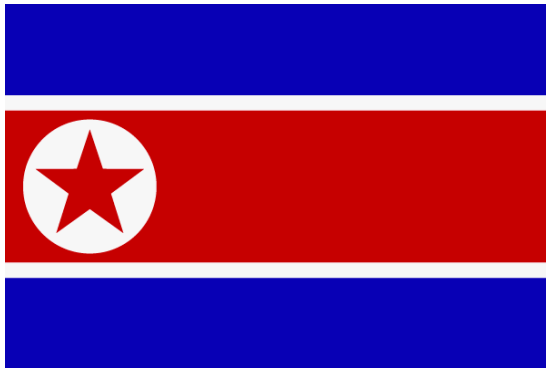


2010

Democratic People's Republic of Korea: A Risk Assessment Report



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CIFP 
Country Indicators for Foreign Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), better known as North Korea, was established in 1948 following the liberation of Korea from Japan in 1945. Following the end of WWII the Korean Peninsula was under the trusteeship of a joint Soviet-U.S. Commission in an effort to establish a national government. The U.N Security Council failed to resolve the issue of unification as a result of Cold War politics leading to the establishment of North Korea and South Korea (Republic of Korea). In 1951, North Korea launched an attack against South Korea. The U.S. allied with South Korea, and the Soviet Union along with China backed North Korea. The U.N. intervened in its first collective action under its Charter and managed, with the leadership of the U.S., to stabilize the border between the two Koreas at the 38th parallel. Although an Armistice Agreement between the two states was signed in 1953, border and naval clashes remain to this day intact.

Kim Il-Sung installed an autocratic political system based on a personality cult and one-party rule (i.e. the Workers' Party of Korea). Although little could be known about the dynamics of the regime, many maintain that the DPRK is ruled by a police regime with low levels of civil rights and liberties. Although little is known about the dynamics of the regime, many maintain that the DPRK is ruled by a police regime, where political rivals were assassinated or sent to prison.

Under the leadership of Kim Jong-Il the DPRK was keen on expanding its military arsenal and even going as far as developing nuclear weapons. In 2002, the U.S. accused North Korea of developing a secret weapons program and the Bush Administration labeled the country as part of the "Axis of Evil."¹ In 2003, negotiations on nuclear program with North Korea started under what came to be known as the Six-Party Talks. This involved countries with particular security concerns include: The U.S., South Korea, Russia, China, and Japan. In 2006, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test. In 2007, North Korea agreed to release all information regarding its nuclear program and to disable its nuclear facilities under international supervision.²

Recent Developments:

- **March 26 2010:** North Korea torpedoes a South Korean naval ship "Cheonan."³
- **May 20 2010:** South Korea releases Investigation Result on the Sinking of ROKS "Cheonan", stating that a North Korean submarine is responsible for sinking of the ship⁴
- **May 20 2010:** North Korean official denounces the results of the investigation and threatens to retaliate in "punishment" of South Korea.⁵
- **September 28 2010:** first meeting of the Korean Workers' Party in 44 years.⁶
- **September 29 2010:** talks between North and South Korea restart but end after two hours following South Korean demand to apologize for the sinking of Cheonan. Kim Jung-Il appoints his son Kim Jong-Un as his successor.⁷
- **October 9 2010:** North Korean official confirms Kim Jung-Un will succeed his father.⁸
- **October 29 2010:** fire exchange across the North-Korean border, an investigation team was sent by the South Koreans⁹
- **November 3, 2010:** South Korean Navy fired warning shots at a North Korean fishing boat after a North Korean vessel strayed across the border¹⁰
- **November 28 Belligerence escalates amidst joint US-South Korea military exercises. North Korea prepares itself for war.**

KEY INDICATORS	INFLUENCE
<p>History of Armed Conflict</p> <p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>Moderate</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent talks with the South shows a willingness to resolve disputes. Expression to return to Six-Party Talks in August 2010 following an official visit to China.¹¹ • In 2009 DPRK vows to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.¹² • Release of two American journalists and another American citizen who entered North Korea illegally could be seen as a sign of good will. • Release of South Korean fishing boat.¹³ <p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinking of South Korean naval ship. • Withdrawal from recent negotiations with South Korea after two hours of its start.¹⁴ <p>Assessment: North Korea seems to be sending mixed messages about its intention to resolve conflict.</p>
<p>Governance and Political Instability</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government reshuffle in September, promoting key negotiators in the Six-Party Talks to top positions. This could be read as a North Korean willingness to return to the talks.¹⁵ <p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepotism is on the rise following the appointment of Kim Jong-Un, Kim Jung-Il's son, and the assignment of his sister as a four-star general.

<p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of the Kim Jung-Un as the heir of the DPRK is seen as a continuation of state autocracy. Marking the third dynastic succession of the Kims in North Korea.¹⁶ • State crackdown on private trading was reported in November 2009, where as a result of the revaluation of the currency, many people lose their savings, leading to protests.¹⁷ • The creation of four naval zones near the South Korean border in February 2010, increasing the tensions between the two Koreas.¹⁸ • About 154,000 political prisoners are held in six detention camps.¹⁹ • All press outlets are run by the state.²⁰ • UNHCR believes corruption to be “endemic” in the country.²¹ <p>Assessment: The DPRK appears to be going through governmental changes. It is yet to be seen whether these changes will have any lasting effect but the situation with respect to civil liberties seems to be unchanged.</p>
<p>Militarization</p> <p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though North Korea’s total military strength is very large, standards of training, discipline and equipment are said to be low.²² • Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009) imposed sanctions on North Korea including an arms embargo, a nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction programs-related embargo and a ban on the export of luxury goods.²³ However, the 2009 report of the UN expert panel on the implementation of the sanctions reported "several indications that the DPRK (North Korea) is engaged in trade, transactions and activities proscribed by (U.N.) resolutions."²⁴ • Nevertheless, North Korea arms import declined from US\$9, 000, 000 to US\$5, 000, 000 between 2004 and 2009.²⁵ <p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Korea is ranked 4th in the world in the number of active troops²⁶, which reached 1 106 000. Its reserve troops are estimated at 4 700 000.²⁷ Total armed forces per 1,000 people were around 243 in 2009. • The country has 180,000 Special Forces troops (largest contingent in the world), ready to be deployed against South Korea.²⁸ • A large portion of the state budgetary expenditures goes into national defense. In 2009 (as well as in 2008), national defense represented 15.8% of the budget, which means that US\$545 million were spent on the military.²⁹ • North Korea holds 17, 634, 000 weapons, and is therefore 3rd among the 137 countries surveyed.³⁰ According to experts, prior to its second nuclear test in 2009, North Korea held enough plutonium to produce 6 or 8 nuclear weapons³¹. It also holds 2,000 to 5,000 tons of chemical weapons (3rd world’s largest arsenal) and 10 different types of biological weapons.³² • In 2009, North Korea also said it was enriching uranium, which gives it another way of developing nuclear weapons.³³ <p>Assessment: The building of North Korean military and weapon’s capabilities is increasing the tensions with the external actors, which is exacerbated by the country’s will to bypass U.N. sanctions.</p>
<p>Population Heterogeneity</p> <p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racially homogenous with a small community of Chinese and a few Japanese.³⁴ • Autonomous religious activity non-existent since 1945.³⁵ All official religious institutions are controlled by the state and are used mainly for propaganda purposes, serving no practical use for worship. State promotes ideology of Juche (self-reliance) and cults of personality instead.³⁶ <p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of over 30,000 Christians reside in North Korea but conduct their activities through underground churches. Autonomous religious activities are punished harshly through imprisonment.³⁷ In some instances, worshippers have been executed.³⁸ <p>Assessment: Given the ethnic homogeneity and lack of religious freedoms, tensions arising from the two are minimal in the face of a dominant state-security apparatus.</p>
<p>Demographic Stress</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable population growth at 0.42%.³⁹ • Stable rate of urbanization at 0.9% from 2005-2010.⁴⁰

<p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>Low - Moderate</p>	<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging youth bulge at 21.3%.⁴¹ This is expected to grow since it is estimated that 10% of births will not survive beyond 40 years of age.⁴² <p>Assessment: <i>Despite stable population growth trends ,the emergence of a youth bulge may put stress on state capacity and social forces in the future.</i></p>
<p>Economic Performance</p> <p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>Low - Moderate</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lifting of certain restrictions on private markets as a result of failed currency revaluation. North Korea asks for international economic aid.⁴³ South Korea sends aid for to North Korea in concluding that the economic ability of farmers to sell crops has been devastated by recent floods.⁴⁴ <p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Korean economic performance has been in decline for the past several years due to numerous factors, but the three that remain the same are named the “three shortages”: Foreign Exchange, Energy, and Food.⁴⁵ The Foreign exchange rate has negatively affected food prices and market prices relative to other foreign currencies.⁴⁶ Internationally viewed as possibly supplying ‘dual use material’ to countries such as Iran and other Middle Eastern countries.⁴⁷ The economy is limited and restricted to agriculture, which has been faced with numerous natural disasters exasperated by political scrutiny.⁴⁸ A change in currency has further decreased the current value of the North Korea KPW.⁴⁹ GDP is stated to be at USD\$40 billion for the past three years.⁵⁰ <p>Assessment: <i>the North Korean economy is worsening, and will require much revitalization only possible once sanctions have been lifted allowing it to conduct normal business. The economic scenario is highly dependent on military and political developments.</i></p>
<p>Human Development</p> <p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>Moderate - High</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong education system with a claimed literacy rate of 99%. Education is compulsory for 11 years.⁵¹ 85% primary school enrolment and 50% secondary school enrolment.⁵² Consistent decrease of tuberculosis death from 100 to 39 deaths per 100,000 from 1990 to 2008 indicates improving health care. Consistently high levels of immunization programs.⁵³ 99% sanitation access. Referred by WHO Director as the “envy of the developing world” and had no shortage of doctors and nurses following her visit in April 2010.⁵⁴ <p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major food shortages: 23% of children under 5 are under weight and 33% of the population is undernourished.⁵⁵ Food shortage most likely to be exacerbated by recent flooding in northern DPRK.⁵⁶ Amnesty International asserts that health system is crumbling and is based unofficial bribes for access to healthcare.⁵⁷ High infant mortality rate at 51.34 / 1,000.⁵⁸ Consistently low health care expenditures at 3.5% of GDP.⁵⁹ Reports of forced labour in working camps with many workers on foreign territory escaping to live in hiding.⁶⁰ <p>Assessment: <i>Problem of food shortages continues to affect the regime despite positive trends in healthcare. However, with the recent collapse of currency revaluations it is highly likely that state services will falter.</i></p>
<p>Environmental Stress</p> <p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>Moderate - High</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the important drop in forest area between 1986 and 1996, the government implemented a strong policy of reforestation.⁶¹ In 2005, North Korea reached the level of CO2 emissions of the other East Asia & Pacific countries (3.5 metric tons per capita) after a strong decrease since 1996.⁶² <p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even though forests cover 74% of North Korea territory, most of it is located on steep slopes, which are more exposed to floods.⁶³ The change in forest cover from 1990 to 2005 was -24.56%/ha.⁶⁴

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of people per square kilometer of Arable land is stable at 0.1.⁶⁵ In 2008, renewable internal freshwater resources per capita were of 2,812.9 cubic meters.⁶⁶ The UNEP 2003 report stresses the fact that pollution of rivers and streams became severe in recent years while the demand for water is rising.⁶⁷ North Korea is prone to environmental damages which may put acute stress on state capacity. In August 2010 heavy rains and landslides caused by a typhoon killed dozens of people, destroyed homes and inundated farmland.⁶⁸ <p>Assessment: Degradation of resources in North Korea weakens the capacity of the population and the government to face natural disasters.</p>
<p>International Linkages</p> <p>CIFP Score:</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPRK receiving aid assistantship from the U.S. and South Korea. North Korea participates in the following international organizations: ARF, FAO, G-77, ICAO, ICRM, IFAD, IFRC, IHO, IMO, IOC, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, NAM, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO.⁶⁹ <p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Korea is not a member of APEC, which criticized the country in 2006 for its nuclear tests. North Korea has helped Myanmar to develop its nuclear weapons program by sending some components.⁷⁰ Some illegal arms trading also occurred in 2009.⁷¹ On September 28, 2010, some cargo has been suspected of carrying weapons from North Korea to Syria.⁷² North Korea ceased cooperation with the IAEA in 2009.⁷³ <p>Assessment: North Korea seems to be far behind in developing political and diplomatic relations with other countries, but more interested in establishing military relations with countries like Syria and Myanmar.</p>

KEY STAKEHOLDERS - Internal	
<p>Kim Family</p> <p>Influence:</p> <p>Mixed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kim family asking for aid from China, South Korea, and allowing entry of food from South Korea is a peace generating factor. The Kim family has increased policing and militarization in certain border areas in order to exhibit control. With Kim Jong-Un unveiled as the successor, the Kim family is continuing into 3rd generation dynastic rule.
<p>Military</p> <p>Influence:</p> <p>Mixed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is uncertain how the military will react to the succession of Kim Jong-Un given the arbitrary bestowal of military rank by Kim Jong-Il upon his family members. Possibly antagonizing elements of the military.
KEY STAKEHOLDERS – External	
<p>Six Party Framework</p> <p>Influence:</p> <p>Mixed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This regional partnership between the U.S. and Northeast Asia facilitates the building of stable relationships around the Korean peninsula.⁷⁴ The Six Party Talks generated 3 significant agreements for denuclearizing North Korea in 2005 and 2007. The Six Party Talks were held for the last time in 2008. North Korea quit the talks in April 2009 and announced it would reverse their disablement process.⁷⁵ It is said that North Korea has now decided internally to return to the talks.⁷⁶ The effectiveness of the talks has been altered by the differing approaches adopted by the governments.⁷⁷
<p>China</p> <p>Influence:</p> <p>Positive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> China remains North Korea's closest ally and holds enormous economic clout.⁷⁸ China appears to be increasing its pressure on North Korea to return to Six-Party Talks although the nature of China's influence on North Korea is debatable.⁷⁹ China has no desire for the onset of a nuclear arms race in the North East Asian region nor does it wish to encourage large refugee flows following regime collapse in North Korea.⁸⁰ Recent visit by Kim Jong-Il to China is supposed to lead to an increase of aid to North Korea to alleviate humanitarian crisis and to bolster regime legitimacy⁸¹

<p>Republic of Korea</p> <p>Influence: Positive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Korea seems to be eager to go back to talks with the North. It took the initiative to schedule talks last month. • According to the South Korean Ministry of Unification, the country is keen to create “a new paradigm for inter-Korean relations” and to “create a turning point” in resolving the nuclear issue.⁸² • Talks failed because of the North’s naval violations against the Cheonan as identified earlier. • South Korean government has resumed aid and abandoned its hard-line policy against North Korea.⁸³
<p>United States</p> <p>Influence: Mixed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. is pursuing what it describes as “strategic patience” policy with North Korea. This is a policy built on the idea that the U.S. should not reach out to the DPRK, but instead wait for the DPRK to come to the table and resume negotiations.⁸⁴ • The U.S. is extremely worried about the North’s nuclear program advancement, and its willingness to transfer nuclear expertise to the Middle East (e.g. Syrian nuclear plant 2007)⁸⁵ • Carter’s latest visit to North Korea in August 2010 shows a U.S. attempt to use second track diplomacy to bridge connections between the two countries.⁸⁶
<p>Japan</p> <p>Influence: Positive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan has a firm position towards North Korea that could contribute to pressuring it. • Japan plans to extend the 2006 ban on North Korean imports.⁸⁷ • Japan has deployed its new Patriot missile defence system in 2010.⁸⁸
<p>Russia</p> <p>Influence: Mixed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia does not work in the same direction that the other external stakeholders do but its moderated position could help to reopen talks. • The complete elimination of North Korea’s nuclear program is not an absolute priority for Russia.⁸⁹ • The country opposes endless sanctions against North Korea.⁹⁰

SCENARIOS

Best Case Scenario:

- Kim Jung-Un’s succession leads to softening of the regime, and North Korea becomes more willing to open up and pursue better inter-Korean relations. North Korea pledges not to provoke and attack South Korea assets at sea.
- Going back to the Six-Party Talks and North Korea agrees to stop its nuclear activity and development.
- As a result, sanctions are lifted, and the North receives more foreign aid. Aid alleviates food shortages in North Korea and money is put into agriculture and fighting soil degradation. Foreign investments begin to flow into North Korea and joint Korean development of North Korea agriculture is explored.
- The North considers apologizing to the South. Formal diplomatic relations between other countries are established. North Korea pledges to end its illicit activities.
- Reduction in military presence on the North-South border. Possible U.S. pullout from the Korean peninsula.
- Family reunification and movements across the border take place.

Worst Case Scenario:

- Kim Jung-Un succeeds to power and loses the support of the military. As a result, we witness a military coup.
- The military leaders decide to resume nuclear development and threaten to use them on a first-strike basis. This prompts the U.S. to deploy nuclear warheads in South Korea.
- The military invades the South using conventional forces. A U.N. coalition force is established under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter.
- Great human loss of life, deterioration in human conditions. A great spill over of refugees from the North to neighbouring countries (China and South Korea).
- Escalation of instability in the whole region, especially in China in the bordering areas with North Korea.
- Supply of terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda or Taliban with nuclear capabilities and weapons of mass destruction. Also, helping Iran to advance its nuclear program, and helping Syria to start its own program. Thus, resulting in a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.
- Northeast Asia is heavily destabilized and the threat of nuclear war is omnipresent.

Most Likely Scenario:

- The recent government reshuffle and the appointment of members involved in the Six-Party talks to high-level positions will lead to restart the Six-Party talks.⁹¹
- Food shortages and the effects of the sanctions pressure the North Korean regime to be more receptive of foreign aid and pressure the regime to return to the Six-Party Talks.

- Six-Party members work towards a short term settlement, in the sense of convincing North Korea to hold its nuclear program. They do not seem to be clear on their long term objective, or how to proceed in negotiating with the North.
- The course of negotiation with the DPRK seems to be running in circles, a form of settlement is reached and then a setback usually follows. North Korea will not allow for further concessions, it will only put its nuclear program on hold, with the intention to proceed later on after receiving some aid. Furthermore, North Korea continues to conduct clandestine illicit activities.
- North Korea will keep naval tension with the South, and will attempt to hinder the talks by launching other naval or nuclear test.

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¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

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