

Section 2. Korean Peninsula

On the Korean Peninsula, people of the same ethnicity have been divided into two — north and south — for more than half a century. Even today, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and North Korea pit their ground forces of about 1.5 million against each other across the demilitarized zone (DMZ).

Maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula is vital for the peace and stability of the entire East Asian region, to say nothing of Japan.

(See Fig. I-2-2-1)

1. North Korea

1. General Situation

North Korea has been advocating the construction of a “powerful and prosperous nation” as its basic national policy¹⁹, aiming to create a strong socialist state in all areas — ideology, politics, military affairs, and economy — and it adopts “military-first politics” to realize this goal. The “military-first politics” has been defined as a form of leadership that advances the great undertaking of socialism by resolving all problems that arise in the revolution and national construction on the principle of military first and stressing the importance of the armed forces as the pillar of the revolution²⁰. Indeed, General Secretary of the Korean Workers’ Party Kim Jong Il is in a position to completely control North Korea’s military forces as Chairman of the National Defense Commission²¹ and regularly visits military forces. It would appear that he intends to continue attaching importance to, and relying on, the military forces.

Although North Korea faces serious economic difficulties to this day and depends on the international community for food and other resources, the country seems to be maintaining and enhancing its military capabilities and combat readiness by preferentially allocating resources to its military forces. For example, military personnel represent a high proportion of the population, with active-service military personnel estimated to account for nearly 5% of the overall population²². It is noteworthy that North Korea deploys most of its armed forces along the DMZ. According to the official announcement made at the Supreme People’s Assembly in April 2009, the proportion of the defense budget in FY2009’s national budget was 15.8%, but it is estimated that this represents only a portion of real defense expenditures.

Furthermore, North Korea seems to maintain and reinforce its so-called asymmetric military capabilities by making efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missiles and by maintaining large-scale special operation forces.

North Korea’s military behavior has increased tension over the Korean Peninsula, and constitutes a serious destabilizing factor for the entire East Asian region, including Japan.

Needless to say, North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is not condoned, but at the same time, we should not forget security concerns other than the nuclear problem. It is necessary to continue to pay enough attention to the development, deployment, and proliferation of ballistic missiles by North Korea and the military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula continue to demand a close watch.

Since North Korea still largely maintains its closed regime, it is difficult to accurately capture the details and

Fig. I-2-2-1 Military Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula



		North Korea	ROK	U.S. Forces in ROK
Total armed forces		Approx. 1.1 million personnel	Approx. 690,000 personnel	Approx. 25,000 personnel
Army	Ground troops	Approx. 1 million personnel	Approx. 560,000 personnel	Approx. 17,000 personnel
	Battle tanks	T-62, T-54/-55, etc. Approx. 3,500	88, M-47, M-48, etc. Approx. 2,750	M-1
Navy	Naval vessels	Approx. 650; 106,000 tons	Approx. 190; 181,000 tons	Supporting corps only
	Destroyers		10	
	Frigates	3	9	
	Submarines	23	11	
Air Force	Marines		2 divisions; approx. 25,000 personnel	
	Combat aircraft	Approx. 620	Approx. 490	Approx. 60
	3rd and 4th generation fighters	Mig-23×56 Mig-29×35 Su-25×34	F-4×70 F-16×164 F-15×39	F-16×40
	Population	Approx. 22.7 million	Approx. 48.5 million	
Reference	Military service	Army: 5–12 years Navy: 5–10 years Air Force: 3–4 years	Army: 18–24 months Navy: 20–26 months Air Force: 21–27 months	

Note: The Military Balance 2010, etc.

intentions of the country's policies and behavior. However, it is necessary to continue to pay utmost attention to them.

2. WMD and Ballistic Missiles

Concerning WMD, issues of North Korea's nuclear weapons program have been pointed out, as well as its chemical and biological weapons capabilities. In particular, North Korea's nuclear issue has serious influence on Japan's national security and it is also a critical problem for the entire international community in terms of nonproliferation of WMD²³. In particular, nuclear tests by North Korea, when considered in conjunction with North Korea's reinforcement of its ballistic missile capability that could serve as the means of delivery of WMD, simply cannot be tolerated as they constitute a serious threat to the security of Japan and do considerable harm to the peace and stability of Northeast Asia and the international community.

As for ballistic missiles, North Korea seems to be conducting R&D for deploying existing ballistic missiles, extending the range and putting solid fuel to use²⁴. Also, it is pointed out that North Korea's proliferation of ballistic missiles continues. Both North Korea's missile issue as well as its nuclear issue are destabilizing factors for the entire international community and the Asia-Pacific region, and such moves are of great concern.

(1) Nuclear Weapons

a. Responses to the North Korean Nuclear Issue

With regards to the issue of North Korea's development of nuclear weapons, the Six-Party Talks²⁵ have been held since August 2003 in pursuit of a peaceful resolution to this problem and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. At the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks in 2005, a joint statement was adopted for the first time, which mentioned the verifiable abandonment of "all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs" by North Korea. However, North Korea delayed its participation in the Six-Party Talks, and launched seven ballistic missiles and announced that it had conducted a nuclear test in 2006. Facing these actions by North Korea, which further increased international tensions, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolutions 1695 and 1718 imposing sanctions on North Korea. In December 2006, North Korea returned to the fifth round of the Six-Party Talks and, in February 2007, the parties reached an agreement on "Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement" to implement the joint statement made at the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks. After the shutdown of nuclear facilities in Yongbyon based on this agreement, in October 2007, the "Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement" were announced as the outcome of the sixth round of the Talks. The agreement includes completion of the disablement of nuclear facilities in Yongbyon and "a complete and correct declaration of all its (North Korea's) nuclear programs" by the end of 2007. However, the implementation of the agreement has not been completed²⁶.

In response to the U.N. Security Council presidential statement condemning North Korea's missile launch, North Korea suggested that it would boycott the Six-Party Talks and announced the resumption of reprocessing spent nuclear fuel rods. It also announced that it would take steps including nuclear tests and test launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles unless the U.N. Security Council apologized. North Korea announced that it had conducted a second nuclear test in May, 2009. In response, the international community adopted U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874 in June 2009, condemning North Korea's nuclear test in the strongest possible terms and imposing additional measures against North Korea. North Korea announced that the whole amount of the newly extracted plutonium would be weaponized, and the process of uranium enrichment would be commenced, etc. An additional announcement was made by North Korea that the uranium enrichment experiment had been successfully carried out in September 2009 and had entered the completion stage. In November 2009 it announced that the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel rods had been successfully completed by the end of August and it had made substantial achievements in weaponizing the extracted plutonium. While emphasizing

the progress in its nuclear development in this manner, North Korea also hinted at the possibility of holding multilateral consultations, including the Six-Party Talks, depending on the progress in talks with the United States. Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, visited North Korea as the first Obama administration official to discuss the issue.

While some argue that North Korea's response to its nuclear development problem is a so-called brinkmanship policy by intentionally heightening tension in order to receive some sort of reward, others argue that North Korea's ultimate objective is to secure deterrence capability by possessing nuclear weapons. The ultimate goal of North Korea is said to be the maintenance of its existing regime. Considering this, these two views are not incompatible.

While it is important for Japan, the United States, and the ROK to maintain close cooperation to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem, roles played by other countries like China and Russia (the other participants in the Six-Party Talks), as well as such international institutions as the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are also important.

b. The Current Status of the Nuclear Weapons Program

Details about the current status of North Korea's nuclear weapons program still remains largely unclear, partly because North Korea remains an extremely closed regime. In light of the series of North Korean announcements and actions as well as the fact that the status of North Korea's nuclear development so far is not yet elucidated, the possibility that North Korea has already made considerable progress in its nuclear weapons program cannot be dismissed²⁷. In addition, the fact that North Korea announced in May 2009 that it had conducted a nuclear test following the one in 2006 suggests that there is a high possibility that North Korea has further advanced its nuclear weapons program. When taken together with North Korea's enhancement of its ballistic missile capability, which could serve as a means of delivering WMD, nuclear tests by North Korea are totally unacceptable as they are a significant threat to Japan's security and seriously undermine the peace and security of Northeast Asia and the international community.

In general, miniaturizing a nuclear weapon enough to be loaded on a ballistic missile requires an extremely high degree of technological capacity. However, considering the fact that the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, and China succeeded in acquiring such technology by as early as the 1960s, it is difficult to eliminate the possibility that North Korea, in a relatively short time, will achieve miniaturization of nuclear weapons and acquire nuclear warheads²⁸. It is necessary to remain watchful of all related developments.

(2) Biological and Chemical Weapons

Because North Korea is an extremely closed regime and most materials, equipment, and technology used for manufacturing biological and chemical weapons are for both military and civilian use, facilitating camouflage, details of North Korea's biological and chemical weapons development and arsenals are not clear. However, it is believed that North Korea has a certain level of production base for biological weapons although it ratified the Biological Weapons Convention in 1987. As for chemical weapons, North Korea has not acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and it is estimated that North Korea has several facilities capable of producing chemical agents and has a substantial amount of stock of such agents²⁹.

(3) Ballistic Missiles

North Korea is an extremely closed regime, and details of its ballistic missiles are unknown. It appears however, that North Korea gives high priority to the development of ballistic missiles out of political and diplomatic considerations and from the viewpoint of earning foreign currency³⁰, in addition to enhancing its military capabilities.

a. Scud

It is believed that, since the middle of the 1980s, North Korea has manufactured and deployed Scud B and Scud C³¹, a variant of Scud B with extended range, and has exported these ballistic missiles to the Middle East and other countries.

b. Nodong

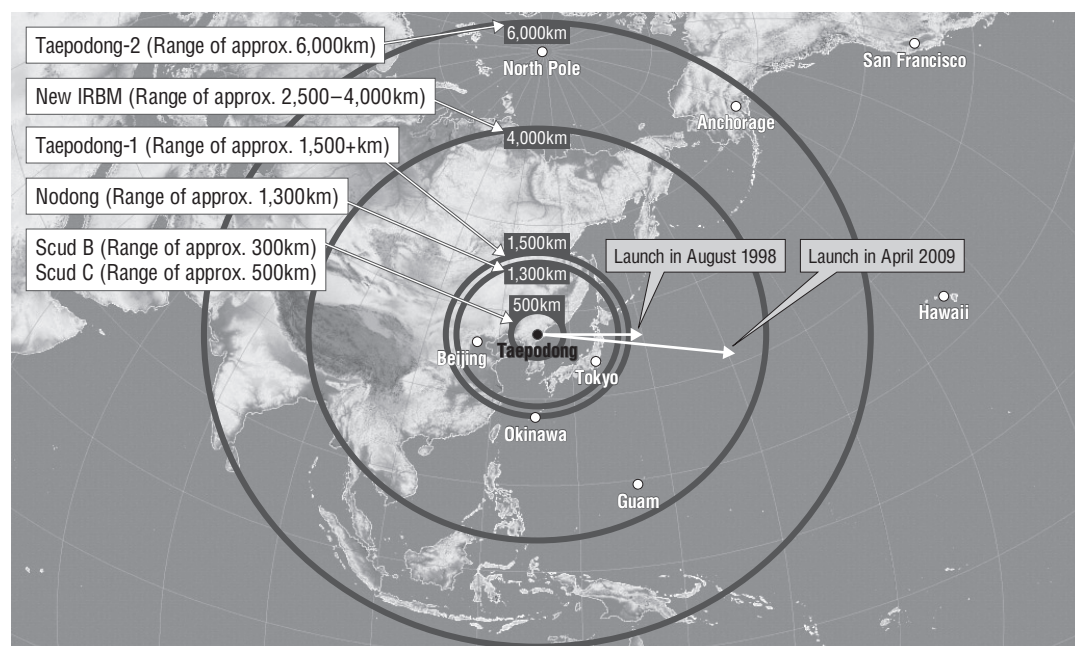
North Korea is also thought to have started its development of longer-range ballistic missiles by the 1990s, including Nodong. It appears that Nodong, the deployment of which is believed to be ongoing, is a liquid fuel propellant single-stage ballistic missile. It is assessed to have a range of about 1,300km, and may reach almost all parts of Japan.

It is highly probable that Nodong was used in the launch into the Sea of Japan in 1993. A total of six ballistic missiles fired from the Kittaeryong district in the southeastern part of North Korea in July 2006 are believed to be Scud and Nodong³². In July 2009, North Korea is believed to have launched a total of seven ballistic missiles from the same district, and it is possible that they were either Scud or Nodong³³.

Though details about Nodong's capability have not been confirmed, as the ballistic missile is believed to be based on the Scud technology, it seems that it does not have the accuracy to carry out strikes on specific target installations.

Due to the fact that it is extremely difficult to verify the intentions of North Korea's military activities because of its closed regime, that it is believed that underground military facilities have been constructed across the country, and that Nodong, as is the case with Scud, is thought to be loaded onto a transporter-erector-launcher (TEL) and operated with mobility, it is thought to be difficult to detect individual and concrete signs of a Nodong launch in advance, such as its specific launch site and timing.

Fig. I-2-2-2 Range of North Korean Ballistic Missiles



Note: The figure above shows the distance each missile can reach from the Taepodong district.

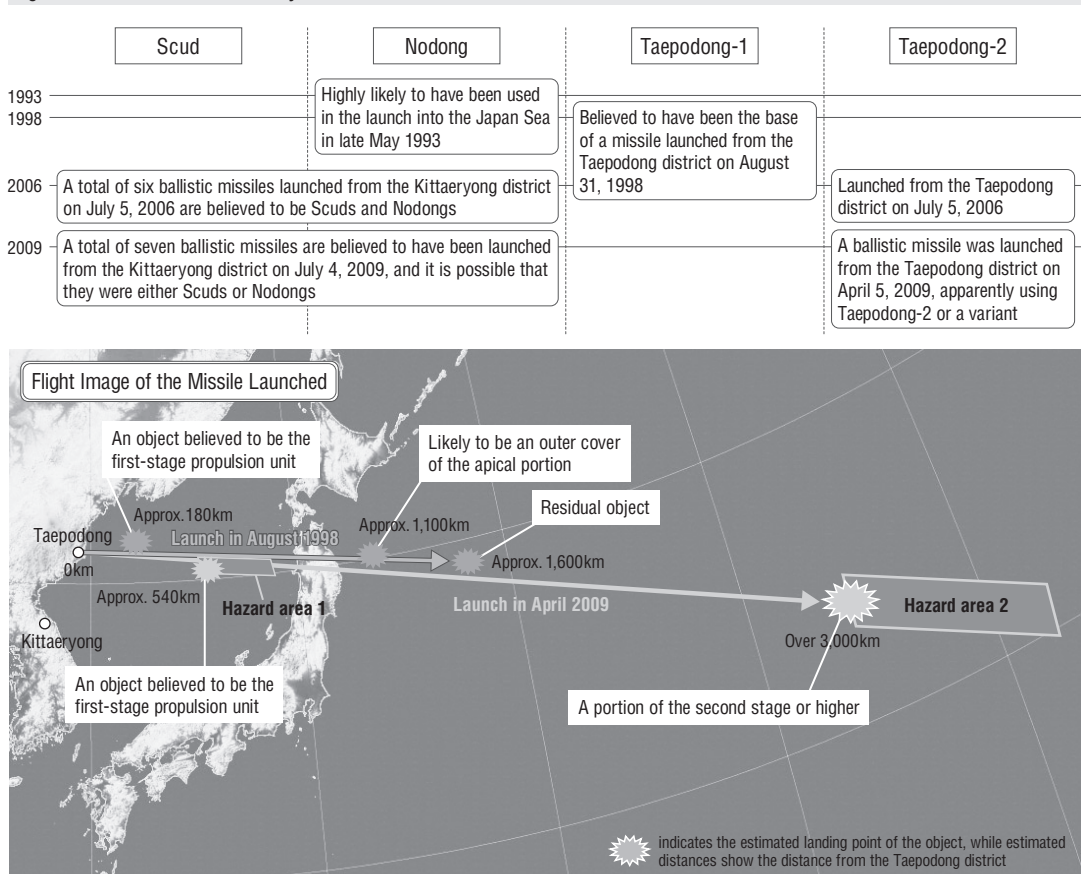
c. Taepodong-1

North Korea has also been developing Taepodong-1 which has an estimated range of at least approximately 1,500km. Taepodong-1 is assumed to be a two-stage, liquid fuel propellant ballistic missile with a Nodong used as its first stage and a Scud as its second stage. The ballistic missile launched in 1998 is assessed to be based on Taepodong-1. North Korea is believed to have shifted its focus to the development of Taepodong-2, which has a longer range, and Taepodong-1 may have been a transitory product for the development of Taepodong-2.

d. Taepodong-2

Taepodong-2 is believed to be a two-stage missile with a new booster as its first stage and a Nodong as its second stage, with a range of approximately 6,000km. A Taepodong-2 is believed to have been launched from the Taepodong district located in the northeastern coastal area in July 2006, and was damaged during the flight at an altitude of several kilometers, several tens of seconds after the launch without separating the first stage, and have fallen near the launch site. In the launch of April 2009, it is thought that North Korea used a Taepodong-2 or a variant of it³⁴ from the same district again. Since it is estimated that the missile crossed over Japan, and flew more than 3,000km before falling in the Pacific Ocean, it is believed that North Korea had been able to extend the range of its ballistic missiles since its failed launch of Taepodong-2 in 2006. Through the April 2009 launch, it is believed that North Korea may have tested the required technologies, such as increasing the size of

Fig. I-2-2-3 Missile Launches by North Korea



propulsion, separation of the multi-staged propulsion devices, and attitude control. Thus, it is highly possible that North Korea will advance the development of ballistic missiles, including longer-range missiles. Moreover, a test launch of a long-range ballistic missile would contribute to extending the range of other shorter-range missiles, increasing the warhead weight and improving the circular error probability (CEP). The April 2009 launch may lead to the improvement of the performance of Nodong and other ballistic missiles possessed by North Korea. (See Fig. I-2-2-2/3)

At present, North Korea appears to be developing not only ballistic missiles but also an intermediate-range ballistic missile³⁵ and a solid fuel propellant short-range missile³⁶. It is also necessary to pay attention to the possibility of North Korea's efforts to improve existing ballistic missiles such as Scud and Nodong, including an attempt to extend their ranges.

As the background of North Korea's rapid strides in the development of its ballistic missiles with only a few test launches, it is assumed that the country imported various materials and technologies from outside. It is pointed out that North Korea transfers and proliferates ballistic missiles or related technologies including the transfer of Nodong airframes and related technologies to Iran and Pakistan, and that North Korea promotes the further development of missiles using funds procured by such transfer and proliferation³⁷.

In light of this, it is necessary to remain alert to North Korea's ballistic missiles, particularly in terms of transfer and proliferation, in addition to their development and deployment.

3. Military Posture

(1) General Situation

North Korea has been building up its military capabilities in accordance with the Four Military Guidelines (extensive training for all the soldiers, modernizing all the armed forces, arming the entire population, and fortifying the entire country)³⁸.

North Korea's armed forces are comprised mainly of ground forces, with total troop strength of roughly 1.1 million. North Korea's military forces are believed to have been maintaining and enhancing their capabilities and operational readiness, and it seems to have continued infiltration³⁹ exercises. However, most of its equipment is outdated.

Meanwhile, North Korea has large-scale special operations forces that can conduct various operations ranging from intelligence gathering and sabotage to guerrilla warfare. These forces are believed to reach approximately 100,000 personnel⁴⁰. Moreover, North Korea seems to have many underground military-related installations across its territory.

(2) Military Capabilities

The North Korean Army comprises about one million personnel, and roughly two-thirds of them are believed to be deployed along the DMZ. The main body of the army is infantry, but the army also maintains armored and artillery forces including at least 3,500 tanks. North Korea is believed to regularly deploy long-range artillery along the DMZ, such as 240mm multiple launch rockets and 170mm self-propelled guns, which can reach cities and bases in the northern part of the ROK including the capital city of Seoul.

The navy has about 650 ships with total displacement of approximately 107,000 tons and is chiefly made up of small naval vessels such as high-speed missile crafts. Also, it has about 20 Romeo class submarines, about 60 midget submarines, and about 140 air cushioned landing crafts, the latter two of which are believed to be used for infiltration and transportation of the special operation forces.

The Air Force has about 590 combat aircraft, most of which are out-of-date models made in China or the former Soviet Union, but some fourth-generation aircraft such as MiG-29s and Su-25s are also included. North

Korea has a large number of outdated An-2s as well, which are believed to be used for transportation of special operation forces.

North Korea's military forces are vigorously conducting various types of training to maintain and enhance their operational readiness. Meanwhile, given the serious food situation, the military forces seem to be engaged in agricultural assistance as well.

4. Domestic Affairs

(1) Stability of the Regime

Some point out that in recent years North Korea's regime is not as stable as in previous years due to loosening of social control resulting from both an increasing income disparity and a trend of money-worshipping, and declining military morale. However, the fact that national events⁴¹ and diplomatic negotiations have been held in an orderly manner suggests that the regime based around Kim Jong Il, Chairman of the National Defense Commission, is considered to be on track⁴². On the other hand, there have been persistent rumors of his ailing health⁴³ since he failed to appear at the military parade of the Worker/Peasant Red Guard celebrating North Korea's 60th anniversary. Though Kim Jong Il is believed to have engaged in public activities such as frequent on-site inspections and visits⁴⁴, given his age of 68, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the regime will become unstable upon the possible change in power structure in the near future.

(2) Economic Conditions

In terms of their economy, North Korea has been facing chronic stagnation and energy and food shortages in recent years due to the vulnerability of its socialistic planned economy and decreased economic cooperation with the former Soviet Union and East European countries following the end of the Cold War. In particular, it seems that North Korea still has to rely on food assistance from foreign countries⁴⁵. It is also pointed out that many North Koreans are starving and their sense of morale has declined.

In response to a host of economic difficulties, North Korea has tried some limited reform measures and changes in its economic management systems. It is believed that, since around July 2002, North Korea has raised wages and commodity prices and devaluated exchange rates⁴⁶, and in 2009, tried to raise productivity through mobilization movements called the 150-Day Battle and the 100-Day Battle⁴⁷. However, as North Korea is not likely to undertake a structural reform that could damage its current regime, North Korea would still face various difficulties in fundamentally improving its current economic situation. At the end of 2009, North Korea is believed to have carried out redenomination of its currency. It remains to be seen how this action will affect the North Korean economy and the stability of the current regime.

5. The Sinking of an ROK Military Patrol Vessel

On March 26, 2010, the ROK military patrol vessel *Cheonan* sank near the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the Yellow Sea. Following the sinking, the Joint Civilian-Military Investigation Group, made up of experts from the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Sweden, conducted investigations in four teams, scientific investigation, explosive analysis, ship structure, and intelligence analysis. On May 20, the Joint Investigation Group announced that the vessel had been split and sunk by a shockwave and bubble effect created by an underwater explosion generated by the detonation of a torpedo launched by a North Korean midget submarine⁴⁸. Following this announcement, President Lee Myung-bak of the ROK issued a statement that the sinking of the *Cheonan* was an act of military provocation. He furthermore stated that the ROK would prohibit North Korean vessels from using sea lanes in the territorial waters of the ROK and all trade and exchanges between the South and the North would be suspended. Finally, he stated that the ROK would take firm measures such as the immediate exercise of the right of self-defense should North Korea invade the ROK's territorial waters, land, or air space, and refer the matter to the U.N. Security Council⁴⁹. On May 20, North Korea proclaimed that the findings of the joint investigation group were fabricated and that it would take forceful actions, possibly including an all-out war, against any sanctions imposed⁵⁰. On May 25, North Korea announced that it would stop all relations with the ROK⁵¹.

In response to these actions, a Summit declaration was adopted by the international community on June 26 of the same year at the G8 Muskoka Summit, as was a Presidential Statement in the U.N. Security Council on July 9. The statements issued criticized the attack which caused the sinking of the *Cheonan*. In talks between the U.S. Secretary of Defense and ROK Minister of National Defense, the two countries agreed to engage in a series of joint military exercises over the following months in the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan. During the period from 25th until the 28th of July, joint exercises, including anti-submarine training, were carried out in the Sea of Japan. Four MSDF officials were dispatched to the scene as observers.



U.S. nuclear aircraft carrier George Washington leaving port at Pusan in order to participate in a U.S.–Korea joint military exercise in the Sea of Japan in July 2010 [U.S. Department of Defense]

6. External Relations

(1) Relations with the United States

The United States made it clear that it would make efforts to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear program in close cooperation with other countries, aiming to resolve the issue through the Six-Party Talks. North Korea has claimed that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is the “dying wish” of Kim Il Sung and pledged to abandon “all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs.” North Korea, however, continues to criticize various policies of the United States, insisting that the United States has yet to abandon its “hostile policy” toward North Korea. Thus, there exists a significant gap between the two parties’ stances and the denuclearization process has seen no substantive progress. In addition, the United States has repeatedly expressed concerns over the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear-related materials, and the development, deployment, and proliferation of ballistic missiles by North Korea.

In addition, while the United States pointed out in its country reports on terrorism that the abduction issue of Japanese citizens is yet to be solved and that the hijackers of Yodo are still living in North Korea, in October 2008, the United States removed North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism on the grounds that North

Korea had agreed to a series of verification measures related to a declaration of its nuclear programs submitted in June 2008⁵².

(2) Relations with the Republic of Korea

Regarding relations between the Republic of Korea (ROK) and North Korea, there had not been much progress in North-South dialogue or exchanges, including in the military area, after the inauguration of President Lee Myung Bak in the ROK. Meanwhile, restrictions on inter-Korean traffic were lifted in the summer of 2009, and in late September 2009, projects for the reunion of separated families resumed for the first time in about two years⁵³. On the other hand, near the NLL in the Yellow Sea, incidents transpired that heightened North-South military tensions, including the exchange of fire between North Korean and ROK naval vessels in November of that year, and the sinking of the South Korean patrol vessel which occurred in March 2010.

(3) Relations with China

With regard to the relationship between North Korea and China, the China-North Korea Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance concluded in 1961 is still in force. Since China and the ROK established diplomatic relations in 1992, the relationship between North Korea and China has changed from the close relationship they had enjoyed during the Cold War period. Since then, however, the leaders of the two countries have made mutual visits and the relationship has improved. In October 2009, the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and North Korea, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited North Korea and held talks with Kim Jong Il, Chairman of the National Defense Commission⁵⁴. China has repeatedly expressed its support for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula regarding North Korea's nuclear issue, and has been playing an active role in resolving the issue by, for example, asking North Korea to return to the Six-Party talks, as its chairman. Some, however, point out that the relationship between China and North Korea seems not to be as close as it used to be.

(4) Relations with Russia

While relations between North Korea and Russia have become less close since the end of the Cold War, the two countries signed the Russia-North Korea Treaty on Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation in February 2000, which lacked articles on military alliance⁵⁵ that were included in the previous treaty. After this, relations between North Korea and Russia have improved, with the heads of both countries making mutual visits⁵⁶.

(5) Relations with Other Countries

Since 1999, North Korea has made an effort to establish relations with West European countries and others, including the establishment of diplomatic relations with them⁵⁷ and participation in the ARF ministerial meetings⁵⁸. Meanwhile, the EU and ASEAN have traditionally expressed concerns over North Korea's nuclear and other issues.

2. The Republic of Korea and the U.S. Forces in the ROK

1. General Situation

In the ROK, democracy has taken firm root through such means as the direct presidential election adopted by the 1987 amendment to the constitution.

The administration of Lee Myung Bak, inaugurated in February 2008, is showing its intention to promote its policy to pursue “co-existence and co-prosperity” with regard to North Korea, and firmly maintains the principle of giving top priority to resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. While it maintains the “Vision 3000:

Denuclearization and Openness,” which aims to offer gradual economic assistance to North Korea in accordance with the progress in the abandonment of its nuclear program, the ROK government showed its renewed emphasis on the abandonment of the nuclear program by North Korea, with President Lee Myung Bak proposing the “grand bargain,”⁵⁹ a package deal to settle the nuclear issue.

U.S. forces, mainly the Army, have been stationed in the ROK since the ceasefire of the Korean War. The ROK has established very close security arrangements with the United States primarily based on the U.S.–ROK Mutual Defense Treaty, and the U.S. forces stationed in the ROK have been playing a vital role in deterring the outbreak of large-scale armed conflicts on the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, in July 2010, on the 60th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, the first U.S.–ROK foreign and defense ministers’ meeting was held. The two nations confirmed that the U.S.–ROK alliance is promoting peace and stability not only on the Korean Peninsula but in the wider region of Northeast Asia, and that it is developing as a powerful, successful and consistent alliance. In view of the progress in the North-South relations, improved national strength of the ROK, and changes in the U.S. strategy, the two countries have been committed to solving issues such as realignment of the U.S. forces stationed in the ROK and transition of the operational control authority in wartime⁶⁰ over U.S.–ROK combined forces to the ROK.

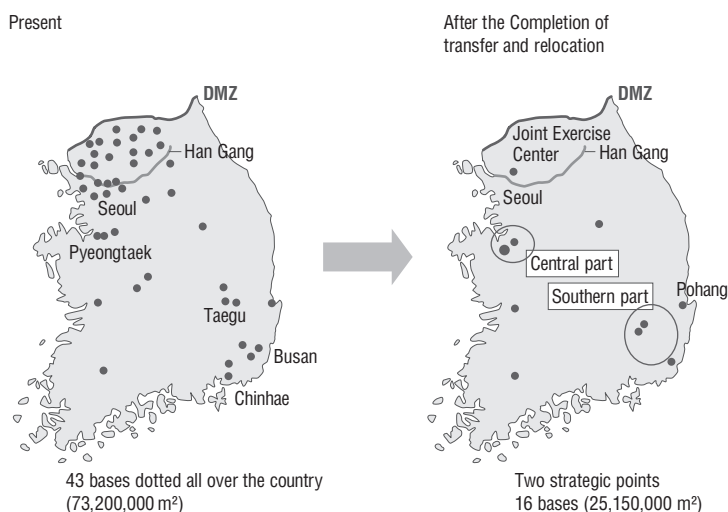
As for the realignment of the U.S. forces in the ROK, the relocation of U.S. forces Camp Yongsan located in the center of Seoul to the Pyongtek area, south of Seoul, and the relocation of U.S. forces stationed in the northern side of Han Gang to the southern side of the river were agreed upon in 2003. However, it seems that the relocation to the Pyongtek area is delayed⁶¹.

As for the transition of the operational control authority in wartime to the ROK, the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the ROK Minister of National Defense determined during their meeting in February 2007 that the



The U.S.–ROK Foreign and Defense ministers’ meeting held in Seoul in July 2010 [U.S. Department of Defense]

Fig. 1-2-2-4 Agreement on the Transfer and Relocation of the U.S. Forces in ROK



Note: ROK Defense White Paper 2006.

two countries would dismantle the U.S.–ROK Combined Forces Command and complete the transition on April 17, 2012. In talks between the leaders of the United States and the ROK in April 2008, both countries agreed to develop the ROK–U.S. Alliance into a new strategic alliance conforming to the 21st century, and the summit meeting in June 2009 created an agreement on the “Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and Republic of Korea⁶².” Further, the 41st Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) in October 2009 adopted a joint statement containing specific details of “extended deterrence” and strong U.S. commitment to the defense of the ROK, showing a further strengthening of the bilateral relationship⁶³. It is necessary to monitor how the transition to the new joint defense system of “the ROK forces leading and the U.S. forces supporting” will be implemented.

(See Fig. I-2-2-4)

2. Defense Policies and Defense Reform of the ROK

The ROK has a defensive weakness in that its capital Seoul, where a quarter of the country’s population is concentrated, is situated close to the DMZ.

The ROK has set the defense objectives as follows: “defending the nation from external military threats and invasion, upholding the peaceful unification, and contributing to regional stability and world peace.” As one of the “external military threats,” the ROK had designated North Korea as its “main enemy,” but, North Korea has no longer been described as such since the publication of the ROK Defense White Paper 2004.⁶⁴ In addition to the defense objectives, the ROK has identified “fostering an elite, advanced, robust military” as its defense vision and the following eight items have been set as the defense policy focus to achieve these goals and the vision.

- (1) Establish defense posture to realize comprehensive security
- (2) Creative development of the ROK–U.S. alliance
- (3) Strengthen advanced defense capability
- (4) Military support for creating a peaceful structure on the Korean Peninsula
- (5) Specialized military development that plays its role in a given position
- (6) Establish pragmatic, advanced defense management system
- (7) Improve barracks and environment and welfare in accordance with national development
- (8) A military of the people

The ROK intends to promote “National Defense Reform 2020”⁶⁵ to satisfy its defense needs such as maintenance of its military capabilities in line with the development of information and scientific technologies; balanced development of its Army, Navy, and Air Forces; elimination of inefficiency; and build-up of barrack culture in accordance with social trends. The bill on the National Defense Reform incorporating these main ideas was enacted in December 2006.

As an amendment reflecting the results of an analysis and assessment of the security situation and defense reform records after the formulation of the Defense Reform 2020, the ROK Ministry of National Defense announced the Defense Reform Basic Plan (2009–2020) in June 2009, defining such matters as a narrowing of the initially planned reduction in the force strength⁶⁶ and the possibility of preemptive strikes against North Korean nuclear and missile facilities.⁶⁷

3. Trends in Defense Buildup in the ROK

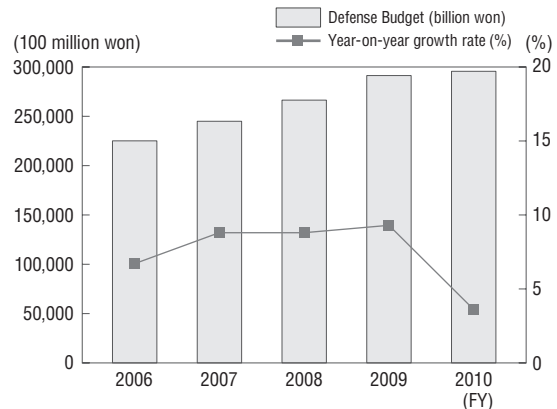
As for the ROK’s military capacity, the ground forces consist of 22 army divisions and two marine divisions, totaling 590,000 personnel; the naval forces consist of about 190 vessels with a total displacement of approximately 181,000 tons; and the air forces (Air Force and Navy combined) of approximately 500 combat aircraft.

In recent years, the ROK has been focused on modernizing its Navy and Air Force in particular in order to develop the capability to deal with a full spectrum of threats, not least threats from North Korea, as well as

omnidirectional military posture⁶⁸. The Navy has been introducing submarines, large transport ships and domestically-built destroyers. In December 2008, the first KDX-III (an Aegis-equipped destroyer) was put into service, and the second is scheduled to be commissioned by the end of 2010. The third is now under construction for delivery in 2012. In February 20, a ceremony was held at Busan Base to mark the creation of the Seventh Mobile Unit, the first mobile force in the ROK⁶⁹. The Air Force is proceeding with the introduction of F-15K fighters, and also plans to procure four Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) by 2012. In addition, the ROK is believed to be promoting domestic production of missiles.

The FY2010 defense budget amounts to approximately 29,562.7 billion won, an increase of approximately 3.6% over the previous fiscal year, marking the 11th consecutive rise since FY2000. (See Fig. I-2-2-5)

Fig. I-2-2-5 ROK's Defense Budget from FY2005 to 2010



Notes: 1. ROK Defense White Paper 2008 for FY2006 to 2008.
2. Press release from the Ministry of National Defense for FY2009 to 2010.

4. External Relations

(1) Relations with China and Russia

The ROK has been promoting military exchanges with China, including mutual visits of vessels and aircraft. In November 2008, the hot lines were established between the two countries' Navies and Air Forces. At the May 2008 summit meeting of the top leaders of the ROK and China, they agreed to upgrade the ROK–China relationship from a “full-scale cooperative partnership” to a “strategic cooperative partnership.” However, the bilateral relations in the security area still remain at the initial level compared with their ties in economic and other areas.

Military exchanges have been under way between the ROK and Russia in recent years, including exchanges among high military officials and mutual visits of naval vessels. The two countries have also agreed on cooperation in the areas of military technology, defense industry and military supplies. At the ROK–Russia Summit in September 2008, they agreed to upgrade the bilateral relations to the “strategic cooperative partnership.” Furthermore, in July 2009, then ROK Minister of National Defense Lee Sang Hee visited Russia for a meeting with Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov⁷⁰, an indication of further progress in security relations between the two countries.

(2) Activities Overseas

The ROK acceded to the United Nations in 1992, and since its dispatch of an engineering unit to Somalia in 1993, has continuously participated in a number of U.N. peacekeeping operations (PKO). The ROK says the active participation in PKO activities is a way of returning international assistance the country has received in the past from the international community, as well as securing support from the international community in times of emergency⁷¹. In December 2009, the ROK unveiled plans to substantially expand the number of personnel sent overseas on PKO missions from the current level⁷².

The ROK dispatched medical support units and engineering units to Afghanistan to support military operations by the United States and other countries, and withdrew them in December 2007 upon completion of their missions. However, in February 2010, the ROK decided to send up to 350 troops to the country again for the purpose of protecting about 140 Korean members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) stationed in Parvan province, and thus resumed activities in Afghanistan in July 2010. The ROK also dispatched troops to Iraq at the request of the United States, but withdrew from the country in December 2008 upon completion of the mission. Further, the ROK has dispatched naval vessels to waters off the coast of Somalia where they have been engaged in the protection of ROK-registered ships and maritime security operations (MSO) of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).