeonhwang mit geu wonin."

331 Author's interview with former mid-level Party official from Pyongyang.

Pyongyang was reduced, the regime ultimately relies on the 50,000 cadre of the Party, government, and military in Pyongyang to maintain power. These 50,000 are the core class that have survived under the Kim family regime since the 1960s and received the greatest privileges. The families of these cadre tend to inter-marry to maintain their socio-political status.<sup>332</sup>

Please refer to Appendix B.9 for a visual overview of the recent administrative changes to Pyongyang.

## 7.4 Kim Jong-un's Republic of Changjeon Street

After Kim Jong-un took power at the end of 2011, he directed in December 2012 that Pyongyang develop a pure political-ideological core class within a year.<sup>333</sup> His intent was that Pyongyang should be populated “with the cream of North Korean society in terms of political and ideological beliefs.”<sup>334</sup> He also stated that “as the capital of the revolution, Pyongyang should be constructed with grandeur and splendor and managed with elegance and grace befitting its place as a world city.” His intent was to maximize power through a privileged city-society built on maximum loyalty to his rule. As speculation ran wild among international media and outside observers that reform was afoot in North Korea, Kim Jong-un proved that his first and foremost priority was regime preservation. Hope for improved human rights and open markets was not realized. Instead, changes in key regime personnel through dramatic purges became the norm for many of Pyongyang's elite who were perceived not to be in step with Kim Jong-un's leadership.

Kim introduced the “modernization of the revolution's capital project,” for which he focused all of the government's resources on Pyongyang. This involved building apartments, foreign goods transaction streets,<sup>335</sup> high-class restaurants, and amusement parks. He made no investments in the

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332 Kim, “Bukan sahoe-ui daepyojeok yanggeukhwa hyeonsangeuloseo Pyongyang-gwa jibang gyeokcha hyeonhwang mit geu wonin.”

333 Core class is a reference to the socio-political classification system that classifies every individual at the age of 17 into the core class (viewed as loyal to the regime), the wavering class (those that need strong indoctrination to establish loyalty to the regime), and the hostile class (those that are deemed disloyal to the regime). For an in-depth study on this classification system, known as the “songbun system,” see Collins, *Marked for Life*.

334 “Pyongyang Booms at the Expense of the Rest of N.Korea,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, March 20, 2014.

335 This refers to city blocks where the selling and buying of foreign goods is centrally located, such as Ansangtaek Street.

provinces, thus strengthening the Pyongyang Republic.<sup>336</sup> Under the younger Kim, Pyongyang has reportedly “experienced a veritable boom in cutting-edge technology, Western-style businesses and high-rise apartment buildings.”<sup>337</sup> Several reports have argued that such improvements are due to Kim Jong-un’s desire to support the regime’s elite in return for supporting the hereditary transfer of power. This approach to urban development in Pyongyang versus the lack of support for the provinces parallels the economic difference between South and North Korea.

Please refer to Appendix C.8 and C.9 for images of the apartments on Changjeon Street.

To demonstrate his contribution to this effort, Kim Jong-un ordered the construction of an apartment complex on Changjeon Street in Mansudae District on the west bank of the Taedong River. The construction time to build Changjeon Street was only thirteen months.<sup>338</sup> It was completed in June 2012 in celebration of Kim Il-sung’s 100th birthday anniversary. This area has become the most exclusive residential complex in Pyongyang. The cliché about Changjeon Street is that it is “Pyongyang above Pyongyang.” When the KWP started shifting many of its key cadre from the Party housing complex on Chaggwang Street to the new residential complex on Changjeon Street, not everyone was transferred. This created considerable resentment among Party members who were not transferred to housing with newer amenities and tighter security.<sup>339</sup>

Changjeon Street has dozens of high-rise apartments complete with high-class restaurants, health clubs, and department stores stocked with foreign goods. There are a total of fourteen buildings in the complex, some of which are forty-five stories high.<sup>340</sup> The complex not only contains bathhouses, department stores, barbershops, and convenience stores, but also includes day care centers and schools. According to one report, a source in Pyongyang tells of the average Pyongyang resident seeing this complex as bizarre and extravagant, referring to the area as the “street of dreams.”<sup>341</sup>

336 Hwang Dae-Jin and Kim Myong-Song, “北은 '평양 공화국'... 평양엔 시민證, 지방엔 공민證” [North Korea is the Republic of Pyongyang... Citizen IDs in Pyongyang, Resident IDs in the Provinces], *Premium Chosun*, March 19, 2014.

337 Lee Young-Jong, “Life Is Good for Pyongyang’s Elite,” *Korea JoongAng Daily*, November 13, 2013.

338 Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 42.

339 Good Friends, “‘평양 위의 평양’, 창전거리” [Changjeon Street, The Pyongyang Above Pyongyang], July 7, 2012. [http://www.goodfriends.or.kr/n\\_korea/n\\_korea1.html?sm=v&p\\_no=8&b\\_no=13160&page=1](http://www.goodfriends.or.kr/n_korea/n_korea1.html?sm=v&p_no=8&b_no=13160&page=1).

340 Hwang Dae-Jin and Kim Myong-Song, “北은 '평양 공화국'... 평양엔 시민證, 지방엔 공민證” [North Korea is the Republic of Pyongyang... Citizen IDs in Pyongyang, Resident IDs in the Provinces], *Premium Chosun*, March 19, 2014.

341 Choi Da-Mi, “조선민주주의인민공화국이 작아지고 있다” [Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is Getting Smaller], *New Focus*, January 16, 2014. Photo also this site.

On a Youtube video, one can see comfortable interior appointments within these apartments,<sup>342</sup> which number 3,000 in all.<sup>343</sup>

## 7.5 Bad Construction and Building Collapse

The collapse of a twenty three-story apartment building in Ansan-dong, Pyongchon District in May 2014 claimed hundreds of lives and embarrassed the Kim Jong-un regime. After the collapse, the regime forced five leading officials to directly apologize to the public. Those officials were the Minister of Public Security, General Choe Pu-il; the KPISF's General Sonu Hyong-chol; the Pyongyang City KWP Committee Responsible Secretary, Kim Su-gil; the Pyongyang People's Committee Chairman, Cha Hui-rim; and the Pyongchon District KWP Committee Responsible Secretary, Ri Yong-sik.<sup>344</sup> According to North Korea's Criminal Code, in any case where several citizens die, those responsible must serve three to eight year prison terms doing hard labor. However, these men are close to Kim Jong-un and thus unlikely to be severely punished.<sup>345</sup>

Who will be held accountable? One report states that Jang Song-taek was responsible for stealing concrete while he was the Director of the KWP Administration Department. This department exercised political control over the MPS and its subordinate elements, including the Seventh and Eighth Bureaus.<sup>346</sup> The chief of the MPS Seventh Bureau, one of the organizations responsible for apartment construction along with the Eighth Bureau, received minor punishment.<sup>347</sup> However, the

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342 At the 3:40 mark, Changjeon Street Apartments can be seen in the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKYBu9xIfac>.

343 Jang Jin-Bok, “北, 평양-지방 격차확대... "평양공화국" 불만증대” [Gap Between Pyongyang and the Outer Regions in North Korea Is Expanding... Complaints About the Republic of Pyongyang Rising], *Newsis*, November 13, 2011.

344 Pak Hui-Jun, “北 평양 아파트 붕괴사고로 최부일·선우형철 교체 전망” [Choe Bu-il and Sonu Hyong-chol Expected to be Replaced Due to Pyongyang Apartment Collapse], *Asia Business Daily*, May 20, 2014.

345 Kim Su-gil was a GPB Deputy Director until one month before this incident. Ri Yong-sik was a member of the KWP OGD's Military Division until 2010. He is the son of Ri Yong-chol, former longtime chief of the same division and a close associate of Kim Jong-un's mother, Ko Yong-hui. General Sonu was awarded the Worker's Hero Medal in 2012 for overseeing the construction of the Huichon Power Plant. See “북한 평양 아파트 붕괴사고 책임자 '문책' 내용에 주목” [Focus on content of 'reprimand' for Pyongyang apartment collapse], *Kookje Sinmun*, May 19, 2014.

346 Lee Sang-Yong, “Is Apartment Collapse Being Pinned on Jang?” *Daily NK*, June 12, 2014.

347 The Eighth Bureau of the KPISF is subordinate to the MPS and specializes in construction, not police functions. Eighth Bureau construction projects make considerable money for the MPS in support of operating funds. In the last few years of his rule, Kim Jong-il transferred command responsibility of the Eighth

Minister of People’s Security, General Choe, and other relevant power elite were left untouched.<sup>348</sup> The irony is that the collapsed apartment in Ansan-dong was near Changgwang gardens, which is a fairly privileged neighborhood. As mentioned earlier, apartments in Pyongyang are part of the political landscape. The people who died in the building collapse were the families of the regime’s guardians—members of the MPS, North Korea’s national police force. The workers serving at the construction site were also members of the MPS.

Such weaknesses in the regime’s construction projects are due to the leadership’s demands for completion by specific dates and the use of “speed battles” to complete construction by those dates. This has inevitably led to critical mistakes in construction techniques and practices.<sup>349</sup> Kim Jong-un has applied pressure to build everything quickly, including the Masikryong Ski Resort and apartment buildings in Pyongyang.<sup>350</sup> Beyond the demand for speed, the causes of building collapses are insufficient steel, poor quality cement, and failure to follow construction standards.<sup>351</sup> High quality cement is expensive in North Korea, and it is in high demand by those seeking to do illicit construction or carry out structural improvements on their own. In Pyongyang, one kilogram of cement can be exchanged for the same weight of food. Workers at construction sites steal cement because they are poorly compensated for their work.<sup>352</sup>

The pressure to rapidly complete construction projects is nothing new. There have been numerous cases of collapsed apartment buildings in the past. From the 1970s to the 1980s, North Korea built apartments with Soviet technology, and bad construction was not uncommon. There were only five-story apartment buildings until the 1970s, and ten-story buildings appeared by 1980. After 1980, Pyongyang started constructing twenty to forty-story apartment buildings like bamboo shoots.<sup>353</sup> In 1992, an apartment building on Tongil Street in Pyongyang collapsed due to poor construction,

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Bureau from the MPS to the MPAF, which insisted that they needed the Eighth Bureau for road construction. However, after Kim Jong-un succeeded his father, the younger Kim transferred the Eighth Bureau back to the MPS. See Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 35-62.

348 Lee Sang-Yong, “No Justice for Victims of Apartment Collapse,” *Daily NK*, September 25, 2014.

349 “‘평양 아파트’, 어떻게 지었고 누가 어디 사나” [‘Pyongyang Apartments,’ How Were They Built and Who Lives Where?], *SBS News*, May 29, 2014.

350 Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 35-62.

351 Pak Hui-Jun, “북한 아파트 붕괴 원인은 ‘부실시공’ (KDI 경제리뷰)” [North Korea Apartment Collapse Cause Was “Poor Construction,” According to KDI Economic Review], *Asia Business Daily*, September 23, 2014.

352 Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 35-62.

353 “‘평양 아파트’, 어떻게 지었고 누가 어디 사나” [‘Pyongyang Apartments,’ How Were They Built and Who Lives Where?], *SBS News*, May 29, 2014.

resulting in the death of 500 workers. More recently, there were building collapses in Hyesan, Ryanggang Province in July 2007 and in Pyongsong City, South Pyongan Province in April 2013.<sup>354</sup> Apartments in Pyongyang are made with bricks, whereas apartments built in the provinces are generally built with cement, less K-bar reinforcing rods, and poor construction techniques.<sup>355</sup>

North Korean leaders and propagandists have long used the term *sokdojeon* (speed battle) and have applied it repeatedly to particular construction projects, labeled as “battles.” Originally applied to a farming-ideological concept of “*Chollima*-speed,”<sup>356</sup> the concept of a speed battle is employed to encourage construction workers to work faster and harder to quicken the completion of a particular building or project. A recent power-generation dam construction project in Huichon, north of Pyongyang, was designed to quicken the supply of much needed electricity to the capital city. “Huichon-speed” was the call of the day. In 2008, the term “Pyongyang-speed” was coined to encourage the production of 100,000 apartments within the capital and to produce one apartment every fourteen minutes. Kim Jong-un has continued to employ that concept to this day. In his first year as North Korea’s Supreme Leader, he led the construction of 27,000 apartments in Pyongyang.<sup>357</sup>

## 7.6 Justifying the Pyongyang Republic

The Kim regime’s construction of the Pyongyang Republic reflects politics, law, and culture. However, above all, it reflects the regime’s vision. It is the regime’s vision, as aptly described in the Pyongyang City Management Law, which gives pre-eminence to the regime’s supreme base of operations. According to Article 1 of this law, “Pyongyang is the shrine of *Juche*, the heart of the Korean people, and the capital of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.”<sup>358</sup> This law provides for the prioritization of resources, patriotism, and effort to make Pyongyang a “modern

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354 Pak Hui-Jun, “북한 아파트 붕괴 원인은 '부실시공' (KDI 경제리뷰)” [North Korea Apartment Collapse Cause Was “Poor Construction,” According to KDI Economic Review], *Asia Business Daily*, September 23, 2014.

355 Hong, “Bukan-ui apateu geonseolsijang-gwa dosijeongchi,” 37 and 48-49.

356 *Chollima* (thousand-mile horse) represents great speed. Kim Il-sung adopted this name to represent rapid economic development that paralleled China’s Great Leap Forward and the Soviet Union’s Stakhanovite movement.

357 So Jae-Jun, “北 아파트 붕괴로 '속도전' 집착에서 벗어날까” [Will Apartment Collapse Cause North Korea to End Its Obsession with “Speed Battles?”], *Korea News* 1, May 19, 2014.

358 Sudo Pyongyang-si gwalli-beob [Pyongyang City Management Law], Art. 1. Republic of Korea Unification Law Database, last updated August 12, 2014. [http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttlId=222&bbsId=BBSMSTR\\_00000000021](http://www.unilaw.go.kr/bbs/selectBoardArticleSearch.do?nttlId=222&bbsId=BBSMSTR_00000000021); see also *Pyongyang Review*, 2. All articles referenced by number in this section are references to corresponding articles of the Pyongyang City Management Law.

and cultural city.”<sup>359</sup> It also provides the justification for restrictions on who lives in Pyongyang. An examination of this law is critically important to understanding these precepts.

First, as stated in Article 1, the Pyongyang City Management Law is designed to “make Pyongyang a modern and cultural city that provides a quiet and clean living environment to enable more comfortable living and labor conditions.” According to Article 3, “It is an honorable duty and a display of patriotism for citizens to manage Pyongyang well. The state shall intensify socialist, patriotic education so that all citizens actively participate in Pyongyang City management tasks.” According to Article 5, “The state shall decide key standards for city management, such as Pyongyang’s population limit, population density, the proportion of the population engaged in industry, the proportion of land area permitted for industrial use, and land area per person. The state must strictly adhere to these standards.” This justifies the Kim regime’s limitations on who can live in Pyongyang. Article 7 states that “The central area [of Pyongyang] is a defined area centered on Mansudae. Surrounding areas include protected zones, satellite cities, and farming areas.”<sup>360</sup> According to Article 9, “The cabinet and the Pyongyang People’s Committee shall meticulously implement resident administration tasks, organizing the central area in accordance with the principles of protecting the environment and completing the formation of the city.”

This law directs the Pyongyang People’s Committee, a government organization, to be responsible for implementing Party policies directed by the Pyongyang Party Committee. According to Article 13, “The proper construction and management of Pyongyang, which is the face of the country, is an important requirement in cultivating Pyongyang as a modern, cultural city.” Under Article 19, the Pyongyang People’s Committee gives permission to use public facilities and housing. This justifies the regime’s restrictive housing policies that provide housing only to those of appropriate *songbun*.

Articles 29-32 provide further justification for the regime’s restrictions on who lives in Pyongyang and relevant administrative measures. Article 29 specifies that “the Pyongyang City People’s Committee and relevant authorities” are responsible for resident registration. Article 30 states that “all citizens who intend to live in Pyongyang must be registered as a resident.” Article 31 further adds that “citizens who wish to move from the provinces to Pyongyang or from the surrounding area to the central area [of Pyongyang] must obtain permission from the appropriate authorities.” According to Article 32, “a residency card shall be issued to residents of Pyongyang who are 17 years of age or older. Pyongyang residents must carry the card at all times and uphold the honor as a

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359      Pyongyang City Management Law, Art. 1.

360      In reality, the center of Pyongyang is Chung District, which means “center district.”

citizen of the capital city by setting a stellar example in the implementation of the state's policies. If a Pyongyang resident severely violates the laws of the state, the residency card shall be confiscated.”

According to Article 49, “the national planning organization and relevant institutions, enterprises, and organizations must preferentially provide sufficient labor, electricity, facilities, materials, and funds as necessary for the management of Pyongyang City.” This provides justification for prioritizing all resources and efforts to Pyongyang over the rest of the country.

The Pyongyang City Management Law is just one expression of the Kim regime leadership's intent, which has evolved from Kim Il-sung's desire to build Pyongyang as the “central heart of 40 million Koreans,”<sup>361</sup> referring to all Koreans on the peninsula, into the creation of an exclusionary zone designed to preserve hereditary succession under the Kim family. This process was shaped by Kim Jong-il and has been further intensified under Kim Jong-un. More so than any other aspect, Kim Jong-il's reshaping of the KWP's structure and authority provided the basis for the Pyongyang Republic and its exclusion of all political threats.

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361 Rodong Sinmun, February 16, 1968.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: PYONGYANG'S POWER INSTITUTIONS & HUMAN RIGHTS DENIAL

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The Kim regime's institutions of power, led by the KWP,<sup>362</sup> are organized to serve the interests of the Supreme Leader. These institutions contributed to the concept and the development of the Pyongyang Republic, and they continue to deny human rights to the North Korean people. There are several state agencies that lead this effort under the Party's guidance. The NDC conducts executive functions related to national security. The State Cabinet provides day-to-day governance and administration. The Central Court supervises judicial functions, and the SPA is responsible for legislative functions. The KWP oversees all policy decisions; the concept of separation of powers does not exist in the North Korean political system.<sup>363</sup> This chapter provides an overview of each of these agencies.

### 8.1 Korean Workers' Party (KWP)<sup>364</sup>

The KWP is the *Suryong's* (Supreme Leader) premier authority and maintains representation in all organizations in North Korea. It decides on policy regarding domestic affairs, military affairs, foreign affairs, economic and social issues, and specifically human rights denial.<sup>365</sup>

The KWP traces its history back to October 1945, when the leaders of the five northwestern chapters of the Korean Communist Party met to consolidate their organizations.<sup>366</sup> The next year witnessed

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362 See Article 11 of North Korea's 2009 constitution, an unofficial translation of which can be accessed at <http://web.archive.org/web/20100519134107/http://asiamatters.blogspot.com/2009/10/north-korean-constitution-april-2009.html>.

363 Unification Education Institute, 2012 *Bukan e-hae*, 38.

364 조선로동당 (*Choson Rodongdang*) is the official name of the KWP. The word *Choson* is the North Korean term for "Korea," and is based in the ancient Korean language for the country dating back two millennia. The term *Hanguk* is the South Korean terminology used for "Korea" and refers to the name of the ethnic people of *Choson*—"Han" for the name of the people and "guk" for country. Official usage of the word *Hanguk* began with the founding of the Republic of Korea in 1948. It is not used in North Korea. *Choson Rodongdang* is also translated as Workers' Party of Korea. Use of the term "North Korean Workers' Party" is a mistranslation of the term *Choson Rodongdang* and is done so for political purposes or by the uninformed.

365 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 16; see also Unification Education Institute, 2012 *Bukan e-hae*, 30.

366 The date of this convention, October 10, is marked as the anniversary of the founding of the KWP. The North Korean Bureau of the Communist Party of Korea was founded in October 1945. Kim Yong-bom was its chairman, and Kim Il-sung replaced him after two months. In early 1946, the name of the Party was simpli-

the evolution of the KWP through several structural iterations, but all of these developments focused on communist collective ideology that limited human rights. When the Party was officially founded in 1945, its membership was 4,530. This increased to one million during the Korean War, with nearly 50,000 sub-organizations. In September 1961, this increased to 1.3 million members with 65,000 sub-organizations, demonstrating how thoroughly the party-state was prepared to institute human rights denial at the local level.<sup>367</sup> As previously noted, KWP membership stands at 3.2 million today.

The Kim regime does not use the term “national strategy.” According to a former North Korean diplomat and KWP member, “there is no difference between Party strategy and national strategy.” The official stance is centered on “*the general struggle and basic direction of the Party which maintains at all times the revolutionary stage to carry out the basic mission of the revolution.*” The KWP is responsible for carrying out all strategies and policies within North Korea, although this does not mean the state does not implement those strategies and policies or contribute to their development. North Korea’s revolutionary strategy encompasses politics, economy, internal security, anti-South Korea policy, national defense, foreign policy, and social mobilization that contribute to devising a structured, comprehensive plan.<sup>368</sup> It is within the structure of this strategy, in all of its components, that human rights are denied based on the prioritization of all matters related to serving the Supreme Leader and the Party.

The Party is the staff of the revolution.<sup>369</sup> The KWP leads the shaping of society including the structure, function, and ideology of all institutions in North Korea. It is organized hierarchically and wields power in basic social units such as workplaces, schools, and villages. The Party is the leader of “socialism in our style,” *Juche* (Self-reliance) ideology, and *Songun* (Military-first) politics.<sup>370</sup> The KWP Charter, last modified in April 2010 at the Third KWP Delegates Conference, supersedes the

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fied to the Communist Party of Korea. This Party merged in July 1946 with the New People’s Party, composed of communist Koreans returning from China, to form the Workers’ Party of North Korea. This Party was initially led by Kim Tu-bong, one of the returnees from China, with Kim Il-sung as the deputy. After the merger with the Workers’ Party of South Korea on June 30, 1949, the Party finally became the Korean Workers’ Party.

367 *Bukan gaeyo*, 48.

368 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 16.

369 Kim Il-sung, “*Juchehyeongui Hyeongmyeongmuryeok Geonseol*” 주체형의 혁명무력 건설 [Constructing *Juche*-Style Revolutionary Armed Forces], in *Great Leader Kim Il-sung’s Unending Revolutionary Accomplishments No. 9* (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1998) as cited in Cheong, *The Contemporary North Korean Politics*, 223.

370 North Koreans do not use the term “military-first policy.” However, they have employed a military-first policy since 1962 and frequently use the term “military-first.”

authority of the state. This is based on Article 11 of the state constitution, which was last modified in 2009. The KWP Charter defines the KWP as “the most supreme form of political organization out of all working peoples’ political bodies, and the vanguard of the revolution that leads society in all fields—including politics, military, economics, and culture—in a unified manner.”<sup>371</sup>

The KWP Central Committee is responsible for all facets of the Party, including leadership, policy oversight, and doctrinal direction, which includes human rights policy. Central Committee members are elected during a Party congress or a Party delegates’ conference. The most recent conference was the Fourth Party Delegates Conference in April 2012.

The KWP Politburo is the highest decision-making body within the Kim regime outside of the Supreme Leader’s personal decisions. It is responsible for the Party’s political activities and decides on Party policies. It is the interim authority body between plenary sessions of the KWP Central Committee, and its members are the highest-ranking members of the North Korean polity.

The KWP Inspection Committee detects and punishes Party members who commit anti-Party, anti-revolutionary or factional activities or violate Party line, policies or regulations. This committee consists of a chairman, a vice chairman, and four members.

The KWP CMC, chaired by the KWP First Secretary, is the Party’s highest body of military decision-making that addresses military policy. It discusses and determines how to execute the KWP’s military policies. The committee organizes and supervises projects to strengthen national military power, including the MPAF, and develops its munitions industry while providing guidance to the military.<sup>372</sup>

The KWP maintains provincial, municipal, and county Party committees throughout North Korea. Each committee determines how to implement KWP Party lines, doctrine, and policies within its jurisdiction. Each is led by a Party committee chairman and supported by an organizational secretary. Each regional committee maintains a military committee to manage civil defense and an inspection committee to ensure adherence to KWP doctrine and directives.<sup>373</sup>

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371 The KWP Charter as of 2010 can be accessed at <http://world.moleg.go.kr/KP/law/33758?pageIndex=6>.

372 *Bukan gaeyo*, 95.

373 Choi Jin-Wook, “Bukan jibang haengjeong-ui siltae-wa jeonmang” [Status of North Korea’s Regional Administration and Prospects], *Korea Institute for National Unification* (June 11, 2003), 4-7. [https://www.kinu.or.kr/upload/neoboard/REPORT01/20030613\\_o.hwp](https://www.kinu.or.kr/upload/neoboard/REPORT01/20030613_o.hwp).

The Party is embedded in every organization within North Korea, regardless of type, size, or location. From state ministry down to the lowest bureaucratic entity, from the MPAF and KPA down to DMZ companies,<sup>374</sup> from the MPS down to the village police station, from state economic enterprises down to the smallest farm or mining operation, there is a Party committee or cell to supervise Party life and ensure that Party policy guidance is followed. Each Party committee, which is a cell for organizations with five to thirty personnel, ensures that Party policies and practices are observed in the accomplishment of state goals. However, these Party committees also provide oversight of adherence to the Monolithic Guidance System, the Monolithic Ideology System, and the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology—all the key components of *Suryong-juui* (Supreme Leader-ism). By doing so, the Party ensures that the entire country—its institution, population, and resources—are devoted and prioritized to the center of power in Pyongyang. This enables the phenomena of the Pyongyang Republic.

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374 This refers to a baseline military unit consisting of 80-200 personnel, depending on the type of military mission.



A 15 April 2012 satellite image shows the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee Office Complex #1 in central Pyongyang. RFA according to anonymous sources reports that a new Department of the Economy was established in June 2013 to manage economic policies and personnel. The departments mentioned in this posting that are seen in this image are: the Organization and Guidance Department (1), the Propaganda and Agitation Department (2), the Administration Department (7), Economic Policy Control and Finance and Planning Departments (14), Office #39 (15), Office #38 (16), the Machine-Building Industry Department (17), the Light Industry Department (19), and the Finance and Accounting Department (20). The #1 Office Complex also

contains a Kim family residence and banquet hall (21), the Kim family personal medical clinic (22), a conference center and assembly hall (23), the executive offices of Kim Jong-un (24), the Office of Adjutants (bodyguards) (25), the location of late Kim Jong-il's offices (26) and Kim Jong-un's official residence (27). (Photo: Digital Globe).

Source: *KWP Headquarters in Chung District, Pyongyang* (Source: *North Korea Leadership Watch*, April 15, 2012, citing *Digital Globe*. [https://nkleadershipwatch.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/kwpcoc1\\_0412.jpg](https://nkleadershipwatch.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/kwpcoc1_0412.jpg)).

## 8.2 KWP Organization and Guidance Department (OGD)

The KWP OGD is the most influential and powerful organization in North Korea. Its practices and procedures sustain the phenomenon of the Pyongyang Republic by ensuring that personnel, policy, and resources are prioritized to the capital. The OGD plays an especially critical role. It not only serves as the staff for the Politburo, but it also serves as the staff of the CMC, Inspection Committee, and the Central Committee—the who's who of North Korea.<sup>375</sup> Even though high-ranking generals

375 Jung Young-Tae et al., *Bukan-ui bumunbyeol jojik siltae mit jojik munhwa byeonhwa jonghap yeongu: Dang, jeong, gun mit gyeongje, sahoe bumun giganjojik nae-ui gigwan siltae-reul jungsimeuro* [Joint Study of the Realities and Changes in Organizational Culture of Organizations in North Korea: Focus on Party Institutions within Foundational Organizations in the Party, Government, Military and the Economic, Social Sectors] (Seoul: KINU, 2007), 21.

are Central Committee members, they are also subject to the OGD's control. All Central Committee personnel working in the Central Committee building are assigned to the Headquarters Party Committee, which is controlled by the OGD.<sup>376</sup>

The OGD oversees the efficacy of the internal security agencies discussed below and inspects all organizations on their mission of upholding regime security. No individual or agency other than the *Suryong* can call the OGD to task. Agencies that demonstrate poor performance on upholding regime security are quickly punished based on the OGD's recommendations. Jang Song-taek's execution and the related marginalization of the KWP Administration Department met the standard, but not the precedence, for this type of ruthless efficiency for *Suryong*-level decision-making regarding perceived or actual personnel disloyalty.

However, the OGD is not a power base separate from the *Suryong*. It does not provide or exercise expertise within any professional or technical area such as the military, science, education, or economic fields.<sup>377</sup> It has significant influence, just like any office or organization with access to the ruler in any state system, but it does not have independent decision-making authority. Known among former KWP members as the "Party within the Party," the OGD's influence lies in its direct service to the *Suryong* with the primary mission of ensuring individual and organizational commitment to the *Suryong* and its ability to orchestrate severe punishment for those not demonstrating such loyalty.

As discussed above, there is no state policy or government policy in North Korea, but only Party policy. State agencies prepare policy proposals, but the Party decides and adjusts proposals. Government officials must implement policy as the Party directs. To that effect, the OGD approves all policy, including human rights policy. Kim Il-sung once noted that "the OGD is the doctor and the KWP PAD is the medicine."<sup>378</sup> Although other Party and state agencies, particularly the KWP Secretariat, contribute to policy formulation in all areas, all policies must pass through the OGD. It determines whether policies are consistent with the *Suryong*'s guidance. This is a core aspect of all North Korean political, military, economic, cultural, and social policy decision-making. The OGD not only assesses all policies, but also monitors all senior-level policy formulators and implementers.<sup>379</sup>

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376 Ibid.

377 As referred to in this sentence, "education" excludes political education or indoctrination.

378 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 120.

379 Ibid., 119.

Supervision of North Korea's human rights policy is not a formally designated mission or a publicly discussed issue, but it is the default responsibility of the OGD. The regime's human rights policy is carried out by every level of the Party, internal security apparatus, military, and judicial institutions. Every other organization within North Korea must comply with directives on this issue from these institutions. An individual leader's failure to do so results in loss of privilege and position, and often leads to imprisonment or "re-education" through hard labor on a farm, factory, or mine. Officials in senior positions see themselves as being best served by the current system. Failing to strictly comply with the regime's human rights policy results in negative career consequences for those leaders and the institutions in which they serve.

To direct the Party life of all leaders and Party members, the OGD issues Party life directives through its Party Life Guidance Section. This guidance is disseminated down to every organization through Party committee organization sections, departments, or political guidance officers. This includes instructions on how to implement the guidance. Thus, policy implementation is monitored by the OGD's Party Life Guidance Section and executed through personal, on-site evaluations. Such evaluations are not conducted by an individual's assigned organizational structure. The OGD consistently evaluates the Party life of each KWP member, particularly those in leadership positions, and their demonstrated loyalty to the Supreme Leader. Particular emphasis is given to whether each leader complies with Party policy and the *Suryong's* directives. Policy recommendations from each agency, including the military, are screened in this manner.

Everybody in North Korea has a Party life filled with political ideology sessions, self-criticism sessions, the study of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's teachings, and political organizational activities.<sup>380</sup> Everyone, regardless of Party membership, belongs at least to a Party-affiliated organization.<sup>381</sup> If they are not a Party member, they are either a member of the Party's Women's League, the Kim Il-sung Socialist Labor Youth League,<sup>382</sup> or one of the Party-led unions for laborers and agricultural workers.<sup>383</sup> Local Party officials oversee these activities, and the police conduct surveillance in every neighborhood to ensure participation. Absence from any session is marked in one's record kept by the local police, and may lead to arrest if sufficiently severe.

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380 Party life is sometimes referred to as institutional life.

381 "Escaping From the Institution of North Korea," *New Focus International*, May 16, 2013.

382 The Youth League consists of individuals between the ages of 16 and 30.

383 Jang Seok-Chol, ed., *Civil-Military Operations Handbook, Republic of Korea-United States Combined Forces Command* (Seoul: Republic of Korea Army Printing Office, 2012), 37-41.

Personnel records are maintained on each individual and at every level. These evaluations are based on Party life function and regime policy implementation. After becoming the Director of the OGD in 1974, Kim Jong-il established an Inspections Section in the OGD to ensure that leaders in all sectors of North Korean society complied with the Monolithic Guidance System. Kim Jong-il also established the OGD Reports Section to support the Monolithic Guidance System and to channel all reports on leadership and organizational loyalty to him.<sup>384</sup> He emphasized revolutionizing the cadre with regards to intensifying Party life and guidance, as well as organizational life, ideological instruction, and revolutionary tasks. All Party cells at every level conduct self-criticism, organizational activities, and ideological life sessions. The OGD is responsible for overseeing this.<sup>385</sup> The most important task of the OGD is upholding Party life and maintaining the system of self-criticism. Cell secretaries, basic Party organizations, and the OGD are all responsible for this, and the military is no exception.<sup>386</sup>

The OGD is also responsible for the recruiting, training, and assigning of all Party cadre. North Korea defines “cadre policy” as the “policy of selecting, assigning and training cadre.”<sup>387</sup> The requirement of this personnel system is to train cadre to devote themselves to the goals and objectives of the *Suryong* and to always demonstrate complete loyalty to the same. This system is thus designed to serve as the first line of coup prevention. Only those that demonstrate strong loyalty can be promoted to critical positions or become part of the power elite or even the lesser elite. Kim Jong-un’s advisers have all passed through this system to be present at any crisis decision-making forum. The training operated by the OGD only produces those who will carry out Party policy to the Supreme Leader’s intent, on everything from the nuclear program to human rights denial.<sup>388</sup>

Foreign contact with OGD officials is extremely rare. One visit by U.S. officials led by former Secretary of Defense William Perry may have been the only moment when an OGD official met with American representatives. According to a U.S. team member, General Ri Yong-chol, then OGD

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384 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo elliteu*, 121.

385 Kim Jong-il, “Dangsaenghwal-eul ganghwahayeo ganbudeul-eul cheoljeohi hyeongmyeonghwahaja” [Let’s Revolutionize The Cadre through Intensifying Party Life], in *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 2 (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1995). Speech to OGD and PAD workers, December 3, 1970.

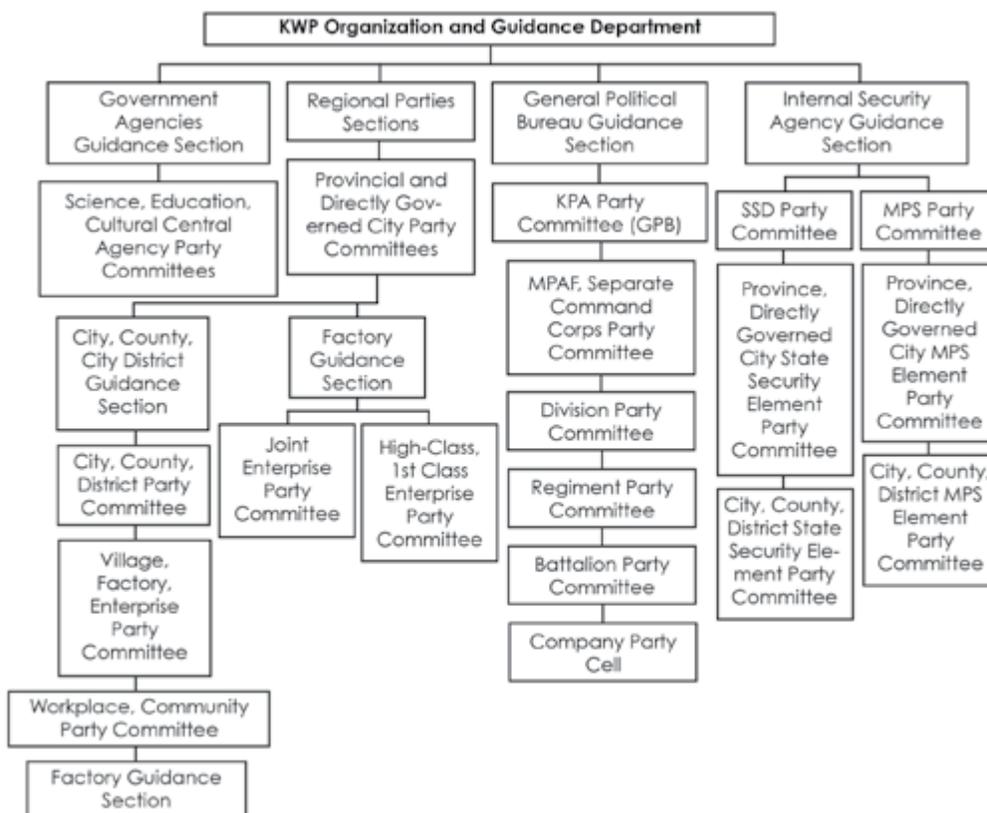
386 Kim Jong-il, “Jeondang-e saeroun dangsaenghwal chonghwa jedo-reul seulde daehayeo” [On Establishing a New Party Life Self-Critique System throughout The Party], in *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 3 (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1995). Speech to a KWP Central Committee OGD “responsible workers” Conference, August 21, 1973.

387 *Chosun-mal Daesajeon* [Great Dictionary of the Chosun Language], Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing House, 1992), 64.

388 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo elliteu*, 199-208.

First Vice Director for military oversight, continually harangued and threatened the U.S. delegation during the negotiations.<sup>389</sup>

According to South Korea’s Ministry of Unification, the exact organization of the Party structure is difficult to precisely determine.<sup>390</sup> Party discussions are secret, and Party organization issues are “super secret.”<sup>391</sup> Although there is little information about the OGD’s organization and activities, one of South Korea’s premier North Korean analysts has compiled the following organizational chart below to demonstrate the OGD’s reach down to every regional and functional Party element.



389 Author’s interview with U.S. team member present at the meeting.

390 Assessments and organizational charts change frequently by year and agency. The latest chart published by South Korea’s Ministry of Unification is available in English at <http://www.unikorea.go.kr/content.do?cmsid=1592&mode=view&page=&cid=44133>.

391 Kim Jong-il, “Dang saeobeseo hyeongsik juui-reul eopsael de daehaeseo” [On Eliminating Formalism in Party Tasks], in *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 5 (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1995). Speech to KWP Central Committee OGD and PAD workers, January 14, 1977.

This chart depicts the chain of authority in the OGD.<sup>392</sup> This chart can also be used to track how human rights denial is implemented throughout every organization and community in North Korea. Each of the Party committees and Party cells identified in this chart is monitored by the OGD, and is responsible for complying with all Party policies.

Kim Jong-un's succession process could not have been conducted without the OGD's power and influence over every aspect of North Korean society, due to its direct control over the power elite. The continuity of the regime's power structure requires the continuity of policies, including human rights denial. This enabled the successor to maintain the regime's political system and preserve the privileges and influence of the power elite. Given the focus of the power elite and the OGD on maintaining the existing political system, the consolidation of power in the Kim Jong-un regime all but eliminates consideration of human rights improvement.

### **8.3 KWP Propaganda and Agitation Department (PAD)**

The KWP PAD is responsible for all ideological training and indoctrination at every level of North Korean society. It is the Kim regime's primary tool of information control. The PAD is part of the KWP Secretariat and takes guidance from the OGD. As a core element of the Kim regime's domestic strategy, political agitation and propaganda is employed to indoctrinate the entire populace, motivate the military and security services, and politicize the economic sector with tailored ideological indoctrination programs. The main objective of North Korean political agitation and propaganda is individual and organizational loyalty to the Supreme Leader.

The PAD's mission is to inculcate the population on the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology, Monolithic Ideology System, and Monolithic Guidance System. It is also responsible for promoting current and new Supreme Leader and Party directives and positions. In doing so, the PAD promotes adherence to collectivist values as outlined by the KWP. Most of all, it promotes individual loyalty to the *Suryong* to the exclusion of individual rights. The regime's propaganda also seeks to define the ideological struggle of socialism against imperialism, to emphasize the theme of independence in *Juche* to build nationalist values, and to characterize the Republic of Korea, the United States, and Japan as the enemies of the Korean people.<sup>393</sup>

The PAD maintains representatives at every level of the Party, government, and military. North Koreans first encounter a PAD representative and the PAD's messages at school at the age of seven.

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392 Cheong, *The Contemporary North Korean Politics*, 312.

393 Author's interview with former female KPA PAD officer.

They encounter such a representative for the rest of their lives unless they are in prison.<sup>394</sup> There is a PAD representative at every organized group of thirty or more people in the Party, government, military, school, social organization, and economic entity. The role of the PAD is to inculcate every North Korean citizen of their responsibility to the *Suryong*, adherence to Party doctrine and guidance, and their individual contribution to the collective.

The PAD oversees all self-criticism sessions and ideological training classes for every citizen, regardless of rank or position. Every morning and evening, local PAD guidance officers broadcast propaganda on every street, subway, newspaper, intranet, mobile phone, and any other information outlet. The PAD propagandizes every Party slogan and policy through these media. The propaganda is not unlike advertisements in capitalist states, but it is more intense. The difference is that socialist countries broadcast socialism, whereas capitalist societies broadcast products.<sup>395</sup>

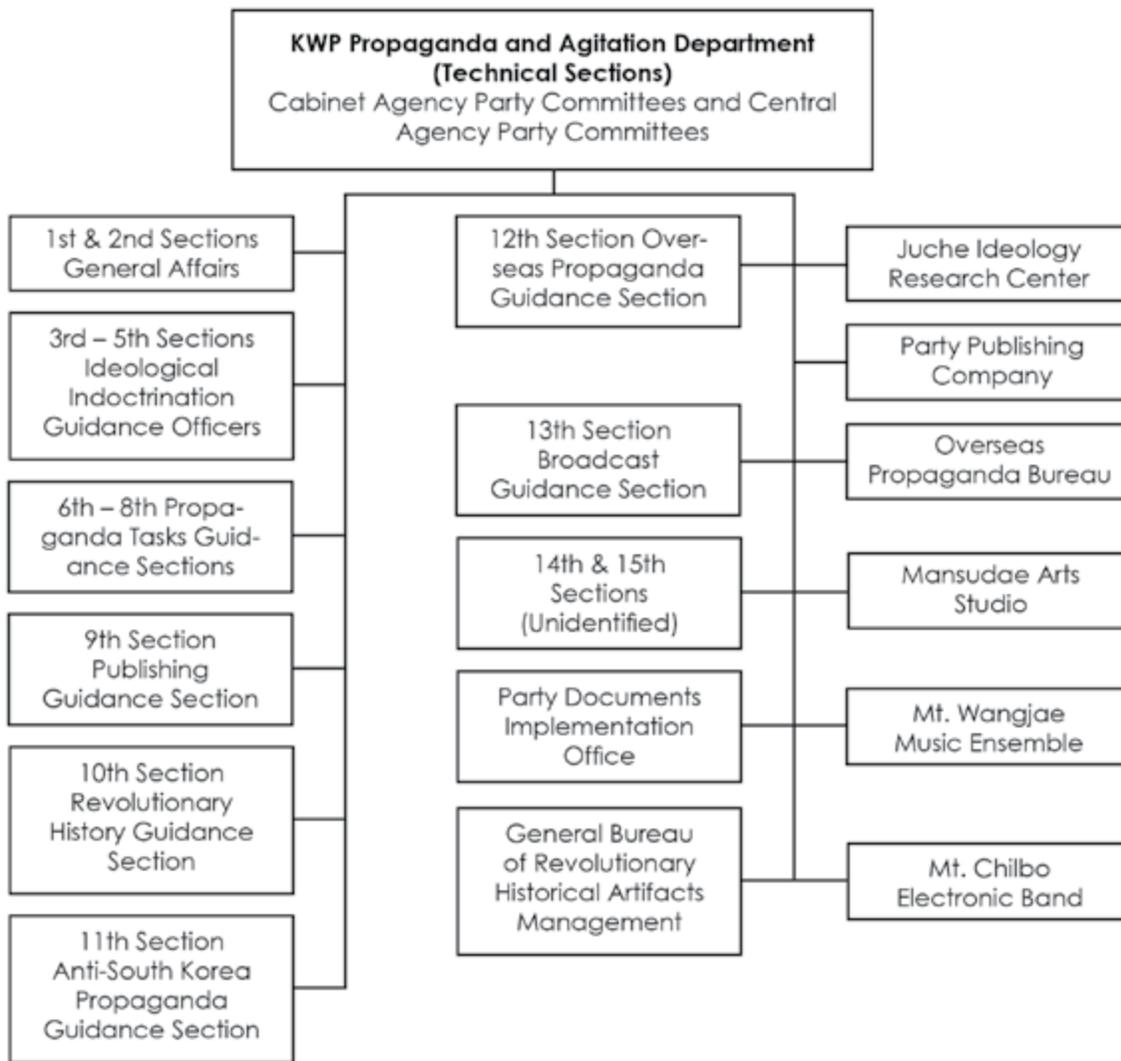
Under the KWP Secretary for Propaganda, a position currently held by Kim Ki-nam, there are three vice directors, one each for propaganda, agitation, and indoctrination. Each of the three vice directors supervises two bureaus. The Propaganda Vice Director supervises the Propaganda Guidance Bureau and the Central Agency Guidance Bureau. The Agitation Vice Director supervises the Agitation Bureau and the Three Revolutionary Teams. The Indoctrination Vice Director supervises the Regional Organization Propaganda Guidance Bureau and the Indoctrination Bureau. The chart below details how functional areas are organized.<sup>396</sup>

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394 Adam Whitnall, "North Korean Defector Says She Believed Kim Jong-Il Was A God Who Could Read Her Mind," *The Independent*, April 10, 2014. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/north-korean-defector-says-she-believed-kim-jongil-was-a-god-who-could-read-her-mind-9251983.html>. The video at this link shows how effective this inculcation process is.

395 Jeon, *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukan-ui sahoe-wa munhwa*, 33-34.

396 *Ibid.*, 34.



The Propaganda Guidance Bureau oversees all newspapers and broadcast media, including opinion pieces. The Agitation Bureau oversees all movies and literature. The Three Revolutionary Teams oversee historical artifacts related to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. The Indoctrination Bureau oversees all meetings, conferences, and lectures.<sup>397</sup> The Propaganda Guidance Bureau and the Indoctrination Bureau are responsible for disseminating the Kim regime’s annual New Year’s address.<sup>398</sup>

397 Jeon, *Dasi gochyeo sseun Bukan-ui sahoe-wa munhwa*, 34.

398 The New Year’s address is analogous to the State of the Union address in the United States.

The PAD manages all information services in North Korea, including the state's three television stations, 200 radio stations, and all newspapers, including the KWP's *Rodong Sinmun*. It supervises the Central Broadcasting Committee, which oversees broadcast media, including KCNA. The PAD also oversees North Korea's publishing companies, including the KWP Publishing House, the Foreign Language Publishing House, and the Workers' Publishing House. The PAD also supervises all art and music troupes, the film industry, and all literary groups. It also oversees the Party History Institute and the Party History Research Center.<sup>399</sup> The PAD also cooperates with the SSD and MPS in all censorship operations.

Importantly, the PAD orchestrated the propaganda for Kim Jong-un's political succession after his father died in 2011 and the propaganda that supports current efforts aimed at power consolidation.

#### **8.4 State Security Department (SSD)<sup>400</sup>**

Known in the international community as North Korea's "secret police," the SSD performs a wide variety of internal security and foreign intelligence missions.<sup>401</sup> The crimes of the so-called "secret police" of any nation-state generally consist of gross human rights violations against fellow citizens of their own country. Members of the secret police conduct their activities "in secret," both within and without the law and unencumbered by international human rights treaties. The SSD usually acts without judicial constraints and, in many cases, with the full support of a duplicitous judicial system. Most importantly, the SSD acts upon political objectives based on the *Suryong's* directives.

The SSD is best known for—and focuses most of its energies on—investigations of political crimes regarded as threats against the *Suryong* and violations of the Ten Principles. With a force of about 50,000 across the country, SSD officers are located in every community and major enterprise. Its violations of human rights are legion, as demonstrated by thousands of first-hand accounts from North Korean refugees who have settled in the Republic of Korea or other countries.<sup>402</sup>

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399 Michael Madden, "KWP Propaganda and Agitation Department," *North Korea Leadership Watch*, November 2009. <http://nkleadershipwatch.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/kwppropagandaandagitationdepartment.pdf>.

400 For more information on the SSD, see Ken E. Gause, *Coercion, Control, Surveillance and Punishment: An Examination of the North Korean Police State* (Washington, D.C.: HRNK, 2012).

401 The SSD (*Guk-ga An-jeon Bo-wi-bu*) is sometimes translated as the "Ministry of State Security" or the "National Security Agency."

402 For instance, see *Daily NK* at <http://www.dailynk.com/english/index.php>; Database Center for North Korean Human Rights at <http://nkdb.org/2012/main.php>; or KINU's annual White Papers on Human Rights in North Korea at <http://www.kinu.or.kr/>.

SSD officers are motivated by professional success, just like anyone else. The more arrests they make, the more successful they are or at least appear to be. Confessions, arrests, successful interrogations, and building informant networks are all measures of success. Such actions are designed to target class enemies and other perceived enemies of the Kim regime. Ignoring the slightest off-hand remark is denying the police officer the opportunity for career advancement and family privilege. For the police and legal systems, death sentences equate to the elimination of enemies of the state. In that vein, the policeman's efforts are "patriotic."

## 8.5 Military Security Command (MSC)

The MSC's actions parallel the duties of the SSD within the military. A conference for MSC leaders in 2013 led by Kim Jong-un prominently displayed the priorities of the MSC: "Protect the Suryong," "Protect Policy," "Protect the System," and "Protect the Ranks."<sup>403</sup> It should be noted that members of the military historically have less rights than those of ordinary citizens in most countries, including democracies. However, the MSC's treatment of individual soldiers is similar to the SSD's treatment of civilians. They have their own courts and own prosecutors. There is an MSC officer at every level of the military down to the battalion level, and they are located at every military industry factory or enterprise.

## 8.6 Ministry of People's Security (MPS)

Violations of human rights by the MPS are extremely well documented through first-hand testimony.<sup>404</sup> As the national police force, its primary stated mission is maintaining law and order. However, the MPS focuses on regime security above all else. It maintains a force of 300,000 that includes investigators, administrative personnel, the Pre-Trial Examination Agency (PEA), and beat cops at the housing area level up through the county, city and provincial levels. The MPS runs hundreds of prisons outside the political prison camp system. Although conditions at these prisons are not as severe as those of political prison camps, they are well known for brutal torture and starvation.

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403 Lee Sung-Hyon, "김정은 제1위원장, 제2차 보위일꾼대회 지도" [First Chairman Kim Jong-un, Leads Second Assembly of Security Workers], *Tongil News*, November 21, 2013.

404 See same websites as those cited for the SSD.

## 8.7 Legal System

The basic elements of rule of law are commonly identified as accessibility, clarity, and equal applicability of the law to citizens and government officials alike.<sup>405</sup> However, North Korean law is essentially “rule-by-law which is defined by the following traits: totalitarianism, single party rule, no civil society, socialist conception of rights as bourgeois, emphasis on duties to State, law as a tool of State interest, party policy preceding laws, and lawyers as State workers.”<sup>406</sup>

Historically, the Kim regime has viewed the law as a tool to enforce the Party’s policies. Early on in the country’s history, Kim Il-sung gave guidance on human rights observance in a speech to the North Korean judiciary: “To reiterate the demands of the Party from the class struggle point of view, we are simply emphasizing that we should interpret and apply the laws accurately from the viewpoint of proletariat dictatorship.”<sup>407</sup> In essence, courts are tools of the Party that serve as “powerful weapons for the proletariat dictatorship, which execute the judicial policies of the Korean Workers’ Party.”<sup>408</sup>

The Kim family regime has marginalized the effectiveness of law through emphasizing political ideology and political accountability for those charged with enforcing laws: “the teachings of Kim Il Sung, the words of Kim Jong Il, and the precepts and principles of the Party have come to function as supra-legal structures.”<sup>409</sup> Consequently, the North Korean legal system, which has roots in the Japanese colonial court system, Soviet instruction, and Korean tradition, is dominated by political instruction far more than jurisprudence.<sup>410</sup> Under these conditions, North Korea’s Supreme Leader has centralized control of all legal power and criminal enforcement within Pyongyang’s political infrastructure, where human rights denial is a basic principle. Senior leaders of the courts, law

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405 Thomas Carothers, “The Rule of Law Revival,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1998), as cited in Patricia Goedde, “Law ‘Of Our Own Style’: The Evolution and Challenges of the North Korean Legal System,” *Fordham International Law Journal* 27.4 (2003): 1267.

406 Goedde, “Law ‘Of Our Own Style,’” 1267-68.

407 Kim Il-sung, “In order to Carry Out Our Party’s Judicial Policies,” in *Kim Il-sung’s Collected Works*, Vol. 12 (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1981), 221. Speech to the National Conference of Judicial Workers, April 28, 1958.

408 “The Judiciary,” in *North Korea: A Country Study*, ed. Andrea Matles Savada (Washington: Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1993). <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9648.html>.

409 Lee, Kyu-Chang and Gwang-Jin Chung, “The North Korean Criminal Trial System: Characteristics and Actual Practice,” *KINU Research Abstract* 11-05 (January 26, 2012).

410 Goedde, “Law ‘Of Our Own Style.’” 1265-88.

enforcement, and extra-judiciary organizations are constantly evaluated on their political performance of supporting the *Suryong*.

There is a direct relationship between the phenomenon of the Pyongyang Republic and North Korean law. The law specifically confers preferential treatment according to political loyalty. One example of this is North Korea's 2009 constitution, which states in Article 162 that the duties of the court are to "ensure that all organs, enterprises, organizations, and citizens precisely observe the laws of the state and struggle actively against class enemies and all law offenders."<sup>411</sup> Secondly, North Korea's Criminal Law sets out the types of crimes and their punishments. Articles 1-8 clearly explain that the Criminal Law is designed to protect the state, not the defendant. This enables the courts to punish defendants by labor class,<sup>412</sup> thus clearly punishing those not allowed entry into Pyongyang more severely. Thirdly, the Criminal Procedures Law is designed to provide the fundamental principles of the legal and investigative institutions of the state. Article 2 specifically states the principle of distinguishing friends from enemies,<sup>413</sup> thus enabling the "friends allowed to live in Pyongyang," and "restricting the enemies from entering [Pyongyang]."

Modern criminal law usually provides for the absence of a crime if not specified by law. However, Article 10 of North Korea's Criminal Code states "in the case of an offense that does not fall under any expressed clause of the criminal law, the basis, scope, and punishment for it shall be determined according to the clause on acts that resemble it most in terms of its type and danger to society."<sup>414</sup>

In order of authority, the theoretical hierarchy of North Korean law is the constitution followed by individual laws; SPA legislation and decisions; NDC decisions and orders; SPA Presidium intent, decisions, and directives; cabinet regulations, decisions, and directives; and cabinet committee directives and regional people's committee decisions. However, the KWP is recognized as the greater authority in all cases.<sup>415</sup>

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411 An unofficial English translation of North Korea's 2009 constitution can be accessed at <http://web.archive.org/web/20100519134107/http://asiamatters.blogspot.com/2009/10/north-korean-constitution-april-2009.html>.

412 Korean Bar Association, *2008 White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea* (Seoul: 2009), 192-93.

413 *Ibid.*, 194-95.

414 "The Judiciary," in *North Korea: A Country Study*.

415 Unification Education Institute, *Bukan beob-eul boneun bangbeob* [How to Understand North Korean Law] (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2006), 30.

## 8.8 Supreme People's Assembly (SPA)

Although it is commonly believed that the SPA determines policy, this has never been the case. Article 11 of North Korea's constitution explains that the state will carry out all activities under the leadership of the Party.<sup>416</sup> The 687-member SPA passes whatever legislation may be needed to support policy as the Party deems fit. After the Party decides policy, the SPA ratifies it rubber-stamp fashion. SPA members cannot debate an issue or bill. The SPA is intentionally made to appear democratic, but this is designed as an illusion for external consumption.<sup>417</sup> One indication of this powerlessness is the SPA Legislation Committee, which has no supporting organization for enforcement of legislation. The same holds true for the Budget Committee, the Foreign Relations Committee, and every other SPA committee.<sup>418</sup>

## 8.9 Courts

According to Article 168 of its 2009 constitution, the Central Court, which is the highest court in North Korea, is subordinate to the SPA. The current President of the Central Court is Pak Myongchol, who was elected to the position by the First Session of the 13th SPA.<sup>419</sup> Since the court does not have separate authority, this is contrary to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which North Korea signed in 1981 but attempted to withdraw from in 1997.<sup>420</sup> The lack of judicial independence is also evidenced by Article 11 of the Prosecution Supervisory Law, which stipulates that "the prosecutor(s) shall supervise whether the trial or arbitration of a case is accurately deliberating and resolving the legal requirements and in a timely manner."<sup>421</sup>

The judicial system consists of the Central Court, twelve provincial or municipal courts, and approximately 100 people's courts. These courts are responsible for protecting the state, not the rights of the accused. Trials by peers in people's courts focus primarily on failure to abide by the Monolithic

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416 An unofficial English translation of North Korea's 2009 constitution can be accessed at <http://web.archive.org/web/20100519134107/http://asiamatters.blogspot.com/2009/10/north-korean-constitution-april-2009.html>.

417 Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo elliteu*, 405.

418 *Ibid.*, 404.

419 "Director of Supreme Public Prosecutors Office Appointed, President of Supreme Court Elected," KCNA, April 9, 2014.

420 See Do et al., *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2015*, 38, note 3. The withdrawal did not happen, as there was and is no provision under the ICCPR to do so. North Korea has not taken further action on withdrawal.

421 Kim Kook-Shin et al., *2011 White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea* (Seoul: KINU, 2011), 180-81.

Ideology System, poor class-consciousness, lack of revolutionary spirit, criticism of Party policies, and minor economic crimes.<sup>422</sup> Some trials are held publicly for the purpose of intimidating the public.<sup>423</sup> Important political cases are handled by the SSD, not the courts.<sup>424</sup>

North Korean courts do not engage in legal arbitration or interpretation. Instead, they solely serve the Kim regime's exercise of power. The SPA Presidium, is responsible for interpreting the law, not the courts. For the defendants, the court interprets what constitutes appropriate thought and behavior. During the appeal process in North Korea's courts, the focus is not on whether errors were committed in previous trials, but on whether lower courts were faithful to the teachings of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. Defendants rarely appeal, given the possibility of additional sentencing.<sup>425</sup>

Kim Jong-il stated that all investigations, court proceedings, and surveillance activities must be in accordance with Party policies and legal requirements.<sup>426</sup> This is a directive from the *Suryong*. Any investigators, judges, prosecutors, or policemen who do not take political directives into account in the legal context will be subject to prosecution themselves. Essentially, the North Korean legal system does not follow its own laws, but follows Party policy instead. When visiting North Korea's Central Court building in 2010, Kim Jong-il was quoted as stating, "In order to strengthen the observance of law for enforcing the socialist law it is important to increase the function and role of the judicial organ... he noted, *underlining the need for the officials in this field to strictly abide by the principle of loyalty to the Party...*"<sup>427</sup>

## 8.10 Pre-Trial Examination Agency (PEA)

The PEA is not separate from the MPS. However, its functions of pre-trial investigations and detention make it a distinct part of the legal system. The PEA's duties and procedures are spelled out in the Criminal Procedures Law, which also stipulates the observance of the rights of the accused. In reality, the PEA does not observe the rights of the accused more than any other agency

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422 Lee and Chung, "The North Korean Criminal Trial System: Characteristics and Actual Practice," 2.

423 For example, see Meabh Ritchie, Colin Freeman and Joe Daunt, "North Korea video shows two on trial for watching American films," *The Telegraph*, September 4, 2015.

424 Darren C. Zook, "Reforming North Korea: Law, Politics, and The Market Economy," *Stanford Journal of International Law* 48.1 (2012): 148.

425 Lee and Chung, "The North Korean Criminal Trial System: Characteristics and Actual Practice," 1.

426 Kim Jong-il, "Sabeop geomchal saeob-eul gaeseon ganghwa halde daehayeo" [On Improving Legal Prosecution Tasks], in *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 7 (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1996), 321.

427 See Curtis Melvin, "Exclusive: Inside the N. Korean Court That Tried Kenneth Bae," *NK News*, August 5, 2013. Emphasis added.

in North Korea, particularly in political cases. The PEA is notorious for the worst kinds of torture and rights violations.

## 8.11 Prosecutor's Office

Prosecutors in North Korea must legally secure the policies of the Party and uphold class principles.<sup>428</sup> The current Director of the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office is Chang Pyong-kyu, who was appointed by the First Session of the 13th SPA.<sup>429</sup> The Prosecutor's Office is responsible for assigning all prosecutors, lawyers, and court assessors to each case. There is no bar association to oversee legal assistance.<sup>430</sup> North Korean authorities are more concerned with obtaining confessions than uncovering the truth.<sup>431</sup> As directed by Kim Jong-il, all North Korean courts come under the supervision of the prosecution. Regardless of who the defendant is, the accused is first subject to the authority of the prosecutor's office, not the authority of the judge or the court.<sup>432</sup> Article 11 of the Prosecution Supervisory Law states that "The prosecutor(s) shall supervise whether the trial or arbitration of a case is accurately deliberating and resolving the legal requirements and in a timely manner."<sup>433</sup> Since all court activities must comply with Party policies, the denial of the defendant's rights must be assumed due to the supremacy of the Party over the court system.

## 8.12 Defense Lawyers

According to the North Korean legal review process, defense lawyers in North Korea must assist individuals in understanding the legitimacy of the judicial system. They are not advocates for the defendant, but an employee of the state.<sup>434</sup> The lawyer "must strive to safeguard KWP policies; and, as proponents of Party policies they have the duty to enlighten the people and justify the various

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428 See Articles 2 and 4 of North Korea's Prosecutor Law. North Korea Laws Information Center, last updated March 30, 2011. <http://world.moleg.go.kr/KP/law/19119?pageIndex=15>.

429 "Director of Supreme Public Prosecutors Office Appointed, President of Supreme Court Elected," KCNA, April 9, 2014.

430 Zook, "Reforming North Korea," 148.

431 Korean Institute for National Unification, *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea*, 2008, 97-98.

432 Kim Jong-il, "Sabeop geomchal saeob-eul gaeseon ganghwa halde daehayeo" [On Improving Legal Prosecution Tasks], in *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 7 (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 1996), 321.

433 Kim et al., *2011 White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea*, 180-81.

434 Ri Jae-do, *Criminal Procedure Laws* (Pyongyang: Kim Il-sung University Press, 1987), as quoted in *2008 White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea* (Seoul: Korean Bar Association, 2009), 223.

policies of the Party in the process of court deliberations and trials.”<sup>435</sup> In other words, a lawyer’s role is to cooperate with the court in a manner consistent with Party policy.<sup>436</sup> Consequently, the likelihood of a fair defense and the observance of individual rights is minimized or entirely absent from legal proceedings.

### **8.13 Local Party Officials**

These officials serve at the provincial, county, and city levels, as well as at all enterprises and within the military. Officials at the lower end of the political hierarchy are expected to carry out Party expectations to the letter. Although that is unrealistic, Organization Departments at the lower levels assesses and reports to the OGD on the effectiveness of local officials in upholding the regime’s interests and denying human rights.

### **8.14 Socialist Law-Abiding Life Guidance Committees**

A major characteristic of North Korea’s legal system is the inclusion of quasi-trial systems. In these systems, the SSD and the Socialist Law-Abiding Life Guidance Committees conduct trials outside the formal system of state courts. The SSD conducts judgment on political crimes through its prosecutor’s office. The Socialist Law-Abiding Life Guidance Committee conducts judgment by peers.<sup>437</sup>

Founded in 1977, Socialist Law-Abiding Life Guidance Committees exist in all provincial, city, and county-level people’s committees. This extra-judicial organization meets at least once a month and is led by the respective head of the people’s committee. These committees oversee public authority and are able to implement state power when addressing issues that are short of crimes.<sup>438</sup>

Another level of surveillance is the network of informants employed by SSD and MPS agents. This system is effective, because in a country where restrictions are harsh and living conditions are even worse, small rewards given by police are highly prized. According to the testimony of one former

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435 Ri Jae-do, *Criminal Procedure Laws* (Pyongyang: Kim Il-sung University Press, 1987), as quoted in Kim Soo-Am, *The North Korean Penal Code, Criminal Procedures, and their Actual Applications* (Seoul: KINU, 2006), 18.

436 Lee and Chung, “The North Korean Criminal Trial System: Characteristics and Actual Practice,” 2.

437 Ibid.

438 “The Judiciary,” in *North Korea: A Country Study*.

MPS officer, each investigation officer of the SSD and the MPS monitor approximately 200 citizens, which includes thirty informants. This is equivalent to 15% of the population.<sup>439</sup>

When someone is told that they are leaving in twenty-four hours, the neighbors know they are going to a prison camp. They will drop off gardening instruments, because they know the departing individuals will need these tools to survive. Consequently, the concept of personal safety dominates each North Korean's thinking in their daily activities and conversations. The Kim regime's anti-socialist inspection teams, recently increased in type, location, and frequency of activity under Kim Jong-un, are a major contributor to the concept of fear versus safety.<sup>440</sup>

### 8.15 Neighborhood Unit (*Inminban*)

This is where human rights denial begins in North Korea. The lowest end of village leadership is the *inminbanjang* (neighborhood unit chief), who observes the private lives of between fifteen and thirty housing units and organizes local Party propaganda programs.<sup>441</sup> The *inminban* organizes the populace down to the sub-community level and helps enable the centralization of North Korean society. The missions of the *inminban* are: ideological education of the residents; support of social labor mobilization; performing cultural hygienic programs and maintaining environmental order; management of residents and local roads and paths; and detection of anti-state behavior by residents.

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439 Kim Young-Cheol, "North Korea's Control over its People and the People's Safety Agency: Testimony of a former officer of the People's Safety Agency," Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, June 29, 2012. [https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs\\_view.php?no=162&board\\_table=bbs\\_evidence&page=1&word=&searchItem=&cate\\_id=](https://eng.nkhumanrights.or.kr:444/board/bbs_view.php?no=162&board_table=bbs_evidence&page=1&word=&searchItem=&cate_id=).

440 "Human Rights Watch: Border Control, Surveillance Increased Under Kim Jong Un," UPI, September 2, 2015; see also Julian Ryal, "North Korea steps up surveillance of citizens with 16,000 CCTV cameras," *The Telegraph*, January 15, 2013.

441 Kim Byeong-Uk, *Hyeondaejeon-gwa Bukan-ui jiyeokbangwi* [Modern Warfare and North Korea's Regional Defense] (Seoul: Seonin Publishing, 2011), 290-91.

### Structural Organization of the Neighborhood Unit



Every North Korean is required to belong to an *inminban*, which meets twice a week. The *inminbanjang* is assisted by a chief of sanitation, a deputy chief of households, and a propaganda agitator representing the KWP. Although neighborhood chiefs are ostensibly state employees, they primarily conduct tasks assigned by the secret police and the national police for the purpose of monitoring the activities of everyone in their *inminban*.<sup>442</sup> The *inminbanjang* is a paid state employee whose responsibilities include monitoring neighborhood activities and individual behavior, reporting regularly to the police, conducting Party propaganda sessions, and overseeing neighborhood self-criticism sessions. Many national programs of resource collection such as scrap paper drives and compost collection drives begin with the *inminbanjang*.<sup>443</sup> As the lowest level of party-state control over the population, the *inminban* is a critical component to understanding the local community. Every village maintains several *inminban*.

The *inminbanjang*'s authority is higher in Pyongyang than in the provinces. One can be expelled from Pyongyang for not following the neighborhood chief's directives and rules. An *inminbanjang* is also better paid in Pyongyang than in the provinces. Only the *inminbanjang* in Pyongyang were paid at first, but now they are paid in the provinces also. The *inminbanjang* are not paid much, but they are allowed to shop in government-sponsored department stores at low subsidized prices.

442 North Korea Information Portal, "Inminban" 인민반 Ministry of Unification. <http://nkinfo.unikorea.go.kr/nkp/term/viewNkKnwldgDicary.do?pageIndex=16&koreanChrctr=&dicaryId=151>.

443 Kim, Hyeondaejeon-gwa Bukan-ui jiyeokbangwi, 290-91.

The *inminbanjang* also receives bribes.<sup>444</sup> There are between thirty to forty neighborhood units per *dong* (sub-district).<sup>445</sup>

## 8.16 Supreme Leader Directives

Though simple in process but major in consequence, directives from the *Suryong* are obeyed without question, with the exception of bribes and rare instances of human concern. Though Kim Jong-un's directives are too numerous to discuss in detail, his first directive is instructive on how simple issues can rapidly turn citizens' lives upside down. On June 25, 2009, Kim Jong-un sent out his very first order to the MPAF, SSD, MPS, and the Prosecutor's Office to form the "6.25 [June 25] Group." This group's mission was to stop low-level Party personnel and workers from avoiding the workplace and gathering to play cards and *janggi* (Korean chess) at parks in Pyongyang. This directive led to 400 families being banished from Pyongyang in August 2009. Many of these family heads were sentenced to two to seven years in labor reform camps.<sup>446</sup>

The above institutions promote the Pyongyang Republic and human rights denial through dedication to centralizing power around the Supreme Leader. This is done by denying the rights of others, as well as by supervising the prioritization of all resources to Pyongyang. The Supreme Leader's strict control of the Party and the corresponding control of these institutions are the primary tools of political centralization, which helps ensure regime security.

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444 Author's interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

445 Choi, "Bukan jibang haengjeong-ui siltae-wa jeonmang," 2, note 4.

446 "Meoriga yunanhi keun Kim Jong-un, manneun gunmoga eopseoseo... (54)" 머리가 유난히 큰 김정은, 맞는 군모가 없어서... (54), *Nambukstory.com* (blog), January 5, 2013. <http://blog.donga.com/nambukstory/archives/45364>. This is the transcript of an interview with Mr. Ahn Chang-Nam, a mid-level Party cadre who has defected to South Korea.

## CHAPTER NINE: DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA— POLITICAL INSULATION AND THE POTEMKIN STATE

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Power in Pyongyang is designed to insulate the regime from international interference, particularly in the area of the human rights of the North Korean people. This insulation maximizes the regime's ability to support those who serve it and enables the prioritization of all resources to loyalists who uphold the regime's interests. Furthermore, this insulation is intentionally designed to sustain the dictatorial policies that enable hereditary succession and prevent internal dissent. These priorities have essentially created the Pyongyang Republic.

Diplomatic efforts to refer Kim Jong-un and the North Korean leadership to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity began at the UN after the completion of the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the DPRK (UN COI) in February 2014. Such efforts have not been fully successful, despite relevant UN Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly Resolutions, and despite the UN Security Council's twice taking up North Korean human rights, in December 2014 and December 2015. These events revealed the difficulty of changing the Kim regime's human rights policies and practices. The Pyongyang Republic is protected from external interference through several structures and policies. The DPRK state insulates the Kim regime from external political criticism, the North Korean population is isolated from external and internal information, and Pyongyang is insulated from the severe deprivation suffered in the provinces through resource prioritization and residency restrictions.

Nowhere is political insulation more evident than in North Korea's attempts to prevent the international community from changing human rights conditions inside the country. It is the role of North Korea's foreign ministry officials and state-to-state delegations to marginalize international criticism of the Kim regime, facilitate the regime's illicit activities and weapons proliferation, and acquire foreign aid and assistance. They do so under the Party's direction and strategy. International pressure has had a positive impact on the DPRK constitution in that human rights were more thoroughly addressed in the 2009 revision. However, there has been little change in North Korea's human rights practices due to the Party's superiority over the state. It is the state that the outside world interacts with, but it is the Party that runs North Korea and determines human rights policies.

The contents of the UN COI report on the situation of human rights in North Korea are horrific, but not unknown to many non-governmental organizations that have publicized North Korea's human rights abuses for decades. Such abuses are also common knowledge to North Koreans. Although the UN COI's report is highly effective in explaining the components of what should be interpret-

ed as the consequences of the Kim regime's human rights policy, it does not address how North Korea's regime, based in the KWP, formulates its policy of human rights denial.

What the North Korean state describes as its 'human rights policy' exists only in North Korea's state documents, and not in the Party's documents. State documents are designed to influence foreign audiences, and do not reflect the values or practices of domestic officials responsible for human rights denial. These officials are required to follow the guidance of the Supreme Leader and the KWP before the law.<sup>447</sup> The words of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un are considered to be above the law in North Korea. Kim Il-sung's view of the law was and continues to be followed:

*The policies of our state are the policies of our Party. It is impossible to enforce the law without knowledge of the political line and policies of our Party... Our judicial functionaries are political workers who implement the policies of our Party and all the policies of our state.*<sup>448</sup>

These words serve as the foundation of how every North Korean official must view Party policy over and above state laws. This enables the regime to use the state as a screen against international criticism and domestic opposition with regards to human rights, thus effectively insulating the Pyongyang Republic.

Because the officials responsible for implementing human rights policy ignore rubber-stamped laws from the state and carry out Party-directed domestic political mandates instead, North Korea's human rights policy is essentially one of human rights denial, in which human rights implementers are active human rights deniers. This strategy, directed by the Party without interference from the state, insulates the regime domestically, just as the state's foreign ministry insulates the regime from foreign critics.

Understanding the Kim regime's strategy for international deception on human rights is as important as knowing the regime's policies, procedures, and practices on human rights, many of which the UN COI identified. North Korea's strategies for defending the Kim regime in the international community vary from obstinate denial to alternate engagement.<sup>449</sup> DPRK state representation at all foreign postings, both at international organizations and in foreign capitals, enables

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447 See Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 109-36.

448 As quoted in Goedde, "Law 'Of Our Own Style'," 1272.

449 Roberta Cohen, "A Human Rights Dialogue with North Korea: Real or Illusory?" 38 *North*, October 16, 2014.

significant regime insulation from external demands while facilitating offers of external support, particularly in the area of food assistance.

North Korea's strategy of human rights denial has its roots in the arrival in northern Korea of Korean communist revolutionaries after the fall of Japanese colonial rule in 1945 and the occupation of northern Korea by the Soviet military. Human rights denial was cemented in practice by the development of *Suryong* ideology as led by Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, and the parallel development of the DPRK as a "Potemkin state" to serve as the Kim regime's external front for the domestic doctrine and practices of the KWP, which governs North Korea in reality.<sup>450</sup>

The Kim regime's strategy for dealing with the demands of the international community regarding human rights is "a multi-layered, complex system of denial and rejection, occasional admissions, offensive diplomacy, and limited and/or selective cooperation."<sup>451</sup> At the forefront of this strategy is the Kim regime's foremost operating principle, which places all political authority in the concept of the *Suryong*, or Supreme Leader, and bases this authority in the KWP, Party doctrine, and the Party Charter.<sup>452</sup> Under this principle, the DPRK becomes a Potemkin state. The DPRK state has no domestic political power, and it has limited authority to make decisions for the Kim regime.<sup>453</sup> However, it serves to insulate the regime leadership and the KWP from international influence. State institutions are designed to carry out the orders of the Supreme Leader and the KWP domestically, as well as to interact with the international community as needed. In effect, the DPRK state acts as an arm of the KWP that serves the interests of the Supreme Leader, and, more figuratively, serves as a political front for Kim family rule.<sup>454</sup>

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450 The regime also employs two other political parties to operate as fronts for political tolerance and to interact with the international community to display this tolerance. The Socialist Democratic Party and the Chondoist Party perform diplomacy with other minor parties of countries that have an anti-South Korean or anti-U.S. stance.

451 Kim Soo-Am, "Gukje sahoe-ui ingwon gaeip-gwa Bukan-ui ingwon jeongchaek gyeoljeong yoso bun-seok" [Analysis of the International Society's Human Rights Intervention and North Korea's Human Rights Policy Decision Criteria], *Gukje munje yeongu* 11.3 (2011), 173.

452 See Chapter Three. Citation from Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 16.

453 The only exception to this concept is the North Korean military.

454 Dae-Kyu Yoon, "The Constitution of North Korea: Its Changes and Implications," *Fordham International Law Journal* 27.4 (2003), 1289-1305.

## 9.1 Responses at the UN: COI and UPR

Nowhere is this more evident than at the UN. Perhaps no front is as important as North Korea's Permanent Missions in New York and Geneva, which serve as the Kim regime's primary front for deflecting criticism of its human rights record. Demands made at the UN about human rights elicit North Korean responses that are designed to provide a superficial cover for KWP policies and practices. This is what the Kim regime expects the DPRK state to do. The best example of such behavior is North Korea's reaction to the release of the COI report that provided the international community's comprehensive evaluation of the country's near-unparalleled denial of human rights.<sup>455</sup> On March 28, 2014, in response to a pending vote by the UN Human Rights Council on demanding justice for "Nazi-style atrocities," DPRK Ambassador So Se-pyong told the council to "mind its own business."<sup>456</sup> This is a clear indicator of North Korea's duplicitous human rights policy. The nation's constitution and civil laws appear to protect human rights by law, but the regime does not observe or implement human rights in practice.

The Kim family regime has successfully insulated itself from the international community in a very selective manner. Achieving success in insulation equates to preventing external or internal pressure on the regime from leading to policy changes, or at least holding such pressures at a manageable level. By using the state to mitigate external impacts on the regime, the regime's Monolithic Guidance System enables the Supreme Leader and the Party to selectively adapt measures that give the illusion of compliance or the appearance of policy adjustment to align with international standards while leveraging international aid.

Historically, recommendations by the UN Human Rights Council intimidate North Korea's state representatives only so far as to motivate a response to isolate or stonewall an international demand. Furthermore, North Korea consistently fails to submit reports in a timely manner and pursues evasive tactics when dealing with UN organizations that do not provide aid to North Korea. The Kim regime has rejected any visit by the Special Rapporteur for North Korean human rights, because the regime cannot allow detailed inspections or interviews inside North Korea, which would violate KWP policies and practices of human rights denial. Even the public release of the UN COI report initially resulted in terse insults.

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455 UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Detailed Findings Of The Commission Of Inquiry On Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," February 7, 2014. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HR-Bodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/CommissionInquiryonHRinDPRK.aspx>.

456 Stephanie Nebehay and Tom Miles, "'Mind your own business', North Korea says of U.N. demand for justice," *Reuters*, March 28, 2014.

Subsequent to the release of the UN COI's report, the European Union (EU) and Japan drafted a resolution calling for North Korea to be referred to the ICC to be held accountable for crimes against humanity. To become effective as a step toward UN Security Council referral to the ICC, the resolution required approval by the UN General Assembly.<sup>457</sup> This compelled North Korean diplomats at the UN to proactively try to prevent the resolution from going forward. However, on November 18, 2014, the General Assembly passed a resolution recommending referral of the North Korean human rights issue to the Security Council. This intimidated North Korea's representatives—beginning with Foreign Minister Ri Su-yong—to a very great degree because of the embarrassment given to the Supreme Leader. Foreign Ministry officials and other representatives at the UN likely fear for their positions, if not their lives, since they have failed in the eyes of the Supreme Leader and his closest advisers.<sup>458</sup>

An excellent example of the DPRK Potemkin state's response to the international community is the "National Report Submitted in Accordance with Paragraph 15(A) of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1" dated August 27, 2009, presented in Geneva to the Sixth Session of the Working Group on the UPR.<sup>459</sup> North Korea's response in this document appears to conform to international norms in format and formality. However, this response conceals the true nature of the regime. The response states that a task force of twenty institutions belonging to North Korea's civil society was formed to prepare and finalize a response to the UPR's 167 recommendations.<sup>460</sup> The deceit here is that only the KWP can "finalize" national actions, such as responses to international organizations, as alluded to in the constitution. The Party committee embedded in each of the state organizations then implements final actions.<sup>461</sup> While each of those institutions contributes to

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457 "Draft U.N. Resolution Calls For Referring N.K. Leader to ICC for Human Rights Violations," *Yonhap News*, October 9, 2014.

458 "NKorea Tries On The Charm To Avoid ICC Referral," *Associated Press*, October 22, 2014.

459 This document can be accessed at <http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/UPR%202009.pdf>.

460 There is no civil society in North Korea as understood by those in free societies. There is no freedom of movement, freedom of expression, or freedom of action independent of party-state control. The exceptions to this are the burgeoning individual-based market activities that developed after the great famine of the 1990s, as well as black-market activity, crime, and corruption. These latter developments enable individual actions normally restricted or even banned within the Kim regime's political and economic norms. An example is the so-called *Bonghwajo*, the sons and daughters of the regime elite who have leverage in foreign currency earning operations due to their fathers' positions. The Supreme Leader now tolerates these previously unacceptable activities, including the operation of private organizations, as long as those families support the regime.

461 See Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo eliteu*, 400-403; see also Cheong, *The Contemporary North Korean Politics*, 234, wherein he cites North Korean political theorist, Kim Hwa-jong, *Intensifying Devel-*

policymaking, only the Party can approve policy based on Party guidance from the Supreme Leader, KWP Politburo, and OGD.<sup>462</sup>

North Korea's response in Subsection 2 of Section 1 states that civil society member organizations listed in Annex 2 discussed the response to the UPR. However, Annex 2 does not explain that each of these organizations is overseen by an embedded KWP committee that gives policy guidance.<sup>463</sup> Furthermore, there is no evidence that these "civil society" organizations exist except on paper, as there is no evidence of their activity reported by North Korean media. Annex 3 lists DPRK laws pertaining to human rights. Although these laws exist, the practice and policies of the Party supersede these laws, compelling law enforcement authorities to observe Party policy rather than state law. They are required to follow the guidance of the Supreme Leader and the Party above the law. Otherwise, they may be punished.

Furthermore, paragraph 13 of the response document states that human rights has four unique characteristics—universality and equality, individuality, dignity, and indivisibility. Though the response insists that the North Korean government respects the principles of the UN Charter, there is no mention of the KWP's authority, which negates this statement. The Party conducts socio-political classification of every individual, provides privileged treatment to human rights deniers based on this classification, denies privilege to those classified as state enemies and the majority of laborers in the provinces, organizes special extra-judicial investigation groups, and conducts extra-judicial punishment by security services.<sup>464</sup>

Lastly, paragraph 18 of the document states that North Korea's "sovereignty resides in workers, peasants, servicepersons, working intellectuals and all other working people." This is totally contrary to the ruling ideology of *Suryong-juui* (Supreme Leader-ism). Another falsehood in the same paragraph states that in the DPRK, people's committees at all levels assume direct responsibility for ensuring human rights. This contradicts and ignores the reality of the KWP's rule over the state at every level, from the workplace and the village to the highest levels.

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opment of *Juche Ideology, Theory, Method #5—Continuous Development of Juche's Leadership Method* (Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing Company, 1984).

462 See Hyun, *Bukan-ui gukga jeollyak-gwa pawo ellipseu*, 400-403; Cheong, *The Contemporary North Korean Politics*, 235, wherein he cites *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 14 (1995–1999) (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 2000).

463 See *Collected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 14 (Pyongyang: KWP Publishing Company, 2000).

464 Goedde, "Law 'Of Our Own Style'," 1277.

## 9.2 The Development of the Potemkin State

The development of the Potemkin state did not happen in conjunction with the founding of North Korea in September 1948. Instead, it developed as part of the leadership transition from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il. When Kim Il-sung became the first state leader of North Korea in 1948, he did not yet have total control. He faced challenges from Soviet Koreans, Chinese Koreans, and Korean communists from South Korea. Later on, he even faced challenges from his own Kapsan faction. Leadership development in North Korea did not take place until Kim Il-sung successfully defeated these challenges and secured his rule in the late 1960s.<sup>465</sup>

After the Korean War, Kim Il-sung prioritized both state building and Party building. The Party and the state were both instrumental in constructing a socialist society. The state was important in dealing with the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and the socialist states of Eastern Europe to obtain economic support and technical expertise. The KWP was critical to structuring society around ideology and securing Kim's leadership. By the end of the 1960s, the roles of the Party and state were fairly well defined. However, when the Party started developing the Monolithic Ideology System, the Monolithic Guidance System, and the Ten Principles of Monolithic Ideology in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, mostly under Kim Jong-il's supervision, the Kim regime began to take on a far more totalitarian character.

Upon being appointed KWP Secretary for Organization, Director of the KWP OGD, and Director of the KWP PAD by his father, Kim Jong-il began to radicalize North Korea's ideology. Every individual in North Korea became personally responsible for demonstrating absolute loyalty to Kim Il-sung through ideology studies, self-criticism, and related Party activities. Additionally, Party oversight of the state expanded as the OGD evaluated and controlled the leaders of every organization equivalent to a one-star general in rank or those in key positions of North Korean society. This was to secure personal and organizational loyalty to the Supreme Leader and KWP policies. Kim Jong-il also removed cadre training and development from the KWP Cadre Department and established a cadre evaluation process within the OGD, thus enabling his direct control of all leaders and ensuring that they focused on political loyalty over professional function. Kim Jong-il personally supervised and micro-managed this process. This strategy reshaped the party-state relationship in function and accountability, as loyalty became far more important than function. Furthermore, this process served as the foundation for the leadership transition from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il.

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465 See Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung* and Lim, *The Founding of a Dynasty in North Korea*.

The latter eventually gained control of every single leader in North Korea except his father and his anti-Japanese partisans.<sup>466</sup>

As a result of Kim Jong-il's changes, legal and ideological doctrine began to take on new meanings and consequences. The role of the DPRK as a Potemkin state was reinforced, and the regime's policy of human rights denial was strengthened. Today, the document that most reflects actual political power in North Korea is the KWP Charter. The document that most accurately reflects the shaping of individual political life is the Ten Principles of Monolithic Leadership. The Party Charter shapes how all organizations—regardless of mission, role, or function—interact with each other within the framework of that dictatorship. The Ten Principles mandate political interaction among individual citizens in terms of what they can and cannot say, think and do. The document that least impacts the everyday life of North Koreans is the constitution.

North Korea's constitution insulates the Kim regime by presenting the illusion that North Korea provides a legal basis for protecting human rights. North Korea's constitution, first written in 1948,<sup>467</sup> was subsequently amended in 1972, 1992, 1998, and 2009 along with five minor revisions between 1954 and 1962.<sup>468</sup> It has become a legal façade for international consumption. It is the ultimate Potemkin document, as there is no individual or organization that implements the constitution domestically at the risk of violating Party policy. Behind the constitution is the reality of totalitarian dictatorship and human rights denial. Due to the Party's superiority over the constitution and state law, the court system does not address human rights, as stated in the 2009 constitution. The police and other internal security agencies follow the Party's orders, not the constitution. The SPA, nominally the legislative branch, does not provide oversight on human rights practices and law implementation. There are no domestic, independent non-governmental organizations that serve to further human rights. North Korea's constitutional processes are validated without opposition and shaped by regime leadership to suit their agenda.<sup>469</sup>

North Korean law frequently serves propaganda purposes as a façade to political reality. An example is North Korea's Environmental Protection Law, which promotes the concept of “anti-nuclear

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466 Choi Da-Mi, “현성일 박사가 밝힌 당 조직지도부의 절대적 위상” [Dr. Hyun Seong-Il Reveals the OGD's Absolute Power], *New Focus*, December 22, 2013.

467 The North Korean legal establishment interprets the 1948 constitution as a Soviet constitution that occupying Soviet Union troops drafted for the establishment of the DPRK state. This is the explanation behind North Korea's narrative that their constitution begins with the 1972 constitutional amendment.

468 Goedde, “Law ‘Of Our Own Style’,” 1276.

469 Yoon, “The Constitution of North Korea,” 1289-1305.

pacifism.” However, in practice, North Korea’s constant development of and professed commitment to its nuclear capability and related threats to its ‘enemies’ demonstrates the reality of the Kim regime. Laws are used to conceal the regime’s reality and to influence international opinion.<sup>470</sup>

### 9.3 Insulating the Leader and the People

The most important aspect of insulation is ensuring no unsanctioned external access to the senior leadership. Even the position of the Supreme Leader is intentionally isolated from the diplomatic community. The President of the SPA Standing Committee meets foreign delegations, not the designated head of state—the Chairman of the NDC—as stipulated in the 2009 constitution.

Notwithstanding the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the DPRK Potemkin state’s frontline domestic institution is the SPA. Its leaders are part of the power elite; their duties are to pass laws that may be necessary in any other society, but also to ensure that the international community does not negatively impact the Party. The SPA has a limited number of action committees. These committees have no authority to “advise and consent,” or to investigate abuses of laws they have passed. The SPA’s Legislation Committee is responsible for writing North Korea’s laws, including those identified in the constitution. The First Session of the 13th SPA appointed the members of the Committee on April 9, 2014. They include Chairman Choe Pu-il, the Minister of People’s Security, and members Chang Pyong-gyu, Pak Myong-chol, Pak Tae-dok, Tae Hyong-chol, Cha Hui-rim, and Pak Myong-guk.<sup>471</sup> However, high-ranking titles in the SPA do not guarantee power and influence within the Kim regime. North Korea’s highest-profile defector ever, Hwang Jang-Yop, wrote in his memoirs that he always used his state title as Chairman of the SPA Standing Committee, roughly analogous to U.S. Speaker of the House, rather than his title of Party secretary when meeting foreign visitors so that they could better relate to the position of importance. He also stated that his state position was nothing in North Korea when compared to being a KWP Secretary.<sup>472</sup>

Perhaps the most insidious form of political insulation is that of thought. What is not taught, what is not informed, and what is not allowed intellectually shapes the base of knowledge possessed by the general population. More than anything else, this arguably preserves the level of ignorance mandatory to underwrite the Kim regime’s legitimacy among the populace and its ability to deny human rights as a concept in the general population’s collective understanding. The manipulation of what is known and what is not known is the regime’s most effective weapon. Compelling

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470 Unification Education Institute, *Bukan beob-eul boneun bangbeob*, 41-42.

471 “Panel Committees of SPA of DPRK Elected,” KCNA, April 9, 2014.

472 Hwang Jang-Yop, *Memoirs* (Seoul: Zeitgeist Publishing, 2006), 234.

ignorance is a highly effective tool in domestic control. It ensures the average North Korean citizen has little knowledge of the truth, external conditions, international norms, other ideological principles, or geopolitical realities other than as promulgated by Party propaganda and Party-approved lesson plans.

Kim Jong-il was so concerned with trends from the outside world seeping into North Korea that he ordered “study lecture notes” entitled “On Strongly Launching the Struggle to Crush the Capitalist Ideological and Cultural Infiltration” for all cadre. In this document, Kim Jong-il blamed the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea for bringing in bibles, pornography, and “impure propaganda materials.” The Kim regime was concerned that outside trends were weakening internal unity and solidarity and feared the fate of the Soviet Union and former East European socialist states.<sup>473</sup> The regime reacted by strengthening internal security and the DPRK state’s resistance to the international community’s initiatives on human rights.

The regime’s leadership views capitalism as a cover for imperialism. North Korean propagandists liken defense against capitalism and democracy to a “mosquito net.” When a democratic “mosquito” bites a North Korean, he or she is infected with democratic and capitalist ideology that can spread to other North Koreans.<sup>474</sup> According to the Youth Advance Guard, the publication of the Kim Il-sung Youth League:

*Firmly installing the mosquito nets means our efforts to install blockades against the parasitic bourgeois ideas and ways of life that tend to smuggle themselves even through very small crevices and prevent them from infiltrating the country by fully blocking their pathways. It also means that we strengthen ideological indoctrination, control, and strife, especially to block the slightest symptoms of such reactionary bourgeois culture and buoyant decadent modes of life infiltrating among our young people, who are most vulnerable to such imperialist culture.*<sup>475</sup>

Thus the party-state’s mosquito net is critical to resisting Western influence. The tools of the mosquito net are ideology, self-study, propaganda (Party-directed themes and messages), and internal security.

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473 Hyun, *Bukan-ui Gukga Jeollyakgwa Pawo Elliteu*, 306-307.

474 Jeon, *Dasi Gochyeo Sseun Bukan-ui Sahoewa Munhwa*, 95.

475 Yonhap News Agency, *North Korea Handbook*, 370.

## 9.4 The Future of the Potemkin State

North Korea's strategy for dealing with the outside world regarding human rights does not mean that the international community's efforts to apply pressure on human rights issues have had no impact. Indeed, the famine of the 1990s compelled some compromise in numerous policy areas, including changes to population control policies that historically stood as part of the basis for human rights denial. Although the North Korean leadership views major efforts against its human rights practices, such as the U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, 2008 and 2012, the UN COI, and the EU/Japan resolution at the UN recommending ICC referral, as attacks on the regime, international efforts such as these do seem to have an impact on the regime to some degree. Changes to the DPRK's 2009 constitution are the best example. However, as reported by numerous sources, human rights suppression has increased under Kim Jong-un's rule.

Most of the world understands North Korea's international deception with regards to taking international aid while not complying with international humanitarian standards. As one example, WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin announced on May 22, 2014 during a visit to Seoul that the "WFP food aid to the communist country hit an all-time low last year with some 38,000 tons, less than one-third of its target of 130,000 tons." The WFP asked the international community for \$200 million by June 2015, but only received \$48 million as of May 2014.<sup>476</sup> As an apparent casual factor, the Kim regime's pursuit of nuclear weapons and lack of progress on improving human rights observance have undoubtedly had a significant impact on world leaders' willingness to support the North Korean people during a time of need. Though China continues to suppress UN Security Council efforts to further sanction the DPRK, the international condemnation of North Korea's human rights practices has a negative impact on international support for Pyongyang's humanitarian needs. Such support is even less likely today as, two decades after the great famine of the 1990s, in the absence of much needed transformation and reforms, donors are increasingly fatigued. At the opposite end of the international support scale, the five series of UN Security Council sanctions introduced against North Korea since 2006 have not been strictly enforced. A total of 158 countries out of 193 have not submitted any required implementation reports pursuant to those resolutions.<sup>477</sup>

The use of the DPRK as a Potemkin state has generally been a successful strategy that contributes greatly to insulating the Kim regime leadership from international and domestic interference in the

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476 Shin Hyon-Hee, "Lack of funding threatens WFP programs in N.K.," *Korea Herald*, May 22, 2014.

477 Wyatt Olson, "GAO: Lack of reporting is undermining UN sanctions against North Korea," *Stars and Stripes*, May 14, 2015.

regime's internal affairs. Furthermore, it has been a significant enabler of the Pyongyang Republic's development and the practices and policies that enable it. These same practices and policies contribute to the continued denial of human rights, as the concept of insulation enables Kim regime leaders to continue their style of abusive rule.

## CHAPTER TEN: THE FUTURE OF THE PYONGYANG REPUBLIC AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

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“The earth without Chosun [North Korea] is useless.” This was a statement a young Kim Jong-il made to his father, Kim Il-sung, about what attitude the North Korean leadership should have towards the world.<sup>478</sup> It is also indicative of the leadership’s view of human rights. The individual North Korean does not matter, particularly if a crisis develops on the Korean peninsula through war or regime collapse.

Both Koreas hope for unification. The South Korean government estimates that it will need \$500 billion to develop North Korea to half of South Korea’s gross national income (GNI). In per capita terms, South Korea’s GNI is nineteen times higher than that of North Korea—\$22,708 to \$1,214. To put this into perspective, at the time of German unification, West Germany’s per capita GNI was 2.1 times higher than that of East Germany.<sup>479</sup> This statistic alone makes it clear that South Korea is inadequately prepared to support Korean unification, especially one that results from war or the collapse of the Kim regime. David Maxwell of Georgetown University has defined Korean unification as “‘a stable, secure, peaceful, economically vibrant, non-nuclear peninsula, reunified under a liberal constitutional form of government determined by the Korean people,’ that can bring security and stability to Northeast Asia.”<sup>480</sup> While unification will certainly bring relief to the human rights situation in North Korea, the road to unification may temporarily worsen it. War or regime collapse, and their consequences, will lead to exponentially worse conditions for the vast majority of the North Korean people.

The Kim regime has never demonstrated any intent to compromise with the South on unification. Pyongyang has always emphasized unification by force, thus implying future enforcement of its “collective human rights policy” of human rights denial upon fifty-one million South Koreans, leaving the Korean peninsula without any human rights observance at all. However, should North Korea initiate a war to unify the peninsula under the Kim regime’s control, the sustainability of the North Korean military is highly questionable. Regardless of North Korea’s military limitations when confronting the combined forces of the U.S.-ROK Alliance, the KPA can inflict enormous damage to the economy, infrastructure, and population of South Korea due to its WMDs and other asym-

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478 Heo Man-Ho, “North Korean human rights in reform policy: searching for a multilateral approach,” *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 20.1 (2008): 87.

479 “Some US\$500 Bln Needed for N. Korean Development: Draft,” *Yonhap News*, October 8, 2014.

480 David Maxwell, “Support to Korean Resistance: Has the Time Come?” *Small Wars Journal*, August 5, 2015. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/support-to-korean-resistance-has-the-time-come>.

metric capabilities.<sup>481</sup> War would also undoubtedly inflict enormous damage on the viability and existence of the Pyongyang Republic.

## 10.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Pyongyang Republic

Before assessing the future of the Pyongyang Republic and human rights in North Korea, it would be prudent to examine the conceptual strengths and weaknesses of the Pyongyang Republic. Its strengths are: the centralization of authority in all forms; pervasive internal security; nationwide indoctrination; national focus on leadership-centered ideology; isolation from the outside world, blocking external interference and reinforcing indoctrination; rewards for those serving the regime's interests; and the ability to prioritize all resources to Pyongyang. The weaknesses of the Pyongyang Republic are: international scrutiny of the Kim regime's human rights practices, which focus responsibility on Kim Jong-un; corruption that reaches into every institution and leadership chain; poor economic performance at the national level; distrust of those not associated with the Kim family; the poor within Pyongyang; poor healthcare, food insecurity, and malnutrition of the general North Korean population; an ever-increasing inflow of outside information;<sup>482</sup> and a growing, low-level market economy that employs low-level capitalistic practices whose success creates expectations that counter the regime's indoctrination objectives.<sup>483</sup> The ability to balance these strengths and weaknesses will determine the survival of the Kim Jong-un regime in the long-term.

Food insecurity is a direct threat to regime security in the long run, and malnutrition among the general populace is a direct result of food insecurity. Even if the regime intended to implement significant economic reforms, a weakened workforce cannot easily adapt to significant economic changes in terms of labor. In addition, malnourished, undersized soldiers cannot be effective on the battlefield.

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481 For a comprehensive overview of North Korea's asymmetric capabilities, see Bruce E. Bechtol, Jr., *Defiant Failed State: The North Korean Threat to International Security* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2010), 11-48.

482 See Lisa Ji, "Why is the Flow of Information so Threatening to the North Korean Regime," Korea Economic Institute, undated. <http://keia.org/why-flow-information-so-threatening-north-korean-regime>.

483 The South Korean authorities estimate that 1 to 1.8 million North Koreans take advantage of private markets on a daily basis. There are now 396 open markets in North Korea, twice the number from 2010, based on recent research. See Elizabeth Shim, "Free market enterprise bringing changes to North Korea," UPI, August 5, 2015; "1 mil. to 1.8 mil. North Koreans use private sector markets," *The Korea Times*, December 27, 2015; No Jeong-Min, "북한 전역에 장마당 396개" [There Are 396 Open Markets in North Korea], *Radio Free Asia*, May 20, 2015; Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, "Growth and Geography of Markets in North Korea: New Evidence from Satellite Imagery," *US-Korea Institute at SAIS* (Oct. 2015).

Construction projects also are vulnerable to structural weakness due to poor discipline among and insufficient support for everyone from suppliers to construction workers.

Prioritizing Pyongyang regarding food distribution leaves much of the general population with inadequate or non-existent food supplies. This is a direct violation of Article 11 of the ICESCR.<sup>484</sup> The prioritization of food to Pyongyang ensures that the approximately one tenth of the North Korean population, comprising those living in the Pyongyang Republic, remains the healthiest. This means that for every mouth fed in Pyongyang, ten are inadequately fed in the provinces. For every individual medically treated in Pyongyang, ten are inadequately treated in the provinces. Though hardly scientific, this approximation is evidenced by the extraordinary rates of malnutrition throughout the country, meaning that the ratios are much higher than one to ten.<sup>485</sup> While international food aid to North Korea increased in the summer of 2015,<sup>486</sup> malnutrition and a tuberculosis epidemic continue to take a toll on the population, especially the labor class. This latter issue will eventually impact resources assigned to Pyongyang due to production issues.

The life of a North Korean in the provinces is not as important to the Supreme Leader and the Party as the life of a North Korean in Pyongyang who directly supports Kim Jong-un, the regime, or the institutions upon which the regime is built. The nutritional health of a North Korean in the provinces is not as important to the regime as that of the Party worker in Pyongyang. Healthcare in the provinces is not prioritized to the level of that provided to Pyongyang residents, because the regime needs physically competent people to run the institutions of power to serve the Kim regime's objectives. While some North Koreans in the provinces require greater support to serve the regime, the Party ensures that these groups receive food and other support to the degree necessary to maintain physical and mental competency to accomplish such service. These groups include KPA leaders and special operations forces; nuclear, biological, chemical, and missile scientists; and regional Party personnel.

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484 See Article 11 of International Covenant for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>.

485 For a detailed examination of the effects of widespread malnutrition on the North Korean population, see Amnesty International, "The Crumbling State of Healthcare in North Korea," 2010. <https://www.amnesty.de/files/asa240012010en.pdf>.

486 "World Food Program: Food Aid to North Korea Up 110 Percent in July," *UPI*, August 4, 2015.

## 10.2 Kim Jong-un's Efforts to Consolidate Power

For the Kim family regime and the Pyongyang Republic to continue, Kim Jong-un must consolidate his power, a process which will likely lead to a deterioration of the human rights situation across North Korea. The Kim Jong-un regime faces significant internal challenges. These include lack of confidence by the elite in Kim Jong-un's leadership maturity; the loyalty of the military leadership; food insecurity; security on the northern border; corruption at every level of society; the elite's exploitation of disenfranchised commoners; and significant generational turnover of Party personnel. These factors all threaten regime stability in the long run.

In the view of most North Korea analysts, survival is the Kim regime's foremost objective. South Korean analysts believe that North Korea's leaders are attempting to consolidate the elite to address this challenge, the majority of which reside in Pyongyang, by investing in their lifestyle.<sup>487</sup> However, analysts disagree about whether Kim Jong-un will succeed in consolidating power. The leadership has clearly demonstrated that regime security is its primary means of ensuring regime survival. Essentially, it is an argument of no security, no survival. Effective internal security has been a clear priority for the regime in its strategy to successfully consolidate Kim Jong-un's power. Purges, executions of senior leaders and middle-level bureaucrats, extra-judicial task forces, and the reorganization of key institutions are all signs that Kim Jong-un has little confidence in popular or institutional support for his rule. Recent leadership turmoil at the highest levels is a clear indicator of this.

South Korea's foreign minister and its intelligence services have stated that Kim Jong-un has executed seventy or ninety officials since taking power in December 2011. Another report states the total number as 130.<sup>488</sup> Kim has demonstrated considerable distrust towards the military leadership. Since taking power, he has had three directors of the KPA GPB,<sup>489</sup> four KPA Chiefs of the General

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487 "Pyongyang Elite Key to Regime's Survival," *The Chosun Ilbo*, January 4, 2012.

488 This article highlights the different reporting numbers by the two agencies. Lee Chi-Dong, "Kim Jong-un's reign of terror fazes N. Korean workers abroad: FM Yun," *Yonhap News*, July 9, 2015; see also Joo Seong-Ha, "VOA: 北 김정은, 4년간 간부 130여명 처형... 조연 기피현상" [VOA—'North Korea's Kim Jong-un Has Executed About 130 Cadre in Four Years... Cadre Avoid Advising Kim], *Nambukstory.com* (blog), November 28, 2015. <http://blog.donga.com/nambukstory/archives/113823>.

489 Vice Marshal Kim Jong-gak (November 2010–April 2012), acting director due to director Vice Marshal Cho Myong-rok's illness, was serving as the General Political Bureau Vice-Director; Vice Marshal Choe Ryong-hae (April 2012–April 2014); and Vice Marshal Hwang Byong-so (April 2014–present). This position is the chief political commissar within the military and concurrently serves as the KPA Politburo director.

Staff,<sup>490</sup> and six Ministers of People's Armed Forces.<sup>491</sup> This level of turbulence may temporarily secure Kim's control over senior military leadership, but it sows seeds of distrust among military generals regarding Kim's leadership.<sup>492</sup> Such trends likely promote the assignment of less capable but politically loyal generals to positions critical to national defense.

The privileged class wants to maintain its lifestyle, one that is only possible through the current system. Nevertheless, the Pyongyang elite's loyalty to Kim Jong-un is weakening. The elite are both more aware of external information and more heavily monitored than those in the provinces. The majority of North Korean cadre feel North Korea has no future. The more they understand the conditions, the less loyal they become.<sup>493</sup> More than one elite North Korean defector from a power elite family acknowledges that the power elite worry that regime collapse will result in their own collapse. The power elite thus feel a common destiny that serves as a unifying motivation.<sup>494</sup> However, Kim Jong-un has begun to reshape some of the elite inner circle with loyalists who have contributed to purging older-generation politicians.<sup>495</sup> One of the most important aspects of Kim's power consolidation is surrounding himself with loyalty, not competence.

Immediately after the ceremonies marking the second anniversary of Kim Jong-il's death, the regime initiated a purge of Jang Song-taek loyalists from the KWP Administration Department and

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490 General Ri Yong-ho (February 2009–July 2012); General Hyon Yong-chol (July 2012–May 2013); General Kim Kyok-sik (May–August 2013); and General Ri Yong-gil (August 2013–present). This position is analogous to the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

491 Vice Marshal Kim Yong-chun (February 2009–April 2012); Vice Marshal Kim Jong-gak (April–November 2012); General Kim Kyok-sik (November 2012–May 2013); General Jang Jong-nam (May 2013–June 2014); General Hyon Yong-chol (June 2014–June 2015); and General Pak Yong-sik (July 2015–present). This position is analogous to the U.S. Secretary of Defense.

492 So why has there not been a coup? Since the purges of factions within political and military circles in the 1950s and the 1960s, ensuring political control of the military has been a major priority for the regime. It has obviously been successful in achieving this goal. Every military unit from battalion up has a political staff that monitors commanders and soldiers for their loyalty to the Supreme Leader. These political officers have the authority to countermand commander orders; the two leaders of the unit must agree on courses of action. Even if they were to agree to initiate disloyal actions, a MSC officer in the same unit, who has a separate reporting chain, is monitoring both of them. In effect, there is three-way control of all military units. This makes a coup extremely difficult. In essence, this political monitoring system in the military parallels the political loyalty requirements in the workplace, making both institutions less efficient.

493 Author interviews with mid- and high-level defectors from Pyongyang.

494 Author interview with Mr. H. and Ms. H (not related), both party members from Pyongyang.

495 Ser Myo-Ja, "8 Aides Rise In Young Leader's Inner Circle", *Korea JoongAng Daily*, January 27, 2015.

other organizations headed by Jang.<sup>496</sup> The regime established a “purification team” to eliminate the remnants of Jang’s impact on the Party and government. The OGD and the SSD led this effort.<sup>497</sup> The mission was to seek out the cadre paying blind obedience to “Jang’s mini-kingdom” and “relieve them of their duties, fire them, and remove them from the party.” Cadre from other Party organizations, primarily the OGD, replaced all senior Administration Department personnel. Beginning in January 2014, provincial and county level KWP Committees’ Administration Departments were reorganized.<sup>498</sup> Kim Jong-un and his advisers will likely continue to blame future problems on Jang, regardless of Jang’s involvement. Jang’s role as a scapegoat will help the regime conceal their failures, particularly in the area of economics.<sup>499</sup>

### 10.3 Reform, Muddle Through, or Collapse

The question of the Kim regime’s survival, and by extension, that of the Pyongyang Republic has been examined numerous times by informed analysts over the past two decades. Their assessments boil down to “reform, muddle through, or collapse.”<sup>500</sup>

Meaningful reform requires significant political and economic adjustments. These adjustments will likely lead to consequences the regime would find difficult to control. To further development, decision-makers need the latitude to make decisions about which they need not fear retribution from the *Suryong* (Supreme Leader) and the security agencies. Without this tolerance, improvement in food security, much less human rights, will be difficult and the population outside Pyongyang will continue to suffer. Despite the growth of affluence in Pyongyang, there are credible projections that “private commerce and service enterprises” will not be sufficient to provide North Korea

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496 Interestingly, the KWP Administration Department formerly belonged to the OGD until Kim Jong-il transferred it out of the OGD to create an independent organization under Jang Song-taek’s control. During the purge of Party personnel within the Administration Department, which had responsibility for all internal security agencies and the courts, the regime’s control throughout North Korea would have weakened. It would have taken months for the OGD to re-establish political control to previous levels.

497 North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity, “장성택이 관할하던 당행정부 포함 기관들 완전 몰갈이, 기능 대폭 축소” [Agencies Reorganized Including Jang Song-taek-led Party Administration Department, Functions Drastically Reduced], December 31, 2013. <http://www.nkis.kr/board.php?board=nkisb201&config=&command=body&no=490&>.

498 Ibid.

499 Kang Mi-Jin, “Kim Struck Down by Jang Execution,” *Daily NK*, December 19, 2013.

500 For an excellent overview of the North Korean economy and its consequences for the Kim regime, see Nicholas Eberstadt, *The North Korean Economy: Between Crisis and Catastrophe* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007).

with overall economic growth.<sup>501</sup> It will, however, likely lead to a wider economic gap between the “Pyongyang Republic” and the “Republic of the Provinces.”

However, reform carries with it the threat of regime collapse. History teaches that reforms create second- and third-degree consequences that were not anticipated by those who introduced reform. In turn, the collapse of the regime could result in any number of scenarios including violent competition among power elite and institutions, civil war, rebellion in the provinces, or even war with South Korea. While the possible scenarios are too numerous, their effects would result in a serious decline of conditions in North Korea, where the general population already lives at the edge of humanitarian disaster.

In the Kim regime’s political system, only senior Kim family members and high-ranking party members at the secretary level can make recommendations of sweeping change without great fear of the potential backlash such a proposal would inherently bring. Though the Party Central Committee represents the most powerful individuals in the Kim regime, the vast majority of these individuals are not in a sufficiently “bullet-proof” position to make recommendations regarding significant change to North Korea’s social, political, or economic system. Past implementation of major reforms with less than successful results have led to the deaths of those responsible, either directly or as a scapegoat.<sup>502</sup> Consequently, “muddling through” has equated to little political change and only very minor economic change.

Past efforts at economic reform have proven unsuccessful, particularly in the absence of accompanying political reform. This was the case with the “July 1” reforms of 2002. Recently introduced agricultural reforms, which were fairly limited in scope and focused on singular family plots, has proved to be controllable and has staved off malnutrition. However, the 2009 currency reform was disastrous. Foreign investment is highly controlled, as evidenced by disappointing recent events at the Kaesong Industrial Complex. Moreover, the Kim regime has not eliminated the political side of the workplace.

In 1961, North Korea introduced the *Daean* work system that focused on a dual control system of administrative management and Party-led politics in the workplace. The result, particularly after

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501 Hy-Sang Lee, “Can Capitalism Take Off in North Korea?,” *The Diplomat*, April 14, 2015.

502 For example, see Tania Branigan, “North Korean Finance Chief Executed For Botched Currency Reform,” *The Guardian*, March 18, 2010. Pak Nam-gi, head of the KWP Finance and Planning Department, was held responsible for causing economic chaos within months of the disastrous 2009 currency reform policy implementation, for which the Kim regime took the unique step of apologizing. Pak was executed in March 2010 by firing squad. Pak had been a member of the Party Central Committee since 1984.

Kim Jong-il began to control the Party in 1973, was a predominant focus in all areas of production on individual political loyalty to the Supreme Leader at the expense of efficiency and productivity. Individual support for the pre-eminent values of the regime became the standard by which workers were judged personally and in the collective. For true economic reform, the Kim regime needs to advance its tolerance of low-level capitalistic practices at the *jangmadang* markets and elsewhere to expand into true institutional capitalism that requires information sharing with the outside world and foreign investment that leads to profit-sharing and accepted international banking practices. However, the experience of the Egyptian telecommunications company, Orascom, has demonstrated that the regime has no intention of doing so.<sup>503</sup>

For the Kim Jong-un regime to truly reform its human rights practices, it would have to renounce the doctrines that underpin the political foundations of Kim family rule. Human rights observance based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights requires that every individual North Korean citizen receive the same consideration within the North Korean legal system as would Kim Jong-un. As North Korea's political situation stands today, the Kim family regime's political system is designed to do just the opposite.

The regime's leaders are undoubtedly aware of international demands for changes to North Korean human rights policies, but the changes made to date have only been cosmetic—changing terminology in official documents, or being less public with human rights violations. In theory, a person with power and influence could make a recommendation on changing the *songbun* (socio-political classification) policy to the Supreme Leader, Kim Jong-un, or the handful of senior leaders capable of openly supporting the implementation of such change. However, should the Kim regime feel compelled to change its *songbun* policy, how would the decision be made, how would the new policy be implemented, and what would the consequences be? The process would not be much different than in any other autocratic regime—filled with personal danger for anyone who proposed such a change, and resisted by individuals and institutions that stand to lose the most. The Party, military, security agencies, and power elite benefit most from the status quo.<sup>504</sup>

Should a *songbun* reform policy be approved, subject matter experts would have to draft the policy. Since *songbun* is a Party policy, the OGD, as the Party's most influential organization staffed by only those of the highest *songbun*, would certainly draft the new policy. Even if a draft policy were

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503 Martyn Williams, "How a telecom investment in North Korea went horribly wrong," *PC World*, December 17, 2015.

504 Identified issues based on discussions with former ranking KWP members who now reside in South Korea.

forwarded to the Supreme Leader for approval, there is no guarantee that it would be approved for implementation because of the fear of backlash. The *songbun* policy is a cornerstone of regime security and a decisive tool for allocating the critical economic asset of labor. As a result, reform efforts would tread on dangerous political ground. Even if reform were approved, there would be resistance to full implementation. For instance, even if those from the hostile class were allowed to become officers in the military, military security officials would be highly unlikely to approve their assignments to the front line areas, elite security and special forces, or political commissar assignments, limiting their duty to the rear areas. Those of hostile-class *songbun* allowed to become organizational cadre would be relegated to the least influential positions. However, a significant increase in Party membership is unlikely. Even if new individuals entered the Party through bribes or other means, it would be to the lowest positions available.<sup>505</sup> As emphasized by interviewees, policy counter-proposals would seek to limit changes to the *songbun* policy, if not cancel changes altogether. Those offering counter-proposals would seek to discredit, by any means, those presenting reforms to *songbun* policy.<sup>506</sup>

*Songbun* policy reform would reflect meaningful improvement in the North Korean political system, but it may take years—if not decades—of successful implementation to garner significant human rights gains. Perhaps the greatest present threat to the Kim regime system is “open employment.”<sup>507</sup> This has never existed in North Korea, and it is a deadly virus to the Kim regime’s socio-political system. If anybody could compete for almost any position, this would threaten the entire core class and power elite, sending shockwaves through North Korea’s political hierarchy. Indeed, such a development should be one of the goals of the international community’s efforts to change the regime’s *songbun* policy, but such a development will be resisted strongly by the current power elite who benefit most from the current system. Changing the *songbun* system will require the persistence of the international human rights movement; there must be sufficient pressure to compel leaders to risk their positions in the system.

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505 The vast majority of KWP members do not have full-time Party cadre positions. The desire to be a Party member is access to privileges given by the regime in the areas of food security, employment opportunity, housing location and quality, family education, healthcare, and preferential treatment in general.

506 In one famous case known as the “Simhwajo Incident,” Kim Jong-il’s brother-in-law, Jang Song-taek, discredited the powerful OGD Vice Director Mun Song-sul in the late 1990’s by casting blame on him for one of the most famous party disloyalty cases in North Korean history, only to find out later that this was not the case.

507 In the minds of those interviewed, this is the most threatening development possible in North Korea today.

## 10.4 Potential Consequences of the Continuation of the Pyongyang Republic

What will be the consequences of a continuation of the Pyongyang Republic? In a society where its leaders have abandoned the individual Korean, they are: the continuation of the nuclear weapons program; continued human rights abuses on a horrific scale; malnutrition of the general population; erosion of institutions outside Pyongyang; and corruption as a way of survival. These trends directly affect not only the socio-economic processes of the nation-state, but also the military.

The prioritization of funds to continue nuclear weapons development and strengthen the viability of the Pyongyang Republic will guarantee that there will not be enough funds to support the health and well being of the general population. If so, one must also assume that the continued development of nuclear weapons corresponds to the deterioration of the human rights situation, thus ensuring counter-prevailing dynamics between the two.

As Kim Jong-un makes changes to his cadre lineup and bureaucratic organization, there will likely be no change in the regime's policy on human rights outside of defending itself against international efforts to change those policies. The self-imposed standards and methods of the Kim regime's social control have heavily shaped mutual expectations and interactions between the regime and the populace to such an extent that it is overly optimistic to expect the Kim regime to take steps to improve its human rights record. Minor tactical adjustments to the regime's criminal justice system, such as modifications to the Criminal Code, have not changed the relationship between the regime and the general population. These relations remain based in fear, terror, and punishment. Even changes to the DPRK constitution in 2009 have not indicated improvements in human rights. Since the advent of the Kim Jong-un regime, human rights denial has only been reinforced. Even the tremendous work done by the UN COI has not yet changed the regime's treatment of the average North Korean.

North Korea's constitution guarantees rights as stipulated in international covenants to which the DPRK has acceded. However, overwhelming testimony from over 28,000 North Korean defectors to the Republic of Korea in the past twenty-five years demonstrates that discrimination based on background seriously impedes the ability of the lower *songbun* to succeed in North Korean society. Though corruption certainly is beginning to make more of a difference, it is generally a formula of the have-nots bribing the haves, everyday citizens bribing Party and government cadre, and the non-privileged bribing the privileged. Bribing the elite for a specific infraction may momentarily save an individual from punishment, but human rights denial in North Korea is the standing norm.

Advancement to important positions generally remains open only to those of higher *songbun*. At best, the non-privileged can only advance to low-level managerial positions, and a very few to mid-level management.

Moreover, ordinary North Koreans know they are being exploited by the elite. Widespread testimony from North Korean defectors demonstrate that the average North Korean holds strong grudges against those that exploit them. The North Korean elite are aware of this, and they realize the potential for revolt by the masses. Suppressing backlash from the lower classes is a constant effort by the elite and the power institutions they run.<sup>508</sup> For example, Kim Jong-un recently “praised veterans for their devotion to the country” at a conference honoring Korean War veterans.<sup>509</sup> This is meant to show his respect for the elderly, which is an effective way of shaping how the lower classes view him.

The maturity of Kim Jong-un himself may be the greatest challenge. Forcing Navy admirals to participate in swimming competitions and Army generals in running competitions is not likely to induce loyalty within those military groups and will likely be politically costly in the long run. That is especially true regarding the military in the age of military-first politics.<sup>510</sup> Furthermore, Kim Jong-un has demonstrated little concern for his own health, as illustrated in numerous photos of Kim limping with a cane and being missing for more than a month.

Resisting internal non-military threats are likely to become more problematic for the Kim regime in the near-to-mid-term of five to ten years. Checks and balances within the Kim regime are intense, threatening, and always have extreme consequences. Kim’s closest advisers have been influential in shaping Kim’s understanding of internal threats. No example is greater than the execution of his uncle, Jang Song-taek.

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508 Cho et al., *The Everyday Lives of North Koreans*.

509 Vin Shahrestani, “Kim Jong-un shown meeting Korean war veterans on anniversary,” *The Telegraph*, July 28, 2015.

510 Ham Hyong-Pil, “Kim Jong-un jeonggwon-ui gunbu gwollyeok gaepyeon bunseok mit jeonmang” [Kim Jong-un Regime’s Military Authority Reorganization: Analysis and Outlook], *Korea Institute of Defense Analysis*, November 29, 2012.

If the Pyongyang Republic endures, the international community must continue to press for human rights improvement in North Korea. Impactful measures to bring positive change to North Korea should include:

- Demanding that Kim Jong-un halt all practices, procedures and policies related to human rights denial.
- Sanctioning the KWP OGD for its support of human rights denial in North Korea.
- Sanctioning Jo Yon-jun as the First Vice-Director of the KWP OGD for his role in executing the policy of human rights denial in North Korea.
- Sanctioning Kim Kyong-ok as the First Vice-Director of the KWP OGD for his role in executing the policy of human rights denial in North Korea.
- Demanding that the KWP and the DPRK halt all prioritization of energy, food, healthcare and other resources strictly to Pyongyang and treat the provinces of North Korea on an equal basis.
- Urging the UN Human Rights Council to recommend to the DPRK, through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, the promotion of the universality, interdependence, indivisibility and interrelatedness of all human rights, through measures including teaching of the DPRK Constitution focus on human rights in DPRK high schools.
- Urging the UN Human Rights Council to recommend to the DPRK, through the UPR process, the translation into Korean and broad domestic dissemination of international human rights instruments the DPRK has acceded to, especially The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

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# APPENDICES

## 1. Appendix A: Charts

### A.1 KWP Political Bureau (Original Chart from North Korea Leadership Watch)

#### WPK Political Bureau January 2015

The Political Bureau is the highest decision-making body in the Workers Party of Korea (WPK). It decides and directs all Party activities and projects between Party Congresses in the name of the WPK Central Committee (CC). With the exception of National Defense Commission Members Jo Chun Ryong and Ri Pyong Chol, the entire NDC is represented on the Political Bureau. The dates provided indicate when the individual first joined the Political Bureau as either a full or alternate member.

 National Defense Commission

#### Presidium

		
Kim Jong Un April 2012	Kim Yong Nam August 1978	Choe Ryong Hae April 2012

**Replaced by Hwang Byong-so**

#### Members

					
VMAR Hwang Pyong So April 2014	Pak Pong Ju April 2015	Kim Kyong Hui September 2010	Choe Tae Bok May 1990	Kim Ki Nam September 2010	Pak To Chun September 2010

**Status Unclear**

				
Yang Hyong Sop December 1993	Kang Sok Ju September 2010	VMAR Ri Yong Mu September 2010	Gen. O Kuk Ryol April 2012	Gen. Kim Won Hoeng April 2012

#### Alternates

					
Gen. Ri Yong Gil November 2015	Gen. Hyon Yong Chol April 2015	Kim Yang Gon September 2010	Kim Pyong Hae September 2010	Kwak Pong Gi April 2012	Gen. Choe Pu Il April 2015

**Reportedly executed**

**Deceased and replaced by Kim Yong-chol**

				
Ri Tu Chol April 2012	Ju Yun Jun April 2012	Tae Jong Su September 2010	Choe Yong Rim May 1990	O Su Yong April 2014

## A.2 Party CMC (Original Chart from North Korea Leadership Watch)

Party Central Military Commission  
August 2013  
Graphic: Michael Madden/NK Leadership Watch

**Chairman**  
Kim Jong Un  
April 2012

**Vice-chairman**  
VMAR Choe Hyong Hae  
April 2012  
Replaced by Hwang Byong-so



**Members**

VMar Kim Yong Chon  
Gen. Kim Kyong Ok  
September 2010

Gen. Kim Won Hong  
September 2010

Gen. Ri Pyong Chol  
September 2010

Col. Gen. Choe Pu Il  
September 2010

Gen. Kim Yong Chol  
September 2010  
Replaced Kim Yang-gon

Gen. Yun Jong Rin  
September 2010

Ju Kyu Chang  
September 2010

Col. Gen. Choe Kyong Song  
September 2010

Jang Song Taek  
September 2010  
Executed

VMar Hyon Chol Hae  
April 2012

Lt. Gen. Kim Rak Gyom  
April 2012

Gen. Kim Kyok Sik  
February 2015

Col. Gen. Ri Yong Gil  
February 2015

Col. Gen. Jang Jong Nam  
August 2015

## A.3 NDC (Original Chart from 38 North)

### National Defense Commission

The National Defense Commission (NDC) is the supreme organ of the state. The Ministry of People's Armed Forces and Ministry of People's Security are subordinate to the NDC, and the Ministry of State Security is formally under Kim Jong Un's direct control as head of the NDC. On September 25, 2014, KPA General Political Department Director Hwang Pyong So was elected NDC Vice Chairman and Minister of the People's Armed Forces Gen. Hyon Yong Chol and Vice Chief of the KPA General Staff and Air Force Commander Gen. Ri Pyong Chol were elected members. Jo Chun Ryong and Ri Pyong Chol are the only members of the NDC who are not part of the WPK Political Bureau.

 WPK Political Bureau  New position

**1st Chairman**  
Kim Jong Un  
April 2012

**Vice Chairmen**  
VMAR Hwang Pyong So  
September 2014  
VMAR Ri Yong Mu  
September 1998  
Gen. O Kuk Ryol  
February 2009

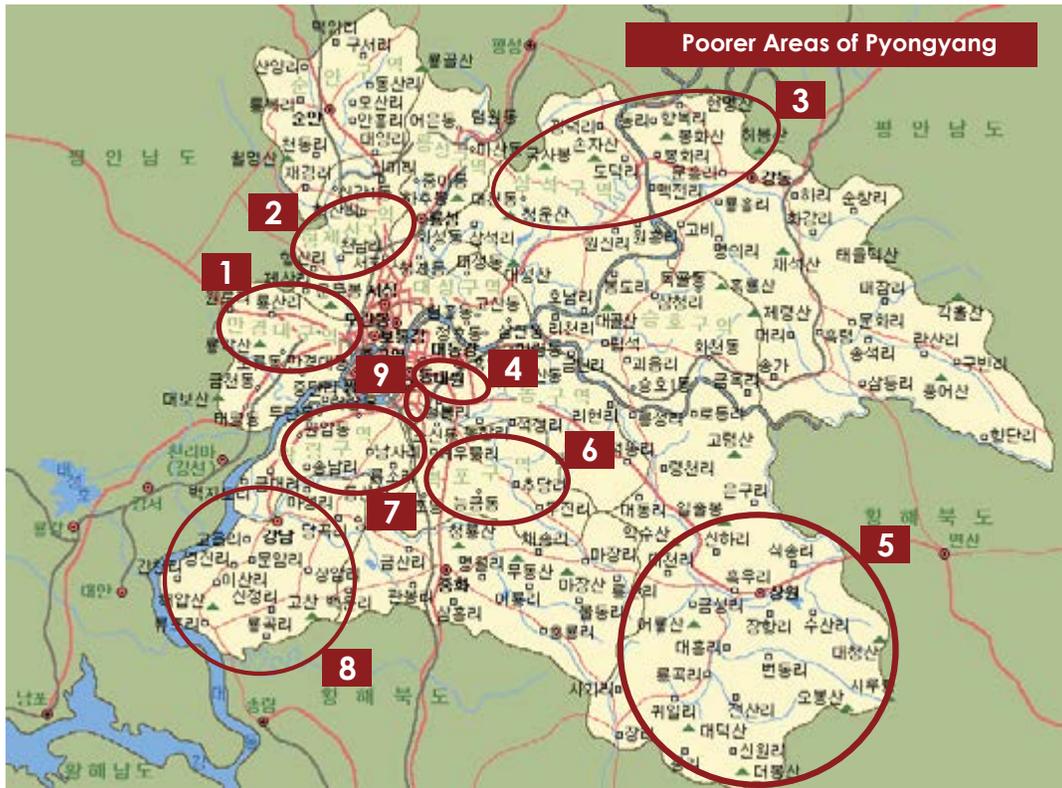
**Members**  
Pak To Chan  
April 2011  
Replaced by Kim Chun-sop  
Gen. Kim Won Hong  
April 2012  
Gen. Choe Pu Il  
April 2013  
Jo Chun Ryong  
April 2014  
Gen. Hyon Yong Chol  
September 2014  
Reportedly executed  
Gen. Ri Pyong Chol  
September 2014

**Ministry of the People's Armed Forces**  
Gen. Hyon Yong Chol  
May 2014  
Reportedly executed

**Ministry of State Security**  
Gen. Kim Won Hong  
April 2012

**Ministry of People's Security**  
Gen. Choe Pu Il  
April 2013

#### A.4 Poorer Areas of Pyongyang



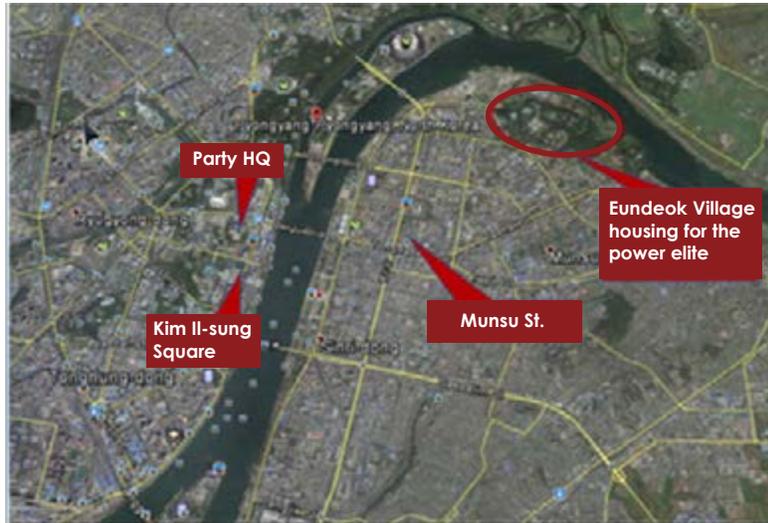
1. Mangyongdae District
2. Hyongjesan District
3. Samnok District
4. Tongdaewon District
5. Sangwon County
6. Ryokpo District
7. Rakrang District
8. Kangnam County
9. Sonkyo District

#### A.5 Pyongyang's Most Affluent to Least Affluent Districts, Ranked 1st to 18th



## 2. Appendix B: Maps

### B.1 Perspective of Pyongyang and Munsu Street (Google Earth)



### B.2 Proximity of Eundeok Village to the Iranian Embassy (Google Earth)



### B.3 Changgwang Street (Google Earth)

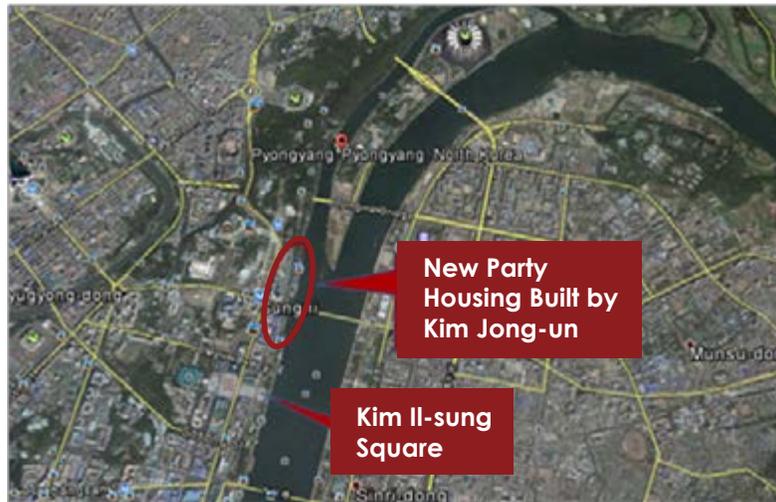


### B.4 Apartment buildings on Changgwang Street (Google Earth)



- Three primary sets of apartment buildings
- Likely more on side streets
- South of party offices

B.5 New Party Housing Built by Kim Jong-un (Google Earth)



B.6 Where the Rich Live in Pyongyang (Google Earth)



B.7 Perspective of Pyongyang and Gwangbok Street (Google Earth)



B.8 Housing for Older Party Cadre on Gwangbok Street (Google Earth)



- Older Party apartments from the 1980s
- Home to older Party cadre (Pyongyang administrators)

## B.9 Recent Administrative Changes to Pyongyang (Yonhap News)



- 2010 three counties and one district reassigned to Hwanghae North Province (see in red and brown striped areas)
- Remaining very light tan is Pyongyang
- Reduction of 500,000 residents
- One county reassigned in 2011 back to Pyongyang, shown in red stripes
- That county was vital for growing vegetables and fruit for elite

## 3. Appendix C: Photographs

### C.1 How North Korean Children are Taught to Hate Americans in Kindergarten



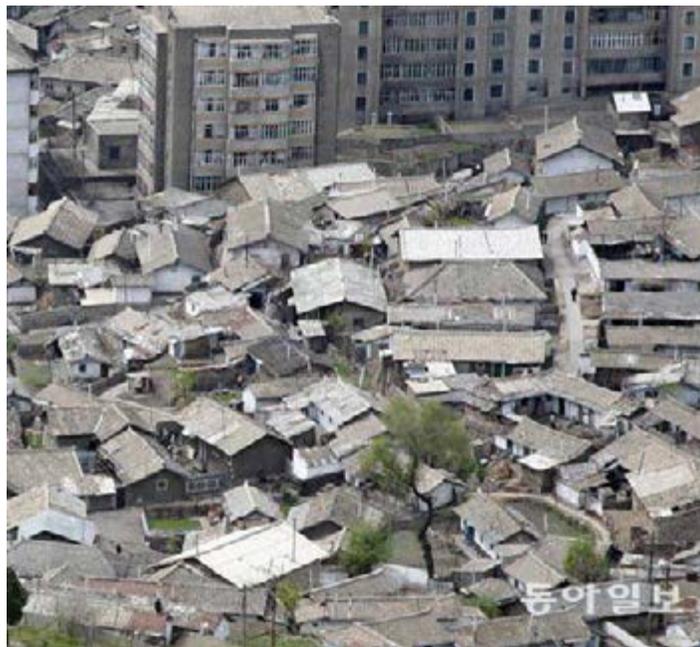
“How North Korean children are taught to hate the ‘American b\*\*\*\*\*’ at kindergarten,” *Daily Mail Online*, June 23, 2012.  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/new/article-2163817/How-North-Korean-children-taught-hate-American-b---kindergarten.html>.

## C.2 Pyongyang Apartments for the Elite



“평양 아파트, 어떻게 지었고 누가 어디 사나” [‘Pyongyang Apartments,’ How Were They Built and Who Lives Where?], SBS News, May 29, 2014. [http://w3.sbs.co.kr/news/newsEndpage.do?news\\_id=N1002413146](http://w3.sbs.co.kr/news/newsEndpage.do?news_id=N1002413146).

## C.3 Housing for the Poor in Pyongyang



Joo Seong-Ha. “평양에 생긴 주택거래소, 사적 소유 인정 신호탄인가” [Housing Market in Pyongyang, the First Sign of Privately-Owned Housing?], *Dong-A Ilbo*, December 16, 2014. <http://news.donga.com/3/all/2014/20141216/68561618/1>.

#### C.4 Housing for the “Poorer” in Pyongyang



Daniel Tudor and James Pearson, “North Korea is undergoing some startling developments,” *Business Insider*, April 2, 2015. <http://businessinsider.com/northkoreaisundergoingsomestartlingdevelopments2015>

#### C.5 Mirim Equestrian Club in Pyongyang



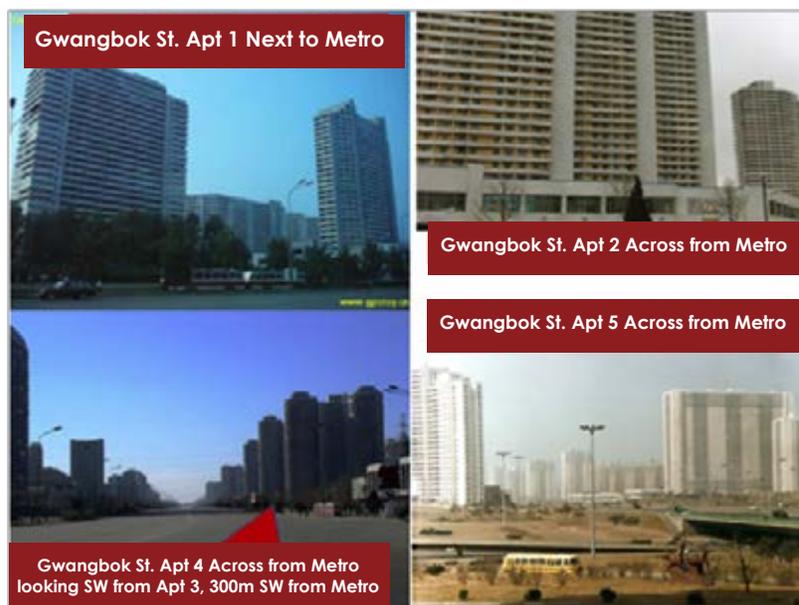
KCNA Watch. Undated, accessed May 18, 2014, <https://twitter.com/kcnawatch/status/402844161864245248>

### C.6 Munsu Waterpark in Pyongyang



Lee Young-Jong, "Inequality evidenced by lavish waterpark," *JoongAng Korea Daily*, July 24, 2014. <http://koreajoongang-daily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=2992451>.

### C.7 Gwangbok Street Apartments



## C.8 Changjeon Street Apartments



## C.9 Changjeon Street Apartments



Hwang Dae-Jin and Kim Myong-Song. *Premium Chosun*. March 19, 2014. [http://image.chosun.com/sitedata/image/201403/19/2014031900210\\_0.jpg](http://image.chosun.com/sitedata/image/201403/19/2014031900210_0.jpg)

Original cover image courtesy of votemenot.com.