



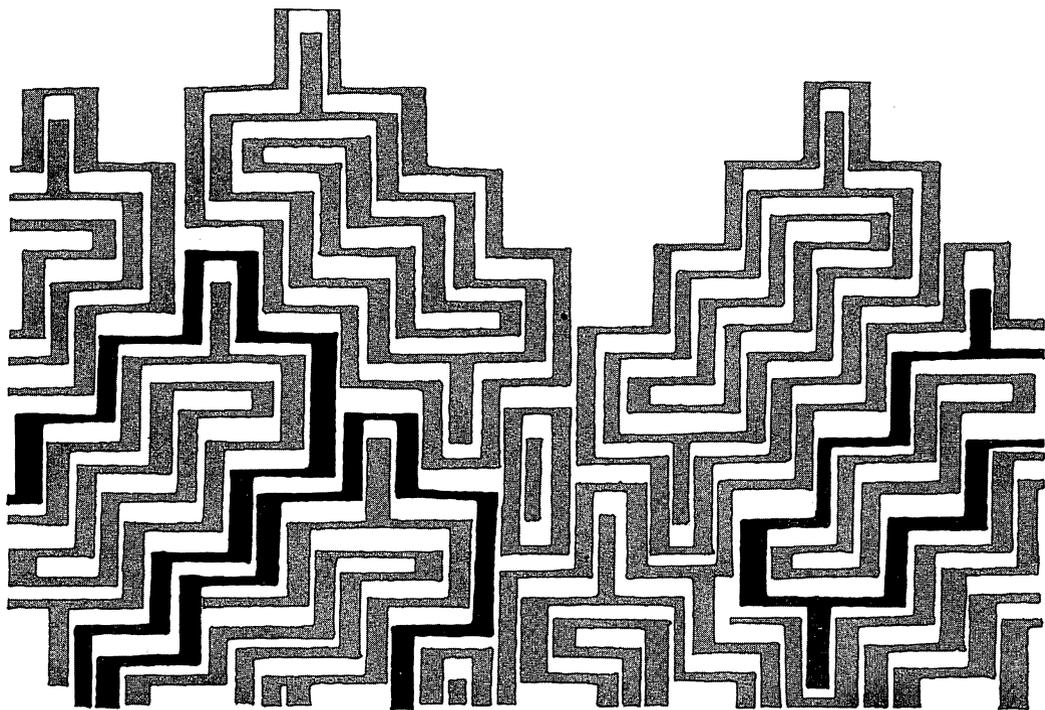
**INSTITUTE OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA • BERKELEY**

**CENTER FOR KOREAN STUDIES**

# **Asian Communism Continuity and Transition**

**EDITED BY**

**Robert A. Scalapino and Dalchoong Kim**



**INSTITUTE OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY**

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# Introduction

ROBERT A. SCALAPINO

The fascination involved in exploring Asian communist states today lies in comparing the precise mix of continuity and change that marks each society at a time when we are in the midst of a global revolution. Since this is a dynamic not a static situation, one can only describe and analyze conditions as of the present. Yet from this, one can hope to extrapolate basic trends of relevance to the future, with the conclusions subject always to later revisions due to unexpected developments (the Cultural Revolution comes immediately to mind). We are forced to deal with the human variable as well as with diverse institutional factors. Hence, we must cope with a larger margin of error than that considered acceptable by our colleagues in the “pure sciences,” although the margin of error that still permits fruitful scientific results is greater than is generally acknowledged.

While Asian communism derives from a single model, the communists both in and out of power have been marked by their particular culture and that of the society of which they are a part, their historical experiences and evolution, and, in the case of communists in power, the timing and circumstances of their triumph. Having underlined these facts, one should also be fully aware of the common elements that the Leninist system has imposed on its adherents as well as the similarities involved in the process of development. The developmental process involves not only parallel changes in individual societies but, equally important, progressively integrative trends in the regional and global community. Each generation of leaders is forced to adjust to these evolving conditions and in a broadly similar manner. Moreover, while one may question whether Asian communism can be considered a separate species apart from its counterparts in Europe or elsewhere, the present Asian communist states share a common cultural heritage, having all been associated with the great Sinic-Confucian civilization of the past. It would be surprising if that legacy had lost all significance.

The foundations of communism lay in the theories of Marx as modified (many would say distorted) and applied by Lenin. Whenever any doctrine is put into practice, its purity is diluted, and, in this sense, it is corrupted. The corruption of Marxism took especially pronounced forms because the effort was made to apply it to societies bearing scant relation to the type of society Marx considered ready for socialism. In many respects, Lenin turned Marx on his head—as Marx had done to Hegel. Leninism became a philosophic vehicle

for the elitist tutelage of a backward people, with its purpose that of telescoping the developmental process so that backwardness could be transformed into modernity in the shortest possible period of time. New societies populated by new citizens were then to take their rightful place in the world. And that rightful place was as leaders. The old imperialism—which threatened the very survival of all underdeveloped societies—was to be replaced by a new imperialism (although such a word was naturally anathema to Marxist-Leninists). The new imperialism was to find its strength in the expansion of a common ideology, a common institutional structure and set of policies, even a common supranational association of adherents bound by the collective views of its leaders.

Today, the ideological foundations of Marxism-Leninism are shaky, perhaps in ironic fulfillment of Marx's dictum that each society works its own downfall. First, Marxism in its unexpected environment became nationalized. It was Lenin that directed the marriage of Marxism and nationalism, although he had purely tactical objectives in mind. Josef Stalin—then Mao Zedong, Kim Il-song, and Ho Chi Minh—injected nationalism into the very heart of the Marxist-Leninist doctrines that they dispensed, making it a central part of the ideological appeal.

The universalist component in Marxism has correspondingly been reduced. At present, it is socialism with *Chinese* (Korean or Vietnamese) characteristics that is emphasized. State sovereignty is not only recognized but heralded. Self-reliance is the precise meaning of *chuch'e*, the essence of Kim Il-songism, but it is a prominent feature throughout the Leninist world, however modified in practice. Patriotic appeals similar to those employed by Japanese leaders a century ago have eclipsed the idealism embodied in the call for the brotherhood of man. To build a strong and respected nation is the order of the day.

Within this context, distinctions are imperative. In China, the confusion caused by the criticism of Mao has had its ideological as well as its institutional consequences. In an effort to erase the cult of personality, "Mao Zedong Thought" has been collectivized, being interpreted as the product of many minds, the result of the composite experiences of the Chinese communist movement.

In a period when the political leaders recognize that cynicism and disbelief are widespread in the aftermath of the events of recent decades, the effort is to rally the populace around four principles, the most important being the dictatorship of the communist party and socialism (with Chinese characteristics). Not without reason, leaders fear disunity in the course of the uncertain years ahead. Thus, differences—and choice—must be carefully circumscribed so that they do not promote dissidence. Yet it is clear that economic dynamism and creativity cannot be promoted by political mutes. This is the dilemma. Equally important, the very process of economic

experimentation promotes, indeed, demands, a pragmatic outlook scarcely in conformity with the rigidities of the past. "Seek truth from facts" may have been uttered at one point by Mao, but it conforms more with the views of John Dewey and his Chinese disciple, Hu Shih. Perhaps, however, Deng epitomized his era when he made the unforgettable statement, "It does not matter whether a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice." That pragmatism so intrinsic to Chinese culture is returning and, in the process, eroding Marxism-Leninism at its base. This is the hidden meaning of "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

North Korea currently represents a society existing in a different era. While the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) share a common adherence to nationalism (indeed, North Korea is possibly the most nationalistic society in Asia today), the political atmosphere of the two societies has diverged at a quickening pace in recent years. Politics is in command in Pyongyang, and the exhortations are strongly ideological. *Chuch'e* is the omnipresent symbol, Kim Il-song the omnipresent visage. No cult of personality has been carried further since that surrounding the sun gods of ancient times. The man and the ideology have thus been fused. The underlying motivation is clear. With half the population of South Korea and massive neighbors to the north and south, the North Korean party, state, and people must be totally unified, so completely integrated that there are no cracks through which divisive ideas or policies can seep. In the process, have genuinely new socialist men and women been created, that elusive goal of every Leninist society? If history is any guide, such a system, while impressive for a time, has a fragility when exposed, like ancient tombs opened to the outside atmosphere. It may thus be doubted that *chuch'e* or even Kim Il-song will be revered in the same manner as today when North Korea goes through the painful process of joining the world, although the psychological advantage of being father of one's country as well as the source of all light is considerable. In any case, North Korea stands alone in clinging to autarky and thereby retaining ideological primacy.

Vietnamese communism, perhaps because of the background of its paramount leader, Ho Chi Minh, never claimed ideological originality. Its distinctiveness lay in the fact that it retained a staunch nationalist commitment while displaying an adherence to the international communist movement and its instrument, the Comintern, more rigorously than other Asian parties. This may explain why an orthodoxy has pervaded Vietnamese communist doctrines, measured against the Soviet model. Yet by the same token, Vietnamese nationalism, replete with xenophobic features, has not only survived Marxism-Leninism, but triumphed over it, and it represents such mass appeal as communism possesses in this environment.

The appeal to struggle and sacrifice—an inevitable part of any war—is deeply imbedded in Vietnamese communism. And still another war con-

tinues at present. But Vietnamese leaders now find themselves in the position of having to tend to the long neglected economy lest disaster overtake them. To tolerate massive corruption and a huge second economy will no longer suffice. In addition to affecting its capacity to sustain its hegemony over Indochina, the deteriorating economy subverts the legitimacy of the system and its leaders. Thus, while evidencing little change of formal doctrine, pragmatism is infecting Vietnamese policy amidst a desperate search for an economic program that will work. Here is a society whose past cannot be its future, but to what is it in transition?

In these three states, the role and status of ideology varies. In China with economics in command, pragmatism threatens to capture the ideological heights, but a desperate effort is under way to protect those elements of Leninism that preserve unity and the power of the state.

In North Korea, with politics still in command, ideological primacy has not been challenged, at least openly. Although its form would shock Marx and dismay Lenin, Stalin would understand, as would Mao. The central question is how long this largely traditional value system and the power structure that goes with it can survive intact in a society that has made economic modernization a goal. Vietnam is at an impasse, with the orthodox ideology to which it clings not serviceable in reaching the goals which it now seeks with increasing flexibility. To be sure, this is only one aspect of the crisis presently engulfing the Vietnamese party and government. Sooner or later, however, ideological currents will have to conform to the basic economic and social policies that take root.

When one explores institutional trends, does a similar pattern emerge? Generally speaking, Asian Leninist societies—like many of a different type—have been governments of men, not of law. Constitutions come and go, basic laws are enacted and changed, but it is the will of the governors that is determining. Nevertheless, Leninism provided an institutional framework of greater utility and effectiveness to these societies than liberalism. Above all, it provided a method of organization starting at the grassroots that in its pervasiveness and linkage was indispensable to communist success. Beyond this, it established the party as supreme—guardian of purity, ultimate policy-maker, and principal symbol of legitimacy. The party served as the initiator and tutor; the state functioned to execute policies and, in this process, adjust them to the exigencies of the times. Under this system, officialdom proliferated since two channels of authority had been created. In this sense, Leninism could build upon the traditions of the Sinic societies of Asia where bureaucratism had long reigned supreme.

Today, some institutional changes of importance appear to be taking place in Asian Leninist states, although their full import awaits further developments. In China, the state has been given new prominence as those with higher education and technical expertise are summoned to undertake the

developmental tasks. The jurisdictional lines separating party and state are being defined more rigorously, with injunctions to the party to confine its activities—both in the public and private sectors—to the tasks of educating the citizenry and sketching the broad future policy course to be taken. It is openly enjoined to refrain from other roles. Managerial responsibility at the plant level is being officially encouraged. And within the governmental system itself, the voice of the legislatures and of the primary consultative bodies is being allowed somewhat greater scope. Thus, sessions of the National People's Congress and the People's Political Consultative Conference have been marked by a rising number of questions and criticisms. Choice in elections—both party and governmental—has been expanded, although most candidates are screened by the party in advance. The media reports problems and issues more fully. In sum, political openness within bounds is in evidence along with the type of nervousness that a Leninist elite might be expected to exhibit in the course of such developments.

In a more general sense, socialist legalism has acquired new emphasis. It should never be forgotten that the old elite who came to power once again after 1979 were deeply marked by the events of the Cultural Revolution. That so-called revolution was a powerful negative lesson that affected many of them personally. Thus, reforms in the judicial system and even the training of lawyers have acquired a certain urgency. One should not fantasize too much about the potentialities. China is still essentially a government of men—but a somewhat sturdier legal structure now exists that awaits cultivation.

In North Korea, there is no evidence of any upsurge of socialist legalism or of a strengthening of participation in party and government. In the classical pattern, North Korean society has been extensively mobilized under party and front banners, while at the same time the masses have been rendered conformist. The media are deadening in their endless repetition of the prevailing programs and dogma. If there is disputation within top political circles, as fragmentary evidence suggests to be the case, it does not reach the public—or the outside world—at least through official channels.

Yet one interesting shift appears to be signaled in the DPRK constitution of 1972 when new state organs were instituted, indicating a strengthening of the administration in comparison with the party. This development occurred at the time North Korea was making its initial efforts to turn out economically and may have reflected the strength of a new generation more technocratically inclined. Interpretation of its significance, however, is rendered difficult because of the multiple party and governmental positions held by the key political figures and the absolute power residing with Kim Il-song when he chooses to use it.

Vietnam presents a picture of limited institutional change, paralleling the minimal developmental progress and the low priority assigned that task until recently. The party reigns supreme, and government operates in its shadow,

but with regional leaders gradually achieving greater autonomy as the need to have some flexibility to cope with diverse conditions has become more clearly recognized. Existing on a somewhat fragile basis in the south, the party has continued to pursue united front tactics.

A torrent of criticism has issued forth from diverse party and governmental sources regarding such problems as economic policies, corruption, and bureaucratism—familiar woes in Leninist societies. Officials are replaced. Some are punished. But the root causes cannot be attacked under present circumstances. Whether the criticisms permitted, on occasion, encouraged, will broaden to encompass fundamental issues remains unclear. An intellectual class exists having past ties with France and other parts of the West, including the United States. With few exceptions, however, its services have not been solicited. Governance remains largely attuned to wartime conditions and thus is reflected in the institutional structure even if the old *esprit de corps* has disappeared.

In the broadest sense and subject to the caveats set forth above, such institutional changes that are en route in the Leninist states of Asia are in the direction of strengthening the state so that it can perform the functions expected of it in an age when development is an ever more imperative need. This is most clearly evident in China. The efforts in North Korea, while to be seen in the legal alterations of earlier times, are difficult to implement as long as personalized rule of a highly authoritarian type continues. Vietnam has not begun to grapple with the institutional requirements of development—merely allowing frustration to be vented through open criticism.

Closely related to the issue of institutionalization is that of leadership, as has already been suggested. The tendency of Leninist societies to require paramount leaders, accruing unto themselves vast power, is well known. What part system, what part culture? In each of the Asian Leninist states there was a relatively recent monarchical tradition, along with a heritage of strong rule in the postmonarchical era. China, for example, had Yuan Shih-k'ai—followed by a period of chaos until the emergence of Chiang Kai-shek. Korea had its kings (and queens) and Japanese governor-generals. Vietnam also had a strong court at Hue, followed by French rule. There can be little doubt that the Leninist system underwrites and strengthens these traditions. It centers upon an all-powerful party that controls every coercive instrument and seeks to bring the society at large under its authority. Thus, the head of the party, not having to deal with a system of checks and balances or a powerful private sector, need merely make certain that he controls the party itself. That is the history of Stalinism, Maoism, and Kimism.

It is here that Vietnam appears to represent an exception. While Ho Chi Minh was clearly *primus inter pares* during his lifetime, he governed or presided by methods different from other Leninist leaders. He acted as arbiter and consensus builder in years of turmoil when unity was critical. Under him,

individuals were elevated and removed, but there is no evidence that the top elite risked liquidation despite the ruthlessness that could be exhibited to others. And those removed not infrequently returned in a way practiced in China.

This heritage has persisted in the post-Ho years. It has permitted collective leadership despite the existence of factions and diverse individual views, some of them fiercely held if certain sources can be believed. Perhaps the supreme test for this system lies ahead. As a new generation comes to authority amid accumulated troubles awesome in the aggregate, can collegiality prevail?

Meanwhile, in China, the coming test is of a somewhat different nature. Under the shadow of Maoist excesses, Deng Xiaoping and his associates sought to establish legal and procedural safeguards to prevent another cult of personality from being created. Yet no one can overlook the fact that in spite of this, Deng emerged as *the* leader, and even after vacating every office except that of the Military Commission chair, he is still referred to as the "senior leader," reflecting more than a respect due age. After Deng, what? Can collective leadership, lacking tradition on its side and in a period that poses multiple problems upon which differences of opinion are certain, survive? And if it survives, will this signify the triumph of the technocrats and administrators? Can China do without a mobilizer, a charismatic figure to personalize a government and party that is otherwise an amorphous bureaucratic morass? (No one should regard this issue as one confined to Leninist states or developing societies in general.)

Clearly, whatever the near-term developments, a younger generation is en route to power in China that will be better educated, more urbane, and with a stronger dedication to developmental goals. This will make functional differentiation, hence power-sharing, more necessary. Decentralization will add to such a trend. Yet the need for strong, visible leadership will not necessarily be less. That is the dilemma of China—and the world at large.

Such a dilemma does not yet affect North Korea. If all goes according to plan, a dynastic succession will take place upon the death of Kim Il-song. Even if the younger Kim were to be sidetracked for some reason, it is difficult to see how the system constructed in the DPRK—and the society in which it operates—could move quickly from its dependence upon a strong man. Here, too, a younger generation different from the first generation guerrilla fighters stands in the wings, and some of this group are assuming power. Kim Chong-il is even bringing a few individuals of his age (late forties) to office. But the type of tolerance, sophistication, and specialization that must underwrite collective leadership is not on the horizon in North Korea.

It is clear, however, that Leninism—both in its native land and in Asia—is struggling to leave the monarchist tradition behind and find safe ways of sharing and distributing power. And such a course is an inevitable aspect of

modernization, although the route may be far from easy, with detours and impasses still to be encountered. The issue of leadership, especially in a society like North Korea, raises the question of the military. One common feature of the Leninist societies under study here, as well as of others of the same category, is that the military establishment, while deeply politicized and very powerful, has remained an instrument of the party and has rarely challenged party rule or civilian control.

The germane question relating to North Korea is whether the military, as the only truly significant group in a position to confront the party, might be prepared to intervene against Kim Chong-il after his father's death, should certain key military figures deem him unqualified. No answer—indeed, no educated estimate—can be given to this question at present. Key military men have been purged, supposedly for failure or factionalism, by the elder Kim, but there is no evidence that after 1956–57 he was ever seriously threatened by either military or civilian sources. Yet the son is not in the same position, and rumors persist that in both personality and ability he falls short of leadership qualities.

In China, as is well known, the military returned to politics as the chaos of the Cultural Revolution deepened, with the party and government being destroyed. And they remained prominently in politics until Lin Biao's purported coup and other events caused Mao to begin the process of returning military men to the barracks, a task continued in earnest by Deng. While the military are sufficiently powerful to delay policies of which they disapprove and to commandeer privileges as a class that few civilians enjoy, as in the USSR, they are a pressure on the party, not the dominant force in the party.

In Vietnam, a similar pattern prevails. Prominent generals like Giap have played key party roles, but as an institution, the military have been at the command of the party despite the militarization of the society. In part, however, this is because the first-generation revolutionaries were all intimately involved in military efforts, as in China. Hence, it is appropriate to ask whether their successors can retain the same control and allegiance as they proceed in the task of delineating functions and separating more rigorously the "military" and "civilian" categories.

Many of the issues posed above will evolve in accordance with the successes or failures that attend domestic and foreign policies. Here too, Asian Leninism is in transition and some degree of trauma. In the economic realm, the central question is whether the command and market economies can be successfully mixed and, in the process, reinvigorated competition offered to so-called capitalist societies. China is fully committed to this goal, but with the obstacles formidable and the results thus far mixed. Indeed, at present, a retreat from recent reforms has been signaled amidst inflation and the threat of economic warlordism as a result of decentralization. Vietnamese

leaders now understand the challenge and are committed in principle to innovative responses, but given the distractions of war and the hostility of neighbors big and small, they have not been able to summon either the resources or the knowledge and courage to embark seriously on a new road. North Korean leaders—or some of them—were ready to begin a cautious process of turning out as early as 1972–73, but because of the oil crisis this effort aborted amidst heavy debt. While the mood continues to be one of seeking external support both of capital and technology, there is no indication as yet that the North Korean government wants to alter in any fundamental way its highly centralized, extensively collectivized economic system. Political changes much precede serious economic ones.

On the international front, the revolutionary rhetoric—and revolutionary activities—of the past survive only in North Korea. Here, terrorism, training of foreign guerrillas and “progressive” armies, and calls for global revolution continue on the scale possible for this economically limited society. But even North Korea makes occasional gestures to capitalist societies, including Japan and the United States. Considerations of national interest will some day conflict sufficiently with its revolutionary stance to produce further changes.

China’s foreign policies, in contrast, are more in conformity with its national interests than at any time since the establishment of the People’s Republic. To proclaim oneself nonaligned and politically identified with the Third World while seeking to reduce tension with the USSR and tilting toward Japan and the United States for economic and security reasons is eminently logical. China has not relinquished its Middle Kingdom complex and the desire to exercise regional power despite its protestations that it will never seek hegemonism. But state-to-state relations have taken a strong precedence over comrade-to-comrade relations as China behaves very much like other major societies of the late twentieth century.

Vietnam’s foreign policies in contrast are in a disarray paralleling its domestic policies and for similar reasons. The intense dependence upon the Soviet Union stems from necessity not love, and Hanoi would like nothing better than to have Japan and the United States return with only a small portion of their available largess. Vietnam does not relish the prospect of long-term hostility with China, knowing the costs this will exact. Nor has it yet found a way to break ASEAN unity on the Cambodian issue although fissures exist. At the same time, Vietnamese leaders are loath to give up control of Cambodia and Laos, not because of ideology but for security and economic reasons. Like the domestic problems with which it is interactive, this basic dilemma will not be easily resolved.

The essays that follow present varying views on the issues and trends outlined above. They seek to put Asian communism in comparative perspective at a truly critical juncture in Leninist history.

**Part One**  
**Ideology**

# 1. Marxist Ideology in China and North Korea

LOWELL DITTMER

Ideology is one of the core concepts of the social sciences, dealing as it does with the meaning that participants impute to their own behavior. Generally speaking, there are at least two reasons for its importance. First, that meaning may at least to some degree be expected to inform what occurs. To what degree is debatable, for such factors as unintended consequences, unconscious motives, not to mention hypocrisy, exaggeration, and other forms of dissembling, may complicate the relationship between the connotation of meaning and the objective reality to which it refers. Yet to deny any relationship whatever is to fly in the face of common sense. Second, it provides the analyst with a basis for evaluating political action without necessarily abandoning all claim to objectivity. That is to say, political action may be evaluated in the light of the announced intentions of the actors, which may be established independently of the preconceptions of the analyst.<sup>1</sup>

In the study of Asian communism there are particularly good reasons to

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My thanks to Steven Kim for his assistance in the study of the development of Marxism-Leninism in North Korea. I am also grateful to Professor Robert Scalapino for comments and criticisms on an earlier draft of this chapter.

*Ideology* has not always been used in such a methodologically agnostic way. Destutt de Tracy, the late-eighteenth-century French materialist who coined the term, was committed to the ideals of the French Revolution and perceived in ideological analysis an opportunity to trace the origins of human ideas about the world in sense experience, thereby demonstrating the emptiness of superstition, religion, and other nonempirical idea systems. With this project in mind, de Tracy and his fellow “ideologues” designed a program of popular education to support the progressive achievements of the postrevolutionary regime, in much the same way that the Catholic church had, in their view, bolstered the repressive institutions of the ancien régime. When the erstwhile revolutionary Napoleon Bonaparte broke with the ideologues, having found it politically expedient to come to terms with the church, he lampooned their ideas, and the term acquired a pejorative connotation.

Marx’s use of the term retained this negative aura, though Marx agreed with the ideologues that ideas should be traced to the material realities of mundane life. His criticism was directed not so much against those who propagated nonempirical superstitions (a harmless “opiate”) as against those whose ideology accurately reflected their own interests, and who propagated that ideology among others whose interests it contravened. He exempted the proletarian worldview from this critique by distinguishing between ideology and science, which could predict the inevitable future.

Karl Mannheim disputed Marx’s attempt to exempt proletarian ideology, reducing all ideological systems, by a “sociology of knowledge,” to their underlying interests. Yet a critique of “bourgeois” self-interest may be found creeping into Mannheim’s analysis in the form of a distinction between ideology and utopia—the latter being rooted not in the status quo but in the hoped-for

give pride of place to the study of ideology. One is that said to have been given by Helman Buhl for scaling Nanga Parbat (in the Himalayan chain): "Because it is there." Ideology is an abundant, even superabundant, source of data for the study of Asian communism, and it seems a pity to renounce it—especially when more reliable information is hard to find. Behind this methodological advantage there is a substantive one: Ideology is ubiquitous in Asian political systems because it is deemed important. Ideology functions not merely to legitimate the existing regime, as it does in all political systems, but also as the most abstract formulation of policy (the "line"), which may accordingly shift periodically in the process of implementation. Lenin emphasized its importance more than Marx did, and Mao and the Asian communists have tended to emphasize its importance even more than Lenin. As we go from nineteenth-century Europe to Russia to Asia, we move in succession from an environment of classic capitalism in its heyday to one of underdeveloped capitalism to one in which capitalism had not yet been established. Asian communists seized upon Lenin's critique of imperialism, but their experience with industrial capitalism was relatively meager, and their experience of socialism or communism even more so. Ideology provided the vision around which politics could be cohesively organized, including a compelling (if exogenous) image of developmental salvation and damnation.

Such a coherent vision was especially useful because of the disintegration endemic to those Asian systems in which communism gained a foothold. Emerging from traditional bureaucratic agrarian empires that had ruled with relative stability (not to say incipient stagnation) for hundreds of years, these countries were thrust into the twentieth century by military and commercial penetration from powers much more technologically advanced than they. All the tasks of nation building had to be accomplished simultaneously, and in the context of civil war and foreign invasion. Traditional learning was demonstrably useless in the face of this crisis. The previous governmental order, constitution, and legal system were completely repudiated. Ideology became the sole acceptable system of ideas around which the society could reorganize itself. Under these circumstances, the "totalitarian" features of Marxist doctrine tended to be all the more marked.

For this analysis, ideology will be defined as *the rational interpretive ordering that is imposed on experience in order to fit "reality" to political purposes*. The two key terms in this definition are "rational" and "purpose." "Rationality" entails a high degree of internal consistency ("constraint," in Converse's terms) among the various elements of the belief system, so that if one discovers an ideologue's attitude toward, say, abortion, one can infer his or her attitude toward pornography or north-south relations. "Purpose" may refer either to the objective needs of a political system or to the subjective

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future, thereby divested of interests. Even Max Weber, in his more self-consciously rigorous "value-free" (*wertfrei*) approach, does not altogether abstain from ideological criticism, but he contents himself with a sustained irony, e.g., juxtaposing spiritually anxious Calvinists with efficient but "soulless" entrepreneurs and technocrats.

desires of a powerful political actor or essential group. The relationship between ideology and purpose is reciprocal and functional, not mechanically determinate. An ideology is not a mere reflection of its social milieu; nor is the relationship adventitious (for an ideology must serve group interests); a limited number of ideologies may be able to serve the same functions equally well. All political systems impose certain general requirements upon ideology. Specific types of political system make more specific categorical demands, while a given political system under particular circumstances will make highly particular demands.

Adopting a middle level of abstraction, this chapter will relate empirical data derived from contemporary Chinese and North Korean politics to a functional schema theoretically generalizable to all state socialist systems. I hypothesize that all such systems impose three functional requirements upon ideology: (1) *Inspirational*. The people must be provided with a desirable (noble, profitable) and plausibly realistic vision of the future. This requirement is dictated by the ineluctably teleological nature of such regimes. (2) *Integrative*. Ideology must serve as a guide to action linking individual motives to the accomplishment of functionally necessary collective tasks. (3) *Legitimative*. The ideology must be capable of generating allegiance and obedience to the power structure and of rationalizing the prevailing distribution of values. The criterion of "rationality" may be said to have been met to the extent that an ideological formulation performing these three functions coheres internally and seems consistent with the Marxist canon.

This chapter consists of two parts, one dealing with the People's Republic of China, the other with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Each of these parts is subdivided into two sections, the first cursorily reviewing the political process by which ideology is formulated, the second examining its substantive content. The Conclusion attempts to compare patterns of ideological development in these two Asian communist systems.

## People's Republic of China

### *Formulation*

In this discussion of the social and political circumstances that gave rise to particular Chinese communist ideological formulations, it will be impossible to examine the wealth of historical detail available or even to summarize it adequately.<sup>2</sup> I shall attempt merely to adumbrate general patterns of ideological formulation, illustrated with selected examples. The Chinese communist experience may be divided into three distinct periods: (1) the initial period of illegal struggle, culminating in the seizure of power ("Liberation") in 1949; (2) the Maoist period of the construction of socialism, from 1949 to 1976; and (3) the post-Mao period of reform, from 1976 to the present.

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<sup>2</sup>A classic historical analysis of this more comprehensive sort is provided in Robert A. Scalapino and George T. Yu, *Modern China and Its Revolutionary Process: Recurrent Challenges to the Traditional Order, 1850–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

1. During the pre-Liberation period, two sets of political actors functioned as “independent variables” in the formulation of Chinese communist ideology: Comintern (or, after the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, simply Soviet) advisers and domestic Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders. They applied Marxist-Leninist doctrines flexibly on the basis of the tactical opportunities presented by Soviet and Chinese domestic politics and even, indirectly, by the international political situation. Though motivated by the same abstract goals, their national interests and political-cultural traditions led them in somewhat different ideological directions.

It is difficult to generalize about Comintern advisers in view of their rather rapid turnover. They seem to have been consistently more orthodox Leninists than the domestic CCP leadership and tended to be cautious or strategically minimalist when CCP vital interests were at stake. Thus, they always adjoined the Chen Duxiu leadership to subordinate CCP interests to the KMT-CCP united front. Li Lisan was a nativist adventurist, whose tactics indeed deviated from more circumspect Comintern advice.<sup>3</sup> Wang Ming’s first “left” line is generally attributed to poor advice from Moscow, motivating a departure from his characteristic caution; Stalin was at the time engaged in the purge of Bukharin and his other “rightist” rivals. But Moscow not only played a key role in arranging the second united front (Mao’s first impulse was to subject the captured Chiang Kai-shek to mass trial), but also advocated CCP self-abnegation in the interest of its maintenance, supporting Wang Ming’s accommodative line against Mao’s combination of unity and struggle. Having come to terms with Chiang at the end of World War II, the Soviets encouraged the CCP to do likewise, discounting its chances of victory in the foreseeable future.

The orthodoxy of the advisers’ position was most clearly manifested in their application of class analysis, where they relied on the classic urban proletariat as the motor of revolution; thus, they were perplexed when the CCP was driven from the cities in the early 1930s. The influence of the Comintern advisers naturally varied according to the individual concerned. Li De (Otto Braun) was held in contempt;<sup>4</sup> Michel Borodin (*né* Mikhail Grusenberg) seems to have been unusually effective.<sup>5</sup> All worked without formal organizational power. Their substantial influence is testimony to the prestige and charisma of the international ideology of Marxism-Leninism during this difficult period.

The CCP leadership seems to have been fractionalized, giving rise to a

<sup>3</sup>See Lynn Feintech, “The Life and Thought of Chen Shao-yu” (M.A. thesis, Group in Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1974).

<sup>4</sup>Largely because he was made a scapegoat by Mao for defeats leading to the forced evacuation of the Kiangsi base in 1934. (Braun had supported Mao’s factional rivals, the “Twenty-eight Bolsheviks,” led by Wang Ming and Po Ku.) See Otto Braun, *A Comintern Agent in China, 1932–1939*, trans. Jeanne Moore (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1982). Despite his enduring enmity with Mao, Braun’s memoir is not without value in its discussion of this period.

<sup>5</sup>Borodin proved to have sound judgment on many matters and came to be trusted even by

discordant tactical—and, to some extent, even ideological—pluralism. In official CCP histories, Mao's rise at the Cunyi conference near the outset of the Long March resolved factional disunity, but at least two major leadership splits postdated Mao's accession, resulting in the purges of Zhang Guotao and Wang Ming and their followers. The period may thus be characterized as one of relative ideological pluralism qua factionalism. The reason for this is primarily structural. The party, lacking monopoly over the instruments of coercion (not to mention such positive incentives as the perquisites of office) assured by control of the governmental apparatus, simply could not foreclose factional divisiveness. Dissidents could disagree and leave (or even betray) the party if they felt moved to do so, with little penalty.<sup>6</sup>

Mao's accession to power did endow the CCP with stronger leadership than before, thereby allowing us to bisect the pre-Liberation era into an early period of factional pluralism and a later one of relative ideological stability, approximately equal in length. The period of factional pluralism was characterized not by liberal democracy but by the rapid succession of leadership regimes, each attempting to impose its own line and punish dissidents. Thus, Mao was relegated to inconsequential positions when he was in the minority, as were Deng Xiaoping, Liu Shaoqi, and many others. They were not purged, and the inability of any party regime to establish ideological hegemony for more than a few years seems to have ensured that dissidents did not hesitate to express their views and challenge the leadership.

After the party emerged from the Long March at Yanan, Mao devised a new method to consolidate ideological leadership, known as the "rectification" (*zhengfeng*) movement, which consisted of the intense propagation of his own ideological line and the ostracism and relentless criticism or "struggle" of dissenters. Because the mass communications capabilities of the party were still rudimentary and the literacy of the intended audience probably low in any case, mass media were augmented by oral communication in small groups, which proved highly effective as a means of consensus generation. As a result, and because of the objective success of the party under the new leadership, a firm ideological foundation could be laid for the Maoist line. Because the foregoing period had coincided with objective failure (and perhaps also because the Maoists wrote the history of that failure), ideological pluralism within the party tended to be discredited.

2. The period of socialist construction, from 1949 to 1976, was crowded with rapid, tumultuous change, from an initial moderate period of New Democracy to the socialization of the means of production in agriculture and then in industry, followed by the utopian experiments known as the Hundred

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Chiang Kai-shek in the early period, partly because of personal attributes, partly because of political acumen.

<sup>6</sup>For example, the arrest and execution of both Ho Mengxiang and about thirty of his followers and later Xiang Zhongfa by KMT security forces was abetted by CCP informants.

Flowers, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. An attempt to generalize about the formulation of ideology in the course of such a continuous revolution can be made only with trepidation. Factional pluralism was proscribed with all the punitive sanctions available to the ruling party-state apparatus and became on the whole much less salient. It did play a role in the Peng Dehuai episode in 1959 and in the ouster of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping in 1968, and perhaps even in the purges of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi in 1955 and Lin Biao in September 1971, though the ideological significance of the purge of Lin Biao has been discounted. In each case, factional pluralism was resolved through mass rectification in such a way as to reinforce the personal power of Mao Zedong.

Mao's ideological authority thus tended to be reinforced by struggle and confrontation, at which he was master, whereas the ideological authority of the collective leadership of the CCP was enhanced during periods of consolidation, when orderly procedures and the regular convocation of large legislative assemblies could be institutionalized. Most major conventions of party and state legislative organs were characterized by relative conservatism and the desire to consolidate past gains rather than unfold ambitious plans for future transformation. The Seventh Party Congress laid the foundations for the moderate New Democracy; the First National People's Congress (NPC) set forth the state constitution; the Eighth Party Congress attempted, following successful completion of socialization of the means of production, to close the book on turbulent mass campaigns, arguing that the principal contradiction was now between advanced relations of production and backward productive forces. The Ninth Party Congress and Tenth Party Congress and the Fourth NPC, coinciding with the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, were partial exceptions to this, though even they attempted to form a consensus among Cultural Revolution survivors and consolidate radical gains rather than extend them; the Fourth NPC even attempted a (premature) shift from Cultural Revolution to Four Modernizations.

As the great party-state legislative apparatus became a bulwark of institutional conservatism, the impetus for radical transformation became increasingly identified with the charismatic personal leadership of Mao Zedong. As his organizational constituency became progressively more disenchanting with his leadership in the wake of the Hundred Flowers and the Great Leap Forward, he turned increasingly to the mobilization of other less institutionalized gatherings. On the one hand, this took the form of ad hoc forums whose membership he could personally stipulate (such as the Supreme State Conference or the provincial party leaderships) or the packing of formal organs (such as the "extended" Politburo meeting, the "Central Work Conference," and so forth). On the other, it took the form of the mass movement, which gave Mao the opportunity to name movement goals and criticism targets and to staff the informal movement network that operated in tandem with the regular party and state hierarchy.

Mao's personal discretion over the mass movement was so extensive that he could mobilize the masses in pursuit of even apparently whimsical goals, such as the criticism of Liang Shuming (following a tantrum), criticism of a film his wife disliked (*The Life of Wu Xun*, 1951), or the later polemic against a prestigious academic critic of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (all in the early 1950s). Nonetheless, most of the major movements of the 1949–66 period—the three and five antimovements, the marriage law, land reform and collectivization, even the Great Leap and the Four Cleans—were directed toward goals deemed important to the collective leadership as well.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution marks a departure from this pattern. The formulation of ideology during the Cultural Revolution decade (1966–76) fits a pattern that might be termed neoimperial, Mao himself playing the role of emperor. Though Mao was perhaps not the sole source of ideological innovation, as the namesake of a belief system that claimed universal validity, his preeminence was unquestioned, and he had final review and absolute veto power. This is not necessarily to imply that Mao's *political* power was absolute, for ideological authority is not fully fungible, but he brooked no challenge in the ideological arena. Sharing this power by Mao's grace was an inner court of high-level officials, known as the Center. The exact membership of the Center is uncertain and perhaps fluctuated somewhat. Jiang Qing remained the highest ranking Politburo member outside the Standing Committee (perpetually on the threshold, as it were), and one is tempted to infer from this that ultimate control over day-to-day decision making was monopolized by this sanctum sanctorum.

Occasionally the larger, formal forums seem to have continued to play a role in policy, thereby minimally affecting the ideological line; for example, the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee occasioned the initial confrontation between Mao Zedong and Lin Biao, and the Fourth NPC seems to have opened a breach between Mao and Zhou Enlai. But large meetings of this sort, which we have previously identified with a conservative ideological impulse, were rare during this decade.

The uninstitutionalized masses seem to have been permitted greater input into ideological formulation, though the process was idiosyncratic. An alternative media network of tabloid newspapers and big-character posters flourished during the first three years (1966–69), which not only circulated hitherto unavailable scandalous information about the inner workings of the leadership organs (thereby gravely damaging the prestige of the established party-state apparatus) but also conveyed a distinctive ideological vision of self-perpetuating rebellion. Even after the Red Guard press was shut down in late 1968 (with a few exceptions, which continued to publish through the early 1970s), the big-character poster remained a constitutionally guaranteed channel for the articulation of mass demands; although the majority of poster writers avoided the risks of innovation, there were always a few (e.g., the trio known as Li Yizhe) willing to brave official stigma for instant renown—the

prevailing conformity of ideological expression in the public arena tended to highlight the slightest deviation and magnify its effect.

Aside from posters, late Maoist ideology permitted workers to strike, as they did for instance in Hangzhou in the 1974–76 period, and regional military commanders to decide factional disputes in the name of restoring order, as General Chen Zaidao did in Wuhan in August 1967. If striking workers or regional military leaders had sufficient force behind them, they might hope to shift the line in their favor. Yet, however much actors on the periphery attempted to lobby, the Center remained the ultimate arbiter of the significance and moral worth of their actions, and Mao Zedong set the ideological tone for the Center.

Ideological change during this period took dialectical form, with the important qualification that this dialectic resulted not in a synthesis but in a cyclical oscillation between thesis and antithesis. The first, and most violent, such swing took place in 1966–67, when Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and much of the leadership of the party-state apparatus were repudiated. The 1968–76 period was characterized by lurches between two factional variants of the same (Maoist) line, each espousing the doctrine of continuing revolution with a mixture of ideological sincerity and political opportunism. The “pragmatists” or “moderates” (Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Hua Guofeng) construed this in economic terms and began an ambitious retooling of the Great Leap, known as the Four Modernizations; the “radicals” interpretation focused on changing property arrangements and establishing a more proletarian revolutionary political culture.

By retaining the final power of ideological definition, Mao determined the line throughout this period, alternating between left and right variants without seeking definitively to eliminate either wing. Thus, in the summer of 1973 he decided to abet the radicals in their efforts to launch a campaign to criticize Confucius, in order to prevent Zhou from taking the line too far to the right in the course of criticizing Lin Biao; when the anti-Confucius campaign began to get out of hand in the spring of 1974, he shifted his support back to the right in reining that campaign in. In the course of 1975 he alternately favored the left (in the campaign to study proletarian dictatorship and the “bourgeois right”), the right (in the criticism of Jiang Qing for her management of the arts), the left (in launching the *Water Margins* campaign), the right (in convoking the first Dazhai Conference), and the left (in the campaign against the reversal of just verdicts). Although he harbored a fundamental aversion to the right, Mao was constrained by fear of adverse economic consequences from pushing the line too far to the left.

All this frustrated efforts at thought reform or at realizing the other policy implications of the radical line. It did have the compensating political advantage of shoring up Mao’s personal power in the face of declining mass support, physical illness, and the ultimate lame duck status of imminent death by allowing him to play one faction off against the other.

3. Mao's death had the profound consequence of depriving the ideological formulation process of an ultimate arbiter, leaving the elite factions that had once clustered around the chairman in suit of his favor to fight out their ideological differences in a free-for-all, relying on their own political resources. Hua Guofeng did not immediately realize this, and he quickly assumed command over the construction of a gigantic memorial and the editing of Mao's *Selected Works*, adopting Mao's hairstyle and visiting the sacred sites, apparently believing that he could assume the cult of personality the way one dons a robe or a crown. Deng was first to appreciate the tenuousness of Hua's hold on power, and he set about to undermine it with great political acumen.

The result was a period of shopping for factional constituencies through incremental ideological innovation. Both Hua and Deng gave speeches to the National Science Conference in March 1978, for example. Hua essentially recapitulated the Maoist conception of the role of intellectuals; Deng introduced the (at that time novel) notion that intellectuals belonged to the working class—that their contributions could be included among the forces of production, not in the ideological superstructure. Potential constituents could peruse the speeches of competing leaders at national party congresses, NPC sessions, and other official occasions and decide on the basis of such signals which faction to support.

The most celebrated such occasion was the quasi-movement that developed in support of the June 1978 article, "Practice Is the Sole Criterion of Truth," which the "whateverists" were forced to opt out of because they could neither accept its antidogmatic implications nor figure out how to refute an argument based on quotations from Mao's works. This episode defined the watershed between the Maoist and post-Mao eras. Without Mao to tender a veto (as he had, say, in January 1976, by repudiating Deng Xiaoping for the second time), his words could be quoted to negate his own posthumous influence, "holding high the red flag to oppose the red flag." Caesaropapist ideological formulation thus gave way to concentric ideological innovation, from positions near, but not necessarily in, the Center—a step toward ideological pluralism.

Another source of ideological innovation during this period, a holdover from the recently eclipsed Cultural Revolution, was the masses. They were permitted to manifest their opinions through the "four great"—by continuing constitutional guarantees and by the need of competing elite factions for mass constituencies in a still unsettled succession struggle. For Deng Xiaoping and his supporters, the campaign against the Gang of Four provided a pretext at once to mobilize the masses and implicitly to flay the Cultural Revolution that Hua Guofeng still defended; the controversy about the Tiananmen incident provided an occasion to acquire a ready-made mass constituency. Although the Democracy Wall movement enjoyed short shrift once the negative verdict on Tiananmen had been rescinded and Deng had

gained the upper hand at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee (December 1978), its posters and tabloid publications did help to define the contents of the still inchoate reform program. For a short time there was an alliance between certain establishment intellectual reformers and elements of the mass movement.

The third major actor in this alliance was the legislative apparatus of party and state, which experienced collective vindication, revival, and growth. The NPC, the Party Congress, even the seemingly defunct Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), and all their functional/regional counterparts met more frequently than they had since the 1950s. Their sense of their own importance was enlivened by fuller reporting on their activities, greater ambit for committee work and investigative activities, and even apparently open discussion of certain topical issues, such as responsibility for the Baoshan incident.

Their influence on ideological formulation was liberal in the sense of fuller realization of "socialist democracy" through the existing legislative organs, but conservative in the sense of commitment to the socialist planned economy and indignation about some of the short-term consequences of marketization and other reforms (e.g., corruption, inflation, political unrest). This conservatism has been particularly noteworthy in the NPC, which tabled bankruptcy legislation in the fall of 1986 and has since continually deferred action on a pivotal enterprise reform law. The Central Disciplinary Inspection Committee also embarrassed the reformers in 1985, pursuing a vigorous campaign against cadre corruption that tended by implication to discredit the policy of opening to the outside world. And the Central Advisory Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Deng Xiaoping and Vice-Chairman Bo Yibo, played an unexpectedly pivotal role in the January 1987 purge of Hu Yaobang.

This propensity to institutional conservatism represents continuity with analogous trends in the 1950s. What is novel is the rising clout of these institutions in the absence of any effective executive or populist check on them, not only in summarizing past achievements but also in contributing to plans for the immediate future. The growth in their influence has been incremental and undramatic—for example, in the submission of minor amendments to countless rounds of draft documents that are circulated before ultimately a consensus agreeable to all is reached. The party and state constitutions adopted in 1982 show this process.

### *Content*

Because CCP ideology has been the functional equivalent of a regime constitution, shifting to meet the needs of the political forces that have formulated it, it should hardly surprise anyone that its content has been highly variable. This ideology may thus surely be said to be sufficiently adaptive; though there have been dogmatic political actors in Chinese

politics, the ideology has not in itself been immutably rigid. Indeed, the greatest difficulty in characterizing CCP ideology is to find generalizations that still apply, *mutatis mutandis*.

Maoism, the reform policy, and the pre-Maoist CCP ideological tradition all remove the concept of class structures from its orthodox Marxist framework. In China, what is decisive for the definition of this concept is no longer the conditionality of social structures and states of awareness on economic factors, as in European or classical Marxism, but rather whether the individual himself subjectively shows his willingness to participate in the national task of building a wealthy and powerful nation-state. This is derived from Li Dazhao's subjectivization of the concept of class, as a moral decision of the individual to adopt a certain attitude or class standpoint, and from its nationalization, in the concept of the proletarian nation. If the conclusion that Mao drew from this was that political priority was to be given to the creation of a new man by the psycho-cultural transformation of the individual's awareness (thought reform, Cultural Revolution), today's reformers hold a more realistic picture of human nature and, on the one hand, conclude that measures geared to efficiency and economic growth can be evaluated independently of their effect on the class structure and, on the other, regard changes in political culture with misgivings and attempt to bring them under control with calls for the development of a "socialist material and spiritual civilization." Despite such changes, class remains subjective and political rather than objective and economic.

A second constant in CCP ideology is the concept of the united front, which is in a sense a logical extension of the CCP concept of class. Just as the subjectivization of class permits people of different social background to be united on a political basis, the united front permits heterogeneous classes—or, in its international context, nation-states—to be brought together in pursuit of common political goals. The concept of a united front seems to have faded in the post-Mao reform era because of the virtual disappearance of exclusive categories in CCP ideology as a whole (which the united front once helped to bridge). There are, for example, no enemies on the international scene for the first time in CCP history; domestic class struggle has taken a much lower profile.

Other aspects of CCP ideology have been variable. In the pre-Liberation period, there were recurrent debates and flip-flops concerning the locus (urban/rural) and imminence of revolution, the importance of class purity versus the need for a militarily puissant coalition, the relative priority of socioeconomic revolution and nationalism, and the strategy and tactics of People's War. As Brantly Womack has demonstrated, Mao tended to take an essentially conservative role in these early controversies.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Womack, *The Foundations of Mao Zedong's Political Thought, 1917–1935* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1982).

During the period of the development of socialism, however, although he had drafted the documentary basis for the relatively conciliatory New Democracy near the end of the pre-liberation period. Mao soon shifted to a much more radical posture. The central theme was that of a continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat became increasingly personified in Mao Zedong and his Thought. Mao's notion of the plasticity of class now gave rise to the idea that the bourgeois class could regenerate itself even after socialization of the means of production, supporting a revival of class struggle complicated by the apparently correct social backgrounds of "degenerated" bourgeois elements and by the interpenetration of class struggle and intraparty line struggle. The phoenixlike resilience of classes might lead one to foresee protracted class warfare, but another marked characteristic of Maoist ideology during this period was a breakthrough mentality, which assumed the possibility of dramatic gains at strategic windows of opportunity. The tactical implication was patient waiting, and even the concealment of ideological disagreement for long periods interspersed by surprise attacks and chaotic polemical eruptions.

The nation-state acquired greater salience, although nation-states were increasingly vested with class characteristics, China in particular being vested with all the virtues of the proletariat. In a formulation reminiscent of "socialism in one country," rigorous self-reliance was adopted in international affairs, entailing minimal commercial or economic contact with nation-states of an impure class character (which, in the Maoist view, excluded nearly all of them). An emphasis on rapid economic development coexisted uneasily (and ultimately unsuccessfully) with a determination not to lose sight of such revolutionary values as egalitarianism, collective ownership, political activism, antimaterialistic asceticism, and even an incompletely digested anarchistic strain.

The post-Mao reforms ideologically represent a departure from Maoism accompanied by a reluctance to foreclose a return to it under unforeseen circumstances. This has given rise to a sense of ideological homelessness and nostalgia among the more ideologically committed members of the leadership, to nightmares of a recurrence of the Cultural Revolution among those more committed to the reforms, and to an unresolved tug-of-war between the two groups. For example, collective ownership was abandoned to the extent that collective farmlands were divided into family plots, but the state retains ownership, surrendering only leaseholds, and a "voluntary" movement toward cooperativization has been intermittently encouraged. Class struggle has been forsworn, but only in its "violent, turbulent" form, with the important qualification that enemy classes and the struggle against them will continue indefinitely. Mass movements have also been renounced, though relatively mild campaigns continue to be launched. The departure from antimaterialistic asceticism has been similarly ambivalent, an emphasis on

consumerism and “getting rich first” alternating with campaigns for thrift and self-sacrifice, even the emulation of Lei Feng. The campaign against the residual influence of the past has continued—now, however, embraced by the right, who see in China’s feudal past the origins of dogmatism, the personality cult, and a pattern of authoritarian submission; the left, for its part, continues to cling to Mao’s xenophobic animus, tracing the roots of bourgeois liberalization and corruption to the opening to the outside world.<sup>8</sup>

The ideological home that the reformers might construct if they were politically capable of overcoming their orthodox opposition remains unclear but it would presumably approximate market socialism. The view of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” implicit in such reform documents as the October 1984 resolution of the Third Plenum of the Twelfth Central Committee rejects any internationally applicable concept of socialism (and hence any notion of a communist bloc). The classic Centrally Planned Economy (CPE) has likewise declined. The sparse prognoses of Marx, Engels, and other classical Marxists on the configuration of the future socialist economy are of little relevance to the problems of the present. Much more significant are, for instance, the analyses in *Das Kapital* that are conceived as a description of the universally valid laws governing any commodity economy (i.e., any economy operating under conditions of shortage)—laws that have their best-known concrete historical application in capitalism. The “socialist commodity economy” is thus no longer radically distinct from capitalism; it is a subtype of commodity economy of which capitalism is the other major subtype. The decisive difference between the two seems to be that socialism is still primarily steered by central planning (Chen Yun’s “bird in the cage”)—though there seems to be continuing controversy concerning the proportions of plan and market in the administrative blend.

## North Korea

### *Formulation*

After the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, Soviet military forces occupied the northern half, and American military forces the southern half, of Korea; The United States proposed the 38th parallel as a temporary division between the two zones. The Soviets wished to consolidate a communist regime in the North without waiting for an agreement with the United States over the future of the country as a whole; therefore they established the North Korean bureau on October 13 at the Five Provinces Conference of North Korean communist representatives. In addition, the USSR established the Five Provinces’ Administrative Bureau to govern its occupation zone. Meanwhile, the Korean Communist Party (KCP) was formally reestablished in the South

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<sup>8</sup>For a historically extended analysis of the xenophobic impulse in Chinese politics, see Kuang-sheng Liao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization in China, 1860–1980: Linkage between Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1984).

by communists recently released from prisons or emerging from the underground, under the leadership of veteran leader Pak Hon-*yon*. The Soviets proceeded to delegate authority to people's committees at the local level (with the explicit understanding that their policies and composition should not be contrary to Soviet policy), finally convening an enlarged conference of North Korean communist representatives on February 8, 1946, to serve as the *de facto* government of the North until unification was achieved. Kim Il Sung, who had been in the Soviet Union since the Japanese forced him into exile in 1941, was elected chairman of the People's Committee as well as first secretary of the North Korean Bureau.

The leadership was thus divided between returning Soviet exiles and native underground leaders in much the same way as in many Eastern European countries during this period; there were also two additional groups: the Soviet-Koreans, Koreans who were either born in or resident in the Soviet Union before 1945 (led at this time by Ho Ka-i, a graduate of Moscow University and former secretary of the Tashkent Republic), and the New People's Army, formed by veterans who had fought the Japanese alongside the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), led by Mu Chong and the venerable Kim Tu-bong. These four groups united with the North Korean Bureau of the KCP in August 1946 to form the North Korean Workers' Party (NKWP).

The goal of the new party, as enunciated by Kim Il Sung, was to establish as soon as possible a "unified, democratic, independent Korea" by creating a mass party based on an alliance among workers, farmers, and intelligentsia—a coalition similar to the united front successfully established in China. The NKWP set out to increase its membership and, indeed, by August 1947 claimed 680,000 members. The party also formed the usual auxiliary organizations (the Labor Union, the Farmers' League, the Democratic Youth League, and the Democratic Women's League), through which the masses would be mobilized and indoctrinated for socialist revolution.<sup>9</sup>

Along with the party and support organizations, a new government was instituted. On November 3, 1946, elections were held for representatives to municipal, prefectural, and provincial peoples' committees. One-third of the elected representatives then met in a general assembly of people's committees in February 1947 to establish the permanent People's Assembly of 237 members. They in turn created the permanent North Korean People's Committee to become the official governing body of North Korea. The lack of progress in Soviet-American negotiations, and efforts to form a separate government in the South, prompted the General Assembly to hold a nationwide election in August 1948 to elect delegates to the Supreme People's Assembly. In September, it formally proclaimed the formation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as representing all the Korean

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<sup>9</sup>See Chong-wook Chung, "Mass Organizations and Campaigns in North Korea" (Paper presented at the Conference on North Korea, San Francisco, Feb. 23–28, 1981).

people. The three top positions in the government were held by Kim Il Sung (already *primus inter pares*), leader of the so-called Kapsan, or old guerrilla faction, who was elected premier with extensive powers over the executive branch; Kim Tu-bong, the Yanan leader; and Pak Hon-yong, the exiled South Korean leader. In May 1948, general elections were likewise held in the south to elect representatives to the National Assembly, which soon resulted in the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK). Thus the peninsula was divided into two separate entities, each claiming sole jurisdiction over the whole.

Having committed itself to the unification of the country, North Korea launched a military attack on the South on June 25, 1950.<sup>10</sup> The invasion ended in a stalemate after a seesaw struggle in which each side barely failed to unify the country, and a cease-fire agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. The war devastated the peninsula; there were enormous casualties on both sides. Moreover, it revealed the extent to which socialism had yet to take root in the North Korean soil. Large numbers of the population not only collaborated with the enemy during the occupation of various parts of the North but also fled to the south when the U.N. forces withdrew. Even the ranks of the NKWP were infected by "impure elements, cowards, and mixed elements," according to Kim Il Sung; thus, the party disciplined no less than 450,000 of its 600,000 members between December 1950 and November 1951. The Korean communists were now faced with the unenviable task of rebuilding their political and economic structure from scratch.

In a speech delivered to political and military cadres in August 1945, Kim Il Sung had laid out the three fundamental tasks facing the NKWP: building a party, a state, and an army. The party need not be built from the ground up because the foundation had already been laid during the armed struggle against Japanese imperialism, but it must eschew elitism by becoming a mass party. It must open its membership to qualified members from the ranks of workers, peasants, and other working masses and launch mass organizations, including peasant unions. The government, a democratic people's republic, would be organized along lines similar to Mao's New Democracy and not dissimilar to the people's republics being simultaneously introduced in Eastern Europe. It would represent the interests of all the Korean people,

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<sup>10</sup>The reasons for the invasion, and for its precise timing, have been extensively researched. According to the most recent findings, the decision to invade seems to have been made in Pyongyang rather than in Moscow or Beijing. The reasons are less clear. Some scholars have emphasized factional conflict within the NKWP; see, e.g., Robert Simmons, *The Strained Alliance: Peking, Pyongyang, Moscow, and the Politics of the Korean Civil War* (New York: Free Press, 1975). Simmons emphasizes the rivalry between Kim and Pak (leader of the "nativists"), along with the alleged provocation by Syngman Rhee's forces in the South. Hiroshi Sakurai has attributed the timing of the invasion to a desire to preempt land reform in the South, in "Why Did the Korean War 'Break Out' on June 25, 1950? A Summary of a New Hypothesis," Institute of East Asian Studies, Berkeley, Calif., May 1983.

including working intellectuals, urban petty bourgeoisie, and conscientious national capitalists in “a national united front for the establishment of a democratic independent state.”<sup>11</sup> At the same time the government must “isolate all the counterrevolutionary forces such as the pro-Japanese elements, traitors to the nation, reactionary landlords and comprador capitalists and serve as a powerful weapon in the class struggle against them.”<sup>12</sup> The building of the armed forces seems to have been based on a combination of Maoist People’s War and a willingness to adopt the most advanced military technology, even at the cost of allocating 20–25 percent of the annual GNP to the military; recently, this has included more than thirty-two MiG-23 interceptors, imported from the Soviet Union in exchange for permission to use North Korean naval bases, and the surreptitious importation of American-made Hughes 500 and 300 helicopters (the models that are used by the ROK military).<sup>13</sup>

Having laid the foundations of the power structure, Kim launched into the construction of socialism, paralleling Chinese efforts at the socialization of the means of production. In agriculture, where 80 percent of the population were employed, land reform was launched immediately after the war and merged imperceptibly into collectivization, which was successfully completed by 1958, apparently without much of the violence or the cyclical surges that characterized the Chinese transition. On September 11, 1961, Kim declared that “the historic revolutionary tasks of completing socialist transformation in town and countryside and building the foundations of socialism have been triumphantly carried out.”<sup>14</sup>

The socialization of the means of agriculture and industrial production was followed immediately by an attempt at forced-draft industrialization and economic modernization. Although Kim gave rhetorical equivalence to light industry, heavy industry, and agriculture, he also emphasized the key importance of the machine industry, betraying the Stalinist origins of his economic modernization strategy. The symbol of rapid industrialization was the mythical Chollima, a horse that could travel a distance of a thousand *li* at a single leap, reflecting the influence of China’s contemporaneous Great Leap Forward. Yet the North Koreans did not lose perspective in the way that the Maoists did. They emphasized an ideological struggle against the mystification of technology and rejected the notion that only specially qualified people can develop it in favor of creative cooperation between workers, peasants, and scientists. Yet experts were never ostracized in the way they came to be in China. And the emphasis on collectivism and heavy industrial investment did not entail renunciation of individual self-interest; only when the material

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<sup>11</sup>Kim Il Sung, *On Juche in Our Revolution* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Faculty Press, 1977), 1:107.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>See *Far Eastern Economic Review* 128, no. 24 (June 20, 1985): 26–35.

<sup>14</sup>Kim, *Juche* 1:205.

foundations of socialism were firmly established, it was decreed, could a socialist and finally a communist society be attained.

Indeed, the achievements of this period of social and economic construction are impressive. Pyongyang provides perhaps the world's sole example of successful industrialization based primarily on indigenous resources and internal demand in a small and modestly endowed country. With almost horticultural (and highly labor-intensive) diligence, an effective agricultural sector was established under difficult topographical conditions, using a quite sophisticated remuneration system of material incentives. Between 1945 and 1965, industrialization made impressive progress; annual GNP growth rates averaged more than 12 percent, and per capita income was well in excess of that in the South. Illiteracy was all but wiped out; eleven-year education for all and a comprehensive network of kindergartens and crèches were established. Health care also became comprehensive.

Only after 1965 did the economy seem to reach the limits of "extensive growth." The Second Seven-Year Plan (1978–84) aimed at an average growth rate of 9.6 percent, but achieved only 4.5 percent. Meanwhile, growth rates in the South took off, averaging 9 percent since the mid-1960s; today, South Korea's economy is 5.2 times larger than that of the North.

The construction of socialism has been accompanied by the construction of a personality cult. Like Mao, Kim launched his drive for unchallenged power against a backdrop of internecine factionalism. The Korean national liberation and communist movements were rife with factionalism as groups such as the Marxist-Leninist, Tuesday, and North Wind Association vied for official recognition from the Comintern as the only orthodox Marxist group in Korea. "As a result, the Korean Communist Party was expelled from the Communist International in 1928, and was finally dissolved."<sup>15</sup> This was a disgrace to the Korean nation, and although Kim was only sixteen at the time, it is said to have made a lasting impression on him. According to Kim, these "two factors—the serious factional strife in the Korean national liberation and communist movements and the leadership divorced from the masses"<sup>16</sup> convinced him that the revolution must not be carried out in this way but must rely on the "force of the masses as the main factor in the solution of all the problems."<sup>17</sup>

It also seems to have convinced him of the need to concentrate power in his own hands. Aside from his own Kapsan group, consisting of guerrilla fighters against the Japanese who had been forced into temporary exile, three other groups contended for leadership in the 1950s: veterans of the underground communist movement in Korea who had already established a party structure before Liberation—the so-called natives; those returning from

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 2:379.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 381.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 379.

northwest China—the Yanan faction—who were given positions of power not only because of their past achievements in China but also because of the presence of Chinese troops in Korea from October 1950 to 1958, a legacy of Chinese involvement in the Korean War; and the Soviet-Koreans, who had been part of the Soviet system in the USSR and therefore had close ties with the Russian authorities from 1945 to 1948 and with the Soviet embassy afterward.

Kim moved first against the native faction, delivering a tirade against liberal tendencies and remnants of factionalism within the party at the Fifth Plenum in December 1952. In the following months the party ordered all units, down to the cell level, to hold discussion meetings in order to engage in criticism and self-criticism on the basis of Kim's report. In early August 1953, twelve high-ranking party officials of South Korean origin, some of whom were close associates of Pak Hon-yong, were tried and convicted of being spies for the American imperialists by the Military Tribunal Department of the Supreme Court. Ten defendants received the death penalty, and the rest lengthy jail terms, isolating Pak. In December 1955 Pak himself was tried and sentenced to death.

Kim then turned against the Soviet-Koreans, who had supported him against the natives. It has been conjectured that his reason for doing so had to do with his dissatisfaction with Khrushchev's policy of *détente* with the United States (a dissatisfaction he shared with Mao), but it was also shrewd intramural tactics to maneuver in this way, as Stalin had demonstrated in turning against Bukharin after eliminating Trotsky.

In a speech to the Central Committee Plenum on April 1, 1955, he accused unnamed comrades of being dishonest about state and public property and engaging in bureaucratic work methods and self-interested factionalism. It was at this time that Kim first espoused the Koreanization of communism that was to become famous as *chuch'e*, or "self-reliance." In order to Koreanize communism, it would be necessary to remove the Soviet-Koreans in the upper echelons of the party and at the same time exalt the experience of the anti-Japanese guerrillas in Manchuria.

The immediate target of these attacks was Pak Chang-ok, the Soviet-Korean who was concurrently vice-premier and head of the National Planning Commission of the government as well as vice-chairman of the Central Committee (CC) and chief of the Propaganda Department. As chief of the Propaganda Department, he was accused of ignoring the importance of learning Korean history and culture and blindly imitating foreign forms and methods, so that, for example, the walls were covered with pictures of Russian scenery. Another party leader who was criticized was Pak Yong-bin, a man from Tashkent who had been head of the Organization Department since 1953.

The showdown came in the fall of 1956. Details of the power struggle have never been divulged, but it apparently culminated during the August and

September CC plenums. At this time Kim attacked both the remaining Soviet-Koreans and the Yanan faction, accusing them of attempting to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat and to modify economic policy in order to shift the emphasis away from heavy industry and improve the people's standard of living (a Malenkov or Liu Shaoqi option). By the First Conference of Representatives of the NKWP in March 1958, all of Kim's rivals, including Yanan faction leader Kim Tu-bong (who had been chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly since 1948) and Choe Chang-ik (another Yanan faction member, who had been vice-premier since 1952) had been removed from positions of power. Of those named, Pak Chang-ok (rank 7 in the CC at the Third Congress of the NKWP in April 1956) and Kim Sung-hua (rank 35) were Soviet-Koreans; all the rest—Choe Chang-ik (rank 8), So Hwi (rank 19), Yi Pil-gyu (rank 97), and Yun Kong-hum (rank 68)—were members of the Yanan faction.

Since then, the cult of personality has been driven to unprecedented extremes. Many so-called grand monumental edifices have been erected throughout the country, the most magnificent the 60 meters high and 50 meters wide granite Arch of Triumph in Pyongyang, inaugurated in time for Kim's seventieth birthday in April 1982. His gold-embossed statue, standing a mere 20 meters high, is the largest the Koreans have ever erected to a living political figure. A personal revolutionary museum has been constructed of marble on 240,000 square meters of the choicest real estate in Pyongyang, with ninety-two exhibition rooms, divided into seven sections, each containing more than one-hundred items.<sup>18</sup> No less than 100 percent of the electorate is said to vote for the Supreme Leader (*suryong*) in every election.

Kim's waxing megalomania has more recently been accompanied by nepotistic tendencies, leading to a "socialism in one family" similar to that in Ceausescu's Romania. Initially, he seemed to have settled on his younger brother, Kim Yong-ju, as his successor, but since late 1972 Kim Yong-ju seems to have fallen from favor; by the Sixth Congress, in October 1980, he had been completely removed from the Central Committee. The rise of Kim Il Sung's eldest son, Kim Jong Il, is usually dated from the Three Revolutions launched in 1975, though the North Korean press began to extol the "revolutionary family" of Kim Il Sung as early as 1968. At the Sixth Congress, Jong Il was formally installed in the fourth position presidium of the Politburo, the second position in the Secretariat, and the third position in the Military Commission.<sup>19</sup> If the succession succeeds, this would be the first transition from father to son in the history of any communist party.

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<sup>18</sup>See Chin-Wee Chung, "Evolution of Political Institutions and Monocracy in North Korea," paper presented to Conference on Development, Stability and Security in the Pacific-Asian Region (Institute of East Asian Studies, Berkeley, Calif., Mar. 17–21, 1984).

<sup>19</sup>See Chong-sik Lee, "Evolution of the Korean Workers' Party and the Rise of Kim Jong-il," unpublished paper (Institute of East Asian Studies, Berkeley, Calif., n.d.).

*Content*

In a lecture at the Ali Archam Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia on April 14, 1965, Kim Il Sung stated that the basic policy of North Korea consisted of *chuch'e* in ideology, independence in politics, self-sustenance in the economy, and self-defense in national defense. *Chuch'e* is a state of mind in which one neither slavishly imitates nor blindly rejects that which is different from oneself. In order to establish *chuch'e* in ideological work, party cadres must apply the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism “in a creative way to suit the specific conditions and national characteristics” of Korea.<sup>20</sup> The goal of the NKWP is to establish a socialist and ultimately a communist society; the means of establishing this goal is *chuch'e* and, thus, *chuch'e* constitutes the core of North Korean communist ideology. The two major forms of deviation from *chuch'e* are flunkeyism, analogous to the “foreign slave mentality” of “crawling” scorned in Cultural Revolution Maoism, and dogmatism.

Rejection of flunkeyism reflects North Korean cultural paranoia, the fear that if cultural penetration is not prevented, the national culture will gradually disappear; not only must outside bourgeois cultural influences be vigilantly warded off but also “a relentless struggle must be waged against this tendency to blindly copy antiquated and reactionary examples from the past and embellish them on the pretext of reclaiming them.”<sup>21</sup> Dogmatism is the opposite tendency, that is, the arrogant refusal to learn from abroad or from others, even when the ideas are good, or bureaucratic behavior—always issuing instructions or decisions and holding meetings rather than being open to new ideas. One should be particularly open to the masses. Under the apparent influence of Mao’s “mass line,” Kim urges cadres to “acquire the revolutionary work method of going deep among the masses, consulting with them and enlisting them in the fulfilment of tasks in hand.”<sup>22</sup>

The principles of *chuch'e* have universal validity and should be broadly disseminated. Political propaganda must interpenetrate the formal education system, so that children are taught the importance of collectivism, labor, and self-reliance; moreover, this should be living knowledge, not mere formal knowledge—that is, it should be combined with practical application. Art and high culture must avoid professionalism, divest themselves of modernist (or other flunkeyist) tendencies, and subordinate considerations of aesthetic form to political content; this has resulted in what most artists elsewhere regard as a cultural wasteland. Thought reform campaigns are periodically launched (but none of them allow the mass spontaneity characteristic of the Cultural Revolution). Criticism and self-criticism are used, obviously borrowed from the Chinese, but in distinction from the Chinese, they are used

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>21</sup>Kim, *Juche* 1:258.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 2:52.

only in routinized and organizationally secure small groups. "All organizations must strengthen criticism and conduct a strong ideological battle against unsound ideological elements of every description. . . . Furthermore, criticism should be conducted patiently and on a regular basis, not in a shock campaign."<sup>23</sup> Also as in China, models are selected for emulation, such as the hard-working mother of comrade Ma Dong Hui.<sup>24</sup>

Although the *chuch'e* approach to economic modernization resembles Stalinism, with its emphasis on heavy industry and extensive development, in most other respects Maoist tendencies are still dominant. The North Koreans do not use the slogan of continuous revolution, probably because the revolutionary experience was less salient in their own accession to power than it was in that of their larger neighbor, but class struggle is prominent and is said to continue under socialism and even after the predicted advent of communism. Even after socialist relations of production have been established, distinctions between town and country, as well as class distinctions, will continue to exist and must ultimately be resolved. The dictatorship of the proletariat also occupies a central place in the liturgy, its chief function being to conduct the class struggle. On the one hand, this entails isolating and suppressing elements of the overthrown classes who attempt to restore the status quo; on the other hand, it implies an ideological and cultural revolution that replaces bourgeois ideology with proletarian ideology. As in Maoist China, collectivism and the importance of labor are emphasized, though nothing as ambitious as the *Xiafang* movement (in which millions of urban youth were sent to work in the Chinese countryside) has been attempted—there is apparently too much residual respect for formal education. Clearly, there is anti-intellectual bias, though the intellectuals have been subjected not so much to a wavelike assault (as in the Cultural Revolution) as to protracted reeducation. Although the Koreans admit a regrettable distinction between workers and peasants, their goal is to educate the peasants to become more like the workers rather than to send the workers into the fields; they remain, in this respect, closer to the Soviets.

The influence of Kim Jong Il, the son and heir of Kim Il Sung, upon ideology—provided, of course, that the succession takes place as planned—remains a matter of speculation. According to some reports, he is already in day-to-day charge of the affairs of state and has been introducing a younger cohort of leaders, for example, Prime Minister Kang Song San and Foreign Minister Kim Yong Nam, a pair of pragmatists in their fifties, who were elevated following the Rangoon bomb debacle in late 1983.<sup>25</sup> According to

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:267.

<sup>24</sup>For a more comprehensive analysis of the Chinese influence on Korean communism, see Yang Ho-Min's study in this volume.

<sup>25</sup>Kang Song San has since been replaced, but his successor appears to be of a similar type.

some pundits, this implies a shift toward pragmatism, as already presaged by the adoption of a foreign investment law in September 1984 that appeals for joint ventures with Western capitalist firms. The more pessimistic prognosis is that the younger Kim, having no heroic accomplishments to his credit, is more likely to launch an invasion of the South.

Thus far, all that can be attributed to his influence on ideology is the notion that *chuch'e* is no longer merely a means for achieving socialism but an end in itself. The leader is the sole guide as well as the center of unity and cohesion for the masses. The role of the party is to inculcate the masses with the thoughts of the leader and unite them into a single political force around him. Only then can a socialist, and a communist, society be built successfully. Because human society is the struggle of the masses to become masters of their destiny by remaking nature and society, the essence of human history is the history of the struggle of the masses for self-autonomy. Thus, the struggle for autonomy is the highest manifestation of the *chuch'e* idea, which becomes an end in itself.

### Conclusion

The most obvious tangency between these two cases of Asian communism is between the Kim dynasty and the Maoist phase in China. Both might be termed cases of feudal socialist modernization, in which the personality cult forms the center of meaning for a political machine in which everyone else is but a cog, sacrificing self for a whole of which each can form only the haziest picture. Both are patrilocal societies of almost absolute lateral and vertical immobility, in which no one may move anywhere without permission, in which commercial consumerism has been almost completely forsworn. Kim's "revolutionary family" becomes an organizing metaphor for the society, and recently the propaganda has even alleged "blood ties" between the people and the party, between people and leader. Both Maoism and *chuch'e* Marxism have served the inspirational function of ideology, combining nationalism with a form of emperor worship, though both have been afflicted by gradually declining efficacy.

Yet Kim is more than Mao Zedong writ small. Most striking is his greater political durability. At seventy-six, Kim has not yet equaled Mao's life span (Mao died in 1976, at eighty-two), but his tenure as chief of state has already exceeded Mao's. Of course this may be a mere actuarial statistic—Kim Il Sung began as a younger man. This is one possible explanation. Yet there are also at least two others.

First, although the *chuch'e* worldview is derived from Maoism and should therefore probably be deemed its intellectual inferior, it may well be *politically* superior to the original. Absent from the North Korean doctrine is the

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Incidentally, a number of the new figures rising under the aegis of Jong Il are children or relatives of first-generation Kapsan leaders (as in China's Third Echelon).

iconoclastic animus of late Maoism, the “breakthrough” mentality that tended to divide reality into polar opposites and resolve the tension by smashing through the dividing barriers. This “to rebel is justified” strain rendered late Maoism unsuccessful in fulfilling the legitimating and integrative functions of ideology: it could no longer legitimate because on the vaguest criteria even the highest party authorities could be suspected of being revisionist; it could no longer integrate because it encouraged class struggle without being able to define classes authoritatively. One might say that since the Great Leap Forward, there has been a disintegration of collective leadership, a disintegration of economic and ideological rationality.<sup>26</sup>

By refusing to press principles to their logical conclusion, *chuch’e* ideology has avoided these outcomes. Similar to Maoism in most of its basic tenets, it is nevertheless more moderate and eclectic, less sharply defined, more carefully hedged and qualified. Some of the evidence for this has already been presented above: the exaltation of labor has been qualified by respect for formal schooling; the anti-intellectual animus has been to some extent balanced by a regard for modern science and technology; the attachment to class struggle has usually been accompanied by warnings against leftist and rightist deviations and warnings that class struggle should not be pursued without regard for building the socialist economy; there has been no opposition between mass movement and economic production, and the former has remained instrumental to the latter.

In avoiding the Maoist tendency to polarize and dramatize alternatives, the North Koreans seem to have had a less exciting and varied history than the Chinese, and perhaps the society seems dour and cold by comparison. Yet Maoism reached its climax in a cumulative failure that provided the springboard for reforms that would vindicate Mao’s rivals and confirm his worst nightmares; the *chuch’e* vision appears likely to suffer more protractedly from its own cumulative success. True, that success is beginning to pall as the economy falls sharply behind that of the South. Even though the Sino-Soviet dispute gives Kim leverage in bargaining for support from these two would-be patrons, both the PRC and the USSR are interested in reforms that go well beyond what the Koreans have been willing to consider. The question is whether the regime can make the appropriate wrenching adjustments in its guiding philosophy and strategy of development in the absence of any crisis more stimulating than a slowly declining rate of growth. Succession seems unlikely to provide the occasion for dramatic departures from the past if it proceeds as planned and filial piety reinforces the natural gratitude of the preselected heir. North Korea may thus stand condemned by its own achievements.

Despite this overall advance in political realism, there are two areas in

<sup>26</sup>For more elaboration of these themes, see my book, *China’s Continuous Revolution: The Post-Liberation Epoch, 1949–1981* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

which rationality has conspicuously failed Kim Il Sung and his apotheosized thoughts. First, Kim and his followers have fashioned a personality cult even more extreme than the Mao cult at its zenith. Although this has its political uses, as Mao was also to point out, it stifles innovation and creates a mask of uniformity that not even the leadership can be sure to penetrate; it thus becomes self-defeating. Second, Kim's commitment to national unification (on his own terms) seems to be so sincere and deep-seated that it has led him at times to abandon his characteristic circumspection. This was first demonstrated in his invasion of South Korea, which neither China nor the Soviet Union seems to have been prepared for<sup>27</sup> (and which brought untold destruction upon the North as well as the South), and again, more recently, in the miscarried attempt against the South Korean political leadership at Rangoon and the subsequent KAL downing.

The second possible explanation, which could also account for the lack of an iconoclastic strain in *chuch'e* ideology, is that the Koreans never really experienced a successful revolution. Korea produced guerrilla fighters, national liberation heroes, communists, and other assorted revolutionaries, but like communist parties in Eastern Europe, the NKWP was installed by the intervention of the Soviet Union. The absence of any revolutionary precedent and the presence of an authoritarian tradition going back to the Yi dynasty have perhaps given rise to an authoritarian political culture more akin to that of pre-World War II Japan or Germany than to that of the PRC.

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<sup>27</sup>Simmons, *Strained Alliance*, chap. 5.

## 2. Mao Zedong's Ideological Influence on Pyongyang and Hanoi: Some Historical Roots Reconsidered

YANG HO-MIN

### Pyongyang

#### *Current Features of Ruling Ideology*

The two most recent clarifications of the North Korean ideological system were made by Kim Il Sung. On May 31, 1986, he published a lengthy work entitled "Historical Experiences of Building the Workers' Party of Korea" on the fortieth anniversary of the High Party school named after him.<sup>1</sup> At the first session of the Eighth Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) held on December 30, 1986, he delivered a policy speech entitled "For the Complete Victory of Socialism."<sup>2</sup>

Kim Il Sung merely reiterated once again the ideological scheme that he has constantly stated during the past thirty or more years. He has neither changed nor added anything, only sticking to his stereotyped, dogmatic hard line. Some essential viewpoints in his two statements can be singled out as follows:

1. *The Workers' Party of Korea (WPK)*. The WPK is a revolutionary "new type of party" of the working class, a "Marxist-Leninist party of the Juche type," "the party guided by the Juche idea and struggling to achieve the cause of Juche."<sup>3</sup> Kim traces its origin to 1926 when he allegedly founded the "Down with Imperialism Union,"<sup>4</sup> at the age of fourteen.

2. *The monolithic ideology of the party*. Ideology is of the utmost importance to the party. The basic principle that the WPK adheres to is "firstly to establish a monolithic ideological system" within the party. Within the party of the working class "there must be but one ideology and the whole of

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<sup>1</sup>The text of Kim Il Sung's work "Historical Experiences of Building the Workers' Party of Korea," in the form of "lecture," is carried in *Kulloja* (The Worker), the monthly organ of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), no. 6 (1986):1-61.

<sup>2</sup>The full English language text of Kim's policy speech "For the Complete Victory of Socialism" is carried in the *Pyongyang Times*, Jan. 3, 1987. The contents of these two texts are duplicated to a large extent.

<sup>3</sup>Kim, "Historical Experiences," 4.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

the party must be imbued with only one ideology.” All members of the party must “think and act solely in accordance with the ideology and the will of the party,” and the whole of the party must “move as one under the monolithic leadership” of the Central Committee of the party.<sup>5</sup>

3. *Succession.* The party of the working class as such must ensure the inheritance of party building. Inheriting the cause of party building “through generations” lies in “inheriting the monolithic character of the party ideology and leadership.” In inheriting this cause through generations (actually from Kim to his son), it is highly important to hold fast to the “revolutionary tradition” of the party and to develop it; otherwise “it is impossible to maintain the life of the party and to achieve the final victory of revolution.” Kim proudly declares that in the WPK the question of inheriting the revolutionary cause “has been satisfactorily solved,”<sup>6</sup> implying that the position of his eldest son, Kim Jong Il, as his heir is firmly consolidated.

4. *The legacy of the old society.* Even after the establishment of the socialist system, society retains “a great deal of ideological, technical and cultural backwardness left over from the old society.” Because of this there remain differences between town and countryside, differences between the industrial working class and the peasantry, and various other differences. This is not a completely victorious socialist society where no social class exists. That is why the ideological, technical, and cultural revolutions are essential, being imperative for the elimination of such class differences.<sup>7</sup>

5. *The continued revolution.* The Three Great Revolutions—ideological, technical, and cultural—are “the task of the continuing revolution to carry out for the construction of communism after establishment of the socialist system.” In carrying out these revolutions, as the general line for the construction of socialism and communism, he repeatedly urges the party cadres to adhere to the principle of “resolutely giving priority to the ideological revolution.”<sup>8</sup>

6. *The danger of capitalist restoration.* North Korea is already declared a socialist state. With the establishment of the socialist system, the exploiting social class ceases to exist, but there still remains “the danger of capitalism being restored.” The people’s government must guard “against the poisonous ideas of capitalism and revisionism” and resolutely fight against all attempts to infringe upon the socialist system.<sup>9</sup>

7. *From cooperative to all-people property.* In order to eliminate the remaining class differences between workers and farmers, it is imperative to turn cooperative property into all-people property so as to establish “an

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 15–16, 58.

<sup>7</sup>Kim, “Complete Victory,” 2.

<sup>8</sup>Kim, “Historical Experiences,” 43, 51.

<sup>9</sup>Kim, “Complete Victory,” 2, 4.

undivided sway of all-people ownership of the means of production"; only then will "the farmers" be "working-classized," and accordingly, the class distinction between farmer and worker will finally disappear<sup>10</sup> and the complete victory of socialism ensue.

8. *Continuous class struggle.* The struggle for the complete victory of socialism is a difficult and complicated struggle to transform people, society, and nature and "runs parallel to a continuous class struggle." "Only by strengthening the people's government and enhancing its function and role, is it possible to rally the broad masses solidly into a political force, and mobilize their creative power effectively in the struggle for the complete victory of Socialism."<sup>11</sup>

9. *More strengthening of party members is necessary.* In order to consolidate the party organizationally and ideologically for the continuing class struggle, "the party ranks should be strengthened, ideological education intensified among the cadres and rank-and-file members, and the function and role of the party organizations continually enhanced."<sup>12</sup>

10. *Ideological education for farmers.* Farmers are backward. "Intensifying the ideological education and organizational life of the farmers and hardening them steadily through communal labour and collective activities so that they will hold the interests of the society and state dearer than their individual interests"<sup>13</sup> is important.

11. *Politics Takes Command.* Simultaneously, all factories and enterprises must organize economic work "under the collective leadership of the Party Committee," and the government and the party must "give precedence to political work" so as to give rein to the revolutionary zeal and creativity of producers for implementing the long-term plan.<sup>14</sup>

12. *The class line and the mass line.* The government of the republic and its organizations at all levels "must thoroughly implement the class line and the mass line in their activities." "It is only when they carry out the class line that they can preserve their working class character," and "in order to build up a socialist society successfully, they must champion the interests of the people in every way and mobilize their creative power to the full. To this end, the people's government must implement the revolutionary mass line in its activities."<sup>15</sup>

13. *Reunification.* All these efforts are ultimately related to Kim's strategy for the unification of the Korean peninsula under his revolutionary banner, the struggle to realize "independent and peaceful reunification." In order to

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>12</sup>Kim, "Historical Experiences," 20.

<sup>13</sup>Kim, "Complete Victory," 3.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

achieve such reunification, it is most important “to further strengthen the revolutionary forces” in North Korea, “to vigorously support the righteous, patriotic struggle of the South Korean people,” and to struggle for the preparation of an “international environment favorable for our revolution.”<sup>16</sup>

14. *Solidarity with nonaligned nations.* In close connection with North Korean unification efforts, Kim emphasizes that “it is the sublime international duty of our party and people to encourage and assist the anti-imperialist struggle of the people . . . of the world,” and that his party should, “in the future too, raising high the banner of independence, goodwill, and peace, actively develop unity and good neighborly and cooperative relations with socialist countries and all the progressive countries of the world headed by the nonaligned nations” so that “the international solidarity” of the revolution can be incessantly strengthened.<sup>17</sup>

Tacitly opposed to the current situation unfolding in China, Eastern European countries, and even the Soviet Union, Kim does not indicate the possibility of introducing economic reforms such as individual (private) economy, material incentives, autonomy of enterprises, or separate roles of party and government; nor does he mention political reform.

With these hardheaded, oversimplified viewpoints, Kim Il Sung has formulated and developed his stereotyped, monotonous, totalitarian ideology. In the milieu of the mounting personality cult of the deified Leader (*suryong*), North Korean publications have all the more extolled his “gifted” theoretical creativity, claiming that every essential part of his ideology has originated from his “immortal” Juche idea.

But studies of international communism disprove such a claim. Instead, they prove that his current ideology is enormously influenced by Maoism, which is, needless to say, deeply rooted in Leninism and, particularly, Stalinism. Those doctrines are blooming in North Korea while withering away in their habitats. This chapter, going back through the past forty years, attempts to trace Kim Il Sung’s current ideological system to its historical roots in Maoism.

### *Democratic Reforms and United Front Tactics*

Detailed analysis of the writings and speeches of Kim Il Sung and Mao Zedong, plus related historical documents, reveals important resemblances in policy and ideology between China and North Korea from 1945 to 1976. In view of the Soviet military presence after August 1945, it is quite natural that at the initial stage Moscow’s influence was absolutely dominant in North Korea. The Stalinist model of political, economic, and social systems was worshipped as a symbol of freedom, justice, and democracy; Marxism-Leninism, reinterpreted and reconstituted by Stalin, was presented to Koreans as

<sup>16</sup>Kim, “Historical Experiences,” 11.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 48.

the final source of truth. North Korea was overwhelmed by Soviet influence until the death of Stalin.

Both Chinese and Korean societies were characterized by the Comintern as colonial or semicolonial and feudal or semifeudal. The coincidence of the developmental stages of the two societies and their common postwar environmental circumstances—for example, the threats of American “imperialism” and revived “Japanese militarism”—logically required both countries to accomplish the same revolutionary tasks. It is likely that the WPK leadership felt the Chinese version of Marxism-Leninism to be most relevant to North Korea.

At the outset of “democratic” nation building in North Korea, on February 8, 1946, the North Korean provisional People’s Committee was established, with Kim Il Sung as its head, through elaborate Soviet political groundwork. The political basis of the committee was, as a matter of course, a communist-dominated united front.

The Bolshevik prototype of the united front tactics for a bourgeois-democratic revolution was presented in 1905 by Lenin. He saw such a stage as necessary as an inevitable prelude to a proletarian socialist revolution in backward Russia. The leading force of the struggle should be only the proletariat allied with the masses of the peasantry, and the power to be set up by this revolution would be “the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.”<sup>18</sup> He applied this fundamental tenet of an anti-imperialist, antifeudal bourgeois-democratic revolution to colonies and backward countries in general and drafted the Theses on the National and Colonial Questions in June 1920, adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern in August of the same year with a number of corrections.

In 1928, the Comintern adopted the Resolution on the Korean Question called the December Theses,<sup>19</sup> which characterized the Korean Revolution as a bourgeois-democratic revolution against Japanese imperialism and Korean feudalism, reluctantly permitting “a temporary alliance of the Communist Party with the national liberation movement.” It urged the proletariat class to struggle not only against the imperialists and the feudal lords but also against “the national bourgeoisie,” defining the power to be established through the (bourgeois-) democratic revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat as a “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasants (in the form of Soviets).” This left-deviated formula was doubtless patterned after the Comintern’s Resolution on the Chinese Question adopted on February 25, 1928, after the debacle of its policy on the first united front (1923–27) in China.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup>V. I. Lenin, “Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution,” vol. 1 of *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 454–566.

<sup>19</sup>Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on the Korean Question adopted on Dec. 10, 1928. Its English text is available in Dae-sook Suh, ed., *Documents of Korean Communism, 1918–1948* (Princeton, N.J., 1970), 243–45.

<sup>20</sup>English text of this resolution is available in *International Press Correspondence*, no. 16 (1928): 321–22.

It was thus natural that Kim Il Sung, on entering North Korea a few weeks after its liberation by Soviet troops, began to advocate “a bourgeois-democratic state-building” of Korea. In his report “On the Errors and Defects in the Work of the North Korean Party,” delivered on December 17, 1945, he clarified that “at the present stage the North Korean Communist Party . . . should assist the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic regime on the broad basis of a coalition of all democratic political parties and organizations.”<sup>21</sup> He said nothing about the leadership of the proletariat or the socialist future of Korea or any kind of dictatorship. His talk was ostensibly non-ideological and tolerant.

Kim Il Sung allegedly delivered a speech earlier, on October 13, 1945, to some provincial party cadres. If the text of his speech is authentic, it appears that even under the circumstances of Soviet military occupation, he emulated Yanan rather than Moscow in his exposition of united front tactics. Comparative analysis of his speech and Mao Zedong’s major writings published in 1939 and 1940, such as *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, On New Democracy*, and *Introducing “the Communist,”* reveals that Kim was indubitably copying Mao’s style of expression, phraseologies, and terms.

In his speech Kim Il Sung presented, as the commanding political task of the Korean people, “anti-imperialist, antifeudal democratic reforms” to found a democratic people’s republic. This has been a routine formula since the Comintern era. Then, what kind of democratic system? Kim characterized it as “a new, progressive democratic system that suits the real condition of Korea,” saying that the “American or British style of ‘democracy’ does not suit Korea today.” The “democracy of Western Europe is already out of date.”<sup>22</sup> His explanation of “a new, progressive democracy” emulated Mao’s interpretation of his New Democracy:

This new-democratic republic will be different from the old European-American form of capitalistic republic . . . which is the old democratic form and already out of date. . . . Therefore, a third form of state [also different from the Soviet type] must be adopted in the revolutions of all colonial and semi-colonial countries, namely, the new-democratic republic. This form suits a certain period.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup>The original text of Kim’s report given to the Third Enlarged Executive Committee of the North Korean Bureau of the Korean Communist Party is available in *Pukban’gwan’gye saryojip* (Documents of North Korea) (Seoul, 1982) 1:309, edited by Kugsap’yonch’an Wiwonhoe (Committee for Compilation of Korean History). It appears to be a translation of the Russian language original. A later edition of this text contained in *Kim Il Sung sonjip* (Selected works of Kim Il Sung) (Pyongyang, 1963), 1:15–26, was altered a great deal.

<sup>22</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 1 (1963):9–10. This is part of Kim Il Sung’s speech entitled “On Building New Korea and the National United Front.” This speech was not contained in the 1954 edition of his selected works. It was published only in the 1963 edition (1:1–10). It is apparent that his speech was printed with revisions because he was sympathetic with Beijing’s criticism of Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization campaign.

<sup>23</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* (Peking, 1965), 2:350.

For the purpose of founding such a democratic system in North Korea, it was urgently necessary to form a working class–led democratic united front including not only the working class, the peasants, and the patriotic intellectuals but also the national bourgeoisie and all other democratic forces.<sup>24</sup> Precisely like Mao, who was on all occasions suspicious of the “dual character” of the Chinese national bourgeoisie who would “vacillate and defect” in the democratic revolution “very clearly when the people’s revolutionary forces grow powerful,”<sup>25</sup> Kim, although insisting on the temporary value of the national bourgeoisie in a transitional period, warned of the “dual character” of the national bourgeoisie who were “afraid of the revolutionary advance of the masses and easily vacillate as the revolution makes progress.”<sup>26</sup>

Kim Il Sung, therefore, urged the party cadres to firmly adhere to the “principle of both unity with the national bourgeoisie and struggle against it” to overcome their vacillation and to enhance the level of political consciousness of the working masses,<sup>27</sup> thus echoing Mao’s tactics, set in 1939, of the “policy of both unity with the bourgeoisie and of struggle against it.”<sup>28</sup> For Kim and Mao, the national bourgeoisie must be used for their transitional role, but they must not be given leadership in the democratic revolution.

This policy originated not from Mao, but from the Comintern’s traditional principle of struggle within the united front.<sup>29</sup> What Mao contributed to this principle was a unique and practical political technique to manipulate, use, and control the Chinese national bourgeoisie for the advantage of the communist revolution. His own operational tactics developed from the summer of 1935 through the period of the second united front (1937–45), after his attainment of supremacy as party leader in January 1935.<sup>30</sup> Kim’s remarks on the Korean national bourgeoisie largely followed Mao.

As Mao Zedong emphasized a proletarian (party) messianism, arguing

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 289, 321.

<sup>26</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 1 (1963):5–6.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 6–7.

<sup>28</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 2:290.

<sup>29</sup>For instance, Stalin said on May 24, 1927, that “in fact, the policy which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik) and the Comintern supported is not the policy supporting the national bourgeoisie, but the policy utilizing the national bourgeoisie as far as Chinese revolution is the revolution of the entire national coalition front.” “The Chinese Revolution and the Task of the Comintern,” in *Stalin zenshu* (Collected works of Stalin) (Tokyo, 1953), 9:313.

<sup>30</sup>On Aug. 1, 1935, during the Long March and under the most severe circumstances of the second civil war (1927–37), Mao and his associates initiated the second united front of the Communist Party and the Kuomintang in the party’s proclamation calling upon “all fellow-countrymen” to unite against Japanese invasion. This proclamation was issued partly to survive the Kuomintang army’s “annihilation” operation and partly to be in line with the Comintern’s policy to form a global united front against Nazi Germany and Japanese aggression, which was adopted by the Comintern Seventh Congress held in July–Aug. 1935. After twists and turns, the second united front was finally realized in Sept. 1937. During this period and the succeeding years, Mao developed his own united front tactics following the line of Lenin and Stalin.

that no other class (or party) except for the working class (or its party) “is equal to the task of leading China’s democratic revolution to complete fulfillment,”<sup>31</sup> so Kim Il Sung claimed that “only the Korean working class can and must lead the Korean (democratic) revolution.”<sup>32</sup> Mao’s claim to the proletarian leadership in the democratic revolution was justified on the assumption that the pro-Japanese big bourgeoisie were “capitulationists” and the pro-Western and pro-American bourgeoisie were anticommunist “die hards”; Kim took for granted that “the Korean capitalist class surrendered to and collaborated with Japanese imperialism.”<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, Kim Il Sung followed Mao’s indoctrination formula by saying that the party should “educate” and “remold” (transform) those members who were forced to serve Japanese imperialism and should open a way for them to achieve a new life.<sup>34</sup> He also told the party cadres not to neglect “self-cultivation,” though without referring to its author Liu Shaoqi, for good service to the people and for devotion to the interests of the people.<sup>35</sup> What Kim strove to establish through his “democratic reforms” (identifying them with democratic revolution) was said to be not a socialist state but a “prosperous and powerful, democratic, independent state,” which was also obviously taken from Mao’s *On Coalition Government* (1945)<sup>36</sup> and was later included in the first Rules of the Workers’ Party of Korea, adopted in August 1946.

### *People’s Democratic Dictatorship*

Only ten years later, all of Kim Il Sung’s early policies were given an explicit socialist interpretation. He stated in April 1956 that “as a result of the democratic reforms, the people’s democratic system was firmly established in the northern part of the republic and the conditions to lay the foundation of socialism were provided.”<sup>37</sup> Simultaneously, Kim ideologically defined the North Korean Provisional People’s Committee as the “people’s democratic dictatorship,” the phrase coined by Mao Zedong on March 5, 1949, and popularized in his article *On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship*, written on June 30, 1949.<sup>38</sup>

The provisional People’s Committee, formed in February 1946, completed

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<sup>31</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 2:331.

<sup>32</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 1:4.

<sup>33</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 2:320; *Kim Il Sung sonjip* 1:4.

<sup>34</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 1 (1963):7.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>36</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 3 (1967):205, 226. Mao’s more exact expression was “independent, free, democratic, united, prosperous and powerful new China.”

<sup>37</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 4 (1960):446.

<sup>38</sup>The phrase “the people’s democratic dictatorship, led by the proletariat and based on the worker-peasant alliance” was used for the first time in Mao’s Report to the Second Plenary Session

the function of people's democratic dictatorship as a people's power organ, led by the working class, based on the alliance of workers and peasants, and on the democratic national united front, rallying broad anti-imperialist and antifeudal democratic forces within the country.<sup>39</sup>

Carefully comparing this with the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference adopted in September 1949, one can easily discern that Kim's statement above is nothing but an abridged version of Article 1 of the Chinese Common Program.<sup>40</sup>

Comparing Mao Zedong's theory of people's democracy with that of Moscow, one can find significant differences in several points. Both theories divided the people's democratic revolution into two stages, characterizing the first stage as the anti-imperialist, antifeudal democratic revolution and the second stage as the socialist revolution. The Soviet theory restricted the definition of the first stage of the people's democratic revolution within Lenin's formula of "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," which he presented in his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (1905).<sup>41</sup> Mao, on the other hand, defined it as "people's democratic dictatorship."

Moscow has, so far, never officially characterized Chinese people's democracy as "people's democratic dictatorship," and Beijing has never identified its people's democratic dictatorship with the Moscow-advocated "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."<sup>42</sup> The differences between Moscow and Beijing in interpreting people's democracy only indicate that Beijing wishes to claim Mao's theoretical originality and autonomy while Moscow attempts to confine Chinese ideological importance within the authority of its own theoretical framework.<sup>43</sup>

Detailed examination of Kim Il Sung's early writings does not present any of his own views on the concept of people's democracy. In February 1952, when he was explaining the characteristic features of people's democracy at a conference of provincial party cadres, he could only quote from "Comrade

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of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China delivered on Mar. 5, 1949. *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 4 (1969): 372. Mao's article appears in *ibid.*, pp. 411–24.

<sup>39</sup>Kim Il Sung *sonjip* 4:446.

<sup>40</sup>Article 1 of the Common Program reads, "The People's Republic of China is a state of the People's Democracy or the New Democracy led by the working class, based on the alliance of workers and peasants, which practices the people's democratic dictatorship rallying all democratic classes, opposes imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism and fights for independence, democracy, peace, unity, prosperity, and the strength of China."

<sup>41</sup>O. V. Kussinen et al., eds., *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1963), 533.

<sup>42</sup>See Arthur A. Cohen, *Communism of Mao Tsetung* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 87–94.

<sup>43</sup>See *ibid.*, 92–94.

Mao Zedong's work on people's democratic dictatorship."<sup>44</sup> Clearly, he was so impressed by Mao's concept that he seems to have accepted it and applied it to the North Korean ideological setting. Kim has, so far, never accepted the Soviet conception of "the democratic-revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" as an earlier form of North Korean people's democracy. Nevertheless, a *Rodong Sinmun* editorial later audaciously published the distortion that "the revolutionary line of people's democracy was articulated for the first time in history by Comrade Kim Il Sung."<sup>45</sup>

### *Socialist Transformation*

The intense socialist construction in North Korea has been pushed forward through several stages since the Korean War. In implementing his economic plans, Kim Il Sung formulated a hard line of "ensuring the priority growth of heavy industry together with the simultaneous development of light industry and agriculture."<sup>46</sup> He thought "the most important task" during the period of the Five-Year Plan (1957–60) was to establish an overall socialist system by completing socialist transformation.<sup>47</sup>

To attain this goal Kim took ultra-Stalinist political measures. Consequently, the agricultural collectivization initiated in 1954 was almost completed by 1956, and 94 percent of arable land was transformed by August 1958 into collective farms.<sup>48</sup> Even the smallest private industries and businesses, along with handicrafts, were collectivized between 1956 and 1958, allegedly on the principle of "voluntariness." Kim has been very proud of the rapid accomplishment of socialist transformation within four or five years. With its completion, technical innovation was set forward as an urgent task.

At the Fifth Congress of the WPK, held in November 1970, he set forth the Six-Year Plan (1971–76) to further industrialize the country and to strengthen its military capability. For the fulfillment of this task he stressed "technical innovation" or "technical revolution." In the process of socialist construction

<sup>44</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 2 (1964): 45.

<sup>45</sup>*Rodong Sinmun*, Sept. 29, 1970.

<sup>46</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 4:459, 476. This formula was presented by Kim Il Sung on Aug. 5, 1953 (*ibid.*, 9). As Glenn D. Paige pointed out, it "apparently preceded by four years the first Chinese Communist announcement of such a policy in September, 1957" in *Communist Strategies in Asia*, ed. A. Doak Barnett (New York: Praeger, 1963), 237–38. However, whatever the origin of the phrase, the formula was basically Stalin's policy line on socialist economic construction. Stalin's policy line is well summarized in *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [Bolsheviks]—Short Course* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1939), 280–99.

<sup>47</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* (Selected writings of Kim Il Sung) (Pyongyang, 1972), 5:150. The Five-Year Plan was officially achieved one year ahead of schedule.

<sup>48</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 64; and *Pukban ch'onggam* (General survey of North Korea), 1945–1968 (Seoul: Institute of Communist Bloc Studies, 1968), 340. In China, 96.3 percent of the country's total peasant households were organized into 750,000 cooperatives. *Renmin Rebao*, July 2, 1957.

of the economy by giving high priority to heavy industry, Kim has whipped the people for thirty-five years, since the Korean armistice. His vision and policy were similar to those of Mao's Great Leap Forward.

A large-scale drive to develop socialist industry in China also followed the Korean armistice. The intense drive for socialist transformation, agricultural collectivization in particular, started in 1954 in both China and North Korea and was fulfilled almost concurrently; that is, it was completed in North Korea, as mentioned above, by August 1958, and in China by the end of 1956. Reporting in July 1955 on the Five-Year Plan, Li Fu-ch'un, relying on Mao's perspective, envisaged that "It will take approximately fifteen years, that is, about three five-year plans, to fulfill this fundamental task of the transition period."<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, Mao carried it out in only a few years, just as Kim did in North Korea.

In implementing socialist transformation, both Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung thought, like Stalin, that socialist industrialization could not be carried out in isolation, separated from agricultural collectivization. Thus, even without appropriate development of farm machinery, the collectivization movement soon followed the completion of land reform as the "task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution."<sup>50</sup>

### *The Pattern of the People's Commune*

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership began to organize the People's Commune system on an urban as well as a rural basis just as North Korea completed its agricultural collectivization. The agricultural cooperatives in both China and North Korea developed alike through stages; at the first stage it was a rudimentary type of collectivization, at the second stage a semisocialist type, and at the third stage a full-fledged socialist type.

The rudimentary type was called "mutual labor team" in North Korea, a counterpart of the Chinese "mutual aid team." The second type was characterized by the pooling of land, draft animals, and farm tools and facilities as shares, together with the distribution of products among members according to individual dividends on land, et cetera. The third type, generally called "the advanced type" in China and "agricultural cooperative" in North Korea, was

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<sup>49</sup>Li Fu-ch'un, "Report on the Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the People's Republic of China in 1953-1957," delivered on May 5, 1955, at the second session of the First National People's Congress. Robert R. Bowie and John K. Fairbank, eds., *Communist China, 1955-1959 . . . Policy Documents with Analysis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 48.

<sup>50</sup>In North Korea, the agricultural collectivization movement did not soon follow the completion of land reform in 1946, probably because of its gradual approach to socialist transformation in the 1940s or because of the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. After the war, however, Kim Il Sung speeded up the agricultural cooperative movement "based on handicrafts level of technology," and he was very proud of its completion "actually in two years." *Kim Il Sung sonjip* 6 (1960):177-78.

almost the same as the Soviet *artel*. The striking resemblance between the collectivization of the two countries is not surprising because both relied on the Soviet experiences and model, with some national flavoring added, but comparing the Chinese People's Commune with the North Korean "cooperative farm" (agricultural cooperative reorganized after 1958), one can perceive how strong was Chinese influence on North Korea.

Kim Il Sung, probably believing like Mao Zedong that a larger unit having more land and manpower at its disposal would be able to make better use of human and material resources for agricultural production, decided to incorporate several cooperatives into larger units. The incorporation project of agricultural cooperatives on the basis of the *ri* (village) began in North Korea after the completion of collectivization.<sup>51</sup> This was shortly after the CCP started the People's Commune. At the end of September 1958 in China, more than 121,936,350 households, 98.2 percent of the total number, were incorporated into 26,425 communes.<sup>52</sup> The merged North Korean agricultural cooperative has been called the "cooperative farm" since October 1962.

Visiting China in November 1958, Kim Il Sung emphasized "the important role that the communes play on the way to communism,"<sup>53</sup> even though, by that time, Khrushchev had assumed a critical attitude toward the commune system as a dangerous experiment. Kim's policy of reorganizing agricultural cooperatives into larger units must have been influenced by Mao's policy of one commune per *xiang* (village). One can discover many common aspects between the two. China's *xiang*, like the Korean *ri*, is the lowest administrative subdivision. The organizational scale of North Korean cooperative farms was smaller than that of people's communes, but there were resemblances in management systems.<sup>54</sup>

From an ideological perspective, the people's communes were said to have carried out the policy of "running industry and agriculture simultaneously and combining them to open up a way to reduce the differences between town and countryside and between worker and peasant."<sup>55</sup> Maoists expected that "when the rural People's Communes pass over from collective ownership to socialist ownership by the whole people, the communist factors

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<sup>51</sup>Through Cabinet Decision No. 125 on Merger and Enlargement of Agricultural Cooperatives issued on Oct. 11, 1958, 13,309 cooperatives throughout North Korea were integrated, on the principle of one cooperative for one *ri*, into 3,843 during the period from Oct. 15 to Oct. 31, 1958. Ryu Hun, *Study of North Korea* (Seoul: Research Institute of Internal and External Affairs, 1966), 254–55.

<sup>52</sup>*Rodong Sinmun*, correspondent's report, Nov. 24, 1958.

<sup>53</sup>*Rodong Sinmun*, Nov. 24, 1958.

<sup>54</sup>In China, the Communal Management Committee assumed the administrative functions of the former *xiang* (village) People's Committee. The chairmanship of the Management Committee of the cooperative farm in North Korea is until now an additional post to the chairmanship of the *ri* People's Committee; thus, formal separation of the two posts remains meaningless.

<sup>55</sup>"Resolution Some Questions Concerning the People's Communes" (Wuhan Resolution), Dec. 10, 1958. Bowie and Fairbank, *Communist China*, 493.

will grow further.”<sup>56</sup> Taking for granted that the people’s communes would quicken the tempo of socialist construction, they thought communes to be “the best form for realizing the transition from Socialist to Communist society in the countryside.”<sup>57</sup>

Kim Il Sung’s perspective on these matters was identical to that of Mao. Kim was certainly thinking that the North Korean *kun* (county) could play the role of Chinese People’s Commune. He said “strengthening the work of the *kun* and building up well the foundation of the *kun* is very significant in eliminating the differences between town and countryside and between worker and peasant and, accordingly, in constructing a communist society.”<sup>58</sup>

Kim regarded *kun* as “a strongpoint to link town with countryside,”<sup>59</sup> and began to organize, in December 1961, the county cooperative farm management committees that were equivalent to Chinese *xian lianheshe* (county federations of communes). He characterized the organization of the committees as “the most rational way to constantly draw cooperative ownership nearer to all-people ownership.”<sup>60</sup> As Maoists thought that “in the future communist society the People’s Commune will remain the basic unit of our social structure,” so Kim foresaw that the Korean “county will remain the economic stronghold to link town and countryside and the supply base for the countryside after our country has entered communism.”<sup>61</sup>

After the death of Mao Zedong, the Chinese people’s communes gradually disappeared because of their indisputable failures, being replaced since late 1978 by the “household contract responsibility system” into which 98 percent of farming households have now moved. Nevertheless, Kim Il Sung, in his above-mentioned policy speech delivered in December 1986, stuck to converting cooperative ownership into all-people ownership, emphasizing all the more the need for “enhancing the role of county cooperative farm management committees,”<sup>62</sup> which is basically People’s Commune-oriented.

### *The Great Leap Forward and the Flying Horse Movement*

When China was accelerating the Great Leap Forward after the midsum-

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 492.

<sup>58</sup>Kim Il Sung *chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 335.

<sup>59</sup>Kim Il Sung *chojak sonjip* 4 (1968): 62.

<sup>60</sup>Kim Il Sung *chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 444. The stipulated roles of North Korean county cooperative farm management committees are almost the same as those of Chinese county federations of communes, which were to “exercise unified leadership over all the People’s Communes in counties” and to “gradually promote the transition from collective ownership to ownership by the whole people.” Bowie and Fairbank, *Communist China*, 493.

<sup>61</sup>Bowie and Fairbank, *Communist China*, 492; and Kim Il Sung *chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 334.

<sup>62</sup>Kim, “Complete Victory,” 3.

mer of 1958, North Korea started its Flying Horse movement, in March 1959. The movements were alike in revolutionary spirit and in enthusiasm and purpose, if not always in form. They aimed at increased production, maximum mobilization of material and human resources, and rapid industrialization. Among other things, both reflected the determination of Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung to industrialize their countries at the highest possible speed by giving high priority to heavy industry.

The political slogan of the Great Leap Forward was heard in China at the beginning of its Second Five-Year Plan (1958–62). On May 5, 1958, Liu Shao-ch'i, in his report of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CC/CCP) to the second session of the Eighth National Congress, gave a grand picture of the revolutionary zeal of the Great Leap Forward. Based on Mao Zedong's slogan "catch up with and outstrip Britain in 15 years" and "achieve greater, faster, better and more results" in building socialism, he put forward "the General Line for Socialist Construction."<sup>63</sup> Kim, on September 11, 1961, responded to China by saying that "the Flying Horse movement has become the general line for socialist construction of our party."<sup>64</sup>

As one of the basic points of the general line, Liu emphasized the need "to develop light industry and agriculture while giving priority to heavy industry."<sup>65</sup> This was precisely the policy line that Kim Il Sung formulated and asserted after the Korean War. Liu, in his report, further stressed the importance of vigorously carrying out a "cultural revolution" and a "technical revolution" together with the rectification campaign. He believed these revolutions would enable Chinese industry "to catch up with and surpass Britain within fifteen years or less in the output of steel and iron and other major industrial products" and enable "China's agriculture . . . to surpass quickly the agricultural achievements of the capitalist countries."<sup>66</sup> Kim also cherished an ambitious desire to catch up with and outstrip capitalist countries. As early as November 20, 1958, he declared that North Korea could definitely catch up with Japan in 1959 in per capita output, though not in total output of heavy industry such as electricity, coal, iron, cement, et cetera.<sup>67</sup>

Since the spring of 1958, Kim Il Sung has also put more emphasis on a "technical revolution" and a "cultural revolution." Already, when the Five-Year Plan (1957–60) started, he characterized the period of the plan "as the first stage of technical innovation,"<sup>68</sup> and later he enunciated that the fundamental

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<sup>63</sup>Liu Shao-ch'i's "Report on the Work of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to Second Session of the 8th National Congress," delivered on May 5, 1958. Bowie and Fairbank, *Communist China*, 422.

<sup>64</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 101.

<sup>65</sup>Liu Shao-ch'i's report of May 5, 1958. Bowie and Fairbank, *Communist China*, 426.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, 429.

<sup>67</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 6 (1960):120.

<sup>68</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 75.

task of the Seven-Year Plan (1961–70) was “to achieve a technical revolution and a cultural revolution on the basis of the victorious socialist system, for an epoch-making raise of the people’s standard of living.”<sup>69</sup> According to him, “the technical revolution and cultural revolution are closely correlated” because the former cannot be successfully carried out unless the latter is conducted.<sup>70</sup> All these visions were reflected in the Flying Horse movement. He even used the Chinese phrase “three red banners” to symbolize his own ideological, technical, and cultural revolutions.<sup>71</sup>

The CCP’s remarkable effort during the period of the Great Leap Forward was to press forward the socialist construction at the highest possible speed. Quoting Marx’s remarks that “twenty years are concentrated in a day” in the socialist revolution, Liu Shao-ch’i stated in his report:

The speed of construction has been the most important question confronting us since the victory of the Socialist revolution. The aim of our revolution is to expand the social productive forces as quickly as possible. Our country’s economy has been very backward, and there are imperialist countries abroad; only by speeding up construction to the utmost can we, with the shortest possible period, consolidate our Socialist state and raise the people’s standard of living.<sup>72</sup>

Kim Il Sung aspired to the same course. At the Fourth Congress of the WPK (1961) he made the following statement in connection with his attack on American imperialism:

In order to make a new big leap in socialist construction we must keep up the high speed of our onward movement, and we must gallop forward more rapidly. This is necessitated by the reality of our country which is still lagging behind in technology and the economy; and it is required because the southern half of our country is still occupied by the American imperialists.<sup>73</sup>

Both Liu’s and Kim’s aspirations to overcome the backwardness of their countries by fast production reflected Stalin’s desire of the early 1930s.<sup>74</sup> The Great Leap Forward was symbolized by the “backyard steel furnaces.” This

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 108. This plan was extended until 1970.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 7 (1978): 155.

<sup>72</sup>Liu Shao-ch’i’s Report of May 5, 1958. Bowie and Fairbank, *Communist China*, 424, 429.

<sup>73</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 110.

<sup>74</sup>On Feb. 4, 1931, Stalin addressed the First All-Union Conference of Managers of Socialist Industry: “Those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. . . . old Russia . . . was beaten by Mongol Khans . . . by the Turkish beys . . . by the French and British capitalists . . . by Japanese barons. All beat her because of her backwardness. . . . That is why we must no longer lag behind. . . . You must put an end to backwardness in the shortest possible time and develop a genuine Bolshevik tempo in building up its Socialist system of economy. There is no other way. . . . Either we do it or they crush us.” Cited in Robert A. Daniels, ed., *Documentary History of Communism* 2 (New York: Knopf, 1968): 22–23.

was the CCP's unrealistic, impatient effort to rapidly increase industrial production by combining small-scale, indigenous methods of production with large-scale modern methods, as exemplified by the Wuhan and Anshan steel factories. The drive for a Great Leap Forward represented the maximum mobilization of human resources by the party in an atmosphere of an intensifying ideological campaign. A similar movement started in North Korea to spur increased production by means of "human sea tactics" for the mobilization of manpower,<sup>75</sup> but the DPRK has never attempted such a primitive approach as the backyard steel furnaces. In December 1956, Kim put forward a slogan, "Gallop forward with the vigor of the flying horse rider!" to accelerate socialist production.

Like the Great Leap Forward, the Flying Horse movement was applied not only to industry but also to agriculture, transportation, construction, science, education, culture, public health, and other aspects of society. The movement was a collective mass competition to increase production among the work teams, which served as production units. It was also a campaign to strengthen ideological work, seeking to arm the people with zealous communist ideology. Just as in the Great Leap Forward, ideology was intended to be the motivating force. Since the initial period of the movement, Kim Il Sung has denounced passiveness and conservatism in particular, along with bureaucracy, factionalism, commandism, subjectivism, revisionism, and "tailism" of "the antiparty and the counterrevolutionary elements," while urging thought reform and the "transformation of man." All these denunciations and pleas were also heard on the Chinese scene during the Great Leap Forward.

### *Copying Mao's Mass Line*

The Great Leap Forward and the Flying Horse movement, as mass movements to speed up socialist construction by increasing production, were to be based on the broad masses. In his speech on the Great Leap Forward, Liu Shao-ch'i stated that "the Party's general line for Socialist construction is the application and development of its mass line."<sup>76</sup> The mass line has been considered the method of leadership unique to the CCP since the Jiangxi Soviet period (1929–34). Lest the party should become alienated from the masses, whose enthusiasm Mao relied upon for successful revolution, it must have close ties with the masses in all practical work of the party.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup>On Mar. 14, 1973, Kim Il Sung mentioned with criticism "certain factories' attempts to increase production by means of 'human sea tactics,' namely, by means of increasing the number of workers instead of conducting the technical revolution in accordance with the guidelines of the party." *Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 6 (1974): 416.

<sup>76</sup>Liu Shao-ch'i's Report of May 5, 1958. Bowie and Fairbank, *Communist China*, 432.

<sup>77</sup>The concept of the mass line may not have originated with Mao Zedong in China. Some pioneer communists in the 1920s are said to have contributed to the development of key aspects. Mao, from 1933 to 1934 on, publicly championed the mass line, arguing in June and Aug. that "the mass line is the only guarantee of the class line." James P. Harrison, *The Long March to Power* (New

The fundamental principle of Mao's classic conception of the mass line was "from the masses, to the masses" or "go to the masses." This means:

Take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in action.<sup>78</sup>

Stressing the importance of combining the leadership of party cadres with the masses, he simplified the principle above as follows:

Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership—such is the basic method of leadership.<sup>79</sup>

On December 19, 1964, Kim Il Sung formulated his own mass line in which one can hear Mao's simplified and modified voice from his writing of June 1, 1943, quoted above. Kim urged party cadres

to go to the masses, organize them so as to correctly put the party policy into effect, discovering related problems; to take the ideas of the masses, bring them to those above and analyze them, then go again to the masses with new guidelines and policies—such is the mass line.<sup>80</sup>

Ever since the first enunciation of the mass line by Mao, it has been an essential element of the organizational philosophy of the CCP supposedly distinguishing it from the Stalinist bureaucratic "commandism" of the CPSU.

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York: Praeger, 1972), 201. Mao himself said in Apr. 1948 that "for over twenty years our Party has carried on mass work every day, and for the past dozen years it has talked about the mass line every day" (*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 4 [1969]: 241), which indicates that mass work began in the 1920s and that the mass line originated before he attained supremacy in the party, in Jan. 1935.

Whatever the origin of the mass line, it is apparent that Mao Zedong, who had to rely on peasants for economic construction and war mobilization during the most difficult time of civil war in Jiangxi province in the 1930s, became its most enthusiastic exponent. On Jan. 27, 1934, explaining, "The revolutionary war is a war of the masses; it can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them," he ardently expressed his views on the mass line, though without using the term:

Do we want to win the support of the masses? Do we want them to devote their strength to the front? If so, we must be with them, arouse their enthusiasm and initiative, be concerned with their well-being, work earnestly and sincerely in their interests and solve all their problems and everyday life. . . . If we do so, the masses will surely support us and regard the revolution as their most glorious banner, as their very life. (*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 1 [1967]:147, 149–50)

<sup>78</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 3 (1967): 119.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>80</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 4 (1968): 169.

However, it does not mean that Lenin and Stalin disregarded the masses.<sup>81</sup> They emphasized the importance of the masses but did not develop the mass line; yet they frequently criticized the “bureaucratic method” and “commandism” of the leadership of the elitist Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

With the onset of the Flying Horse movement, Kim Il Sung put ever-increasing emphasis on the role of the masses in the socialist revolution. Under the circumstances of North Korea's lack of the advanced technology needed to meet the urgent needs of his economic plan, he had to rely on the “wisdom,” “revolutionary enthusiasm,” and “inexhaustible creative power” of the masses who were to be mobilized to serve in some sense as a substitute for technology. Kim's idea of the masses clearly reflects Mao Zedong's belief in the masses who “have a vast reservoir of enthusiasm for Socialism”<sup>82</sup> and also “have unlimited creative power.”<sup>83</sup>

From the spring of 1960, Kim's scattered ideas on the mass line were gradually systematized on the basis of Mao's formulation, though Mao's name has never been cited. According to Kim, his party believes that “the decisive guarantee of success in the socialist revolution lies in the full mobilization of the great creative power of the masses and the all-out development of their enthusiasm, initiatives, and ability,” stressing that the party “consistently adheres to the revolutionary mass line.”<sup>84</sup> Mao told party cadres on November 29, 1943, that “we should go to the masses and learn from them, synthesize their experience into better, articulated principles and methods,”<sup>85</sup> and told Chinese journalists on April 2, 1948, that “to teach the masses,

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<sup>81</sup>Like Mao, they emphasized the vast store of energy and talent of the masses and highly valued their role in revolution when they become class-conscious. One had to appeal to them, organize and mobilize them. Even Hitler, Mussolini, and Japanese fascists did so. The official party history of the Soviet Union, published in 1938 under Stalin, states that “a Party is invincible if it is able, as Lenin says, ‘to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent if you like, to merge with the broadest masses of the toilers—primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian toiling masses.’” It also cited Stalin saying that “as long as the Bolsheviks maintain their connection with the broad masses of the people they will be invincible. And, on the contrary, as soon as the Bolsheviks sever themselves from the masses and lose their connection with them, as soon as they become covered with bureaucratic rust, they will lose all their strength and become a mere cipher.” Relying on these teachings, the party history concluded, like Mao's writings, although the term “mass line” was not used:

The history of the Party teaches us that unless it has wide connections with the masses, unless it constantly strengthens these connections, unless it knows how to hearken to the voice of the masses and understand their urgent needs, unless it is prepared not only to teach the masses, but to learn from the masses, a party of the Working Class cannot be a real mass party capable of leading the working class millions and all the labouring people. (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, 362)

<sup>82</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 5 (1977): 246.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>84</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 4 (1968): 224–25.

<sup>85</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 3 (1967): 158.

newspaper works should first of all learn from the masses” because “intellectuals are often ignorant and have little or no experience in practical matters.”<sup>86</sup> Note Kim’s remarks on September 11, 1961, in his report to the Fourth Party Congress:

Cadres of working class origin should learn knowledge and technology from intellectuals while intellectual cadres should learn the revolutionary and organizational character of the working class. We all should learn from one another, should learn particularly among the masses. Our best teacher is the masses of the people and actuality. All the cadres should modestly learn from the masses, enhance their level through practical work, and daily proceed with the effort by which they synthesize their works and popularize their experiences.<sup>87</sup>

Nevertheless, Mao’s mass line has never been grass-roots participatory democracy, even though there was some freedom at the working level of social organization. It has merely been a method of leadership for an elitist party, lacking the tradition of inner-party democracy, advanced for the purpose of organizing, mobilizing and arousing revolutionary enthusiasm.

For a larger-scale mobilization and a tighter control of the masses, a sustained effort to strengthen the political work of the party was necessary. Thus, the slogan Politics Takes Command was heard in North Korea with increased frequency, as in Mao’s China. Kim Il Sung stated in December 1964 that “the method of work relying on the mass line, that is to say, the method of work to mobilize the masses by giving precedence to political work, is necessary in both revolutionary struggle and economic construction.”<sup>88</sup> He also mentioned that “to give precedence to political work is the most important question in giving full play to the revolutionary enthusiasm and creative power of the masses.”<sup>89</sup>

### *Against Technical Fetishism*

Another surprising feature common to both Mao and Kim in regard to the mass line is found in the attack on technical fetishism. Franz Schurmann lucidly summarized its Chinese version as follows:

Administrators, managers, and technicians were attacked, not only for critical expression during the Hundreds Flowers period, but for lack of enthusiasm toward the mass line. . . . The professional intellectuals were denounced for their technical fetishism, for their arrogant conviction that modern scientific and technical learning was only accessible to the educated. . . . Reducing the gap between mental and physical labour, an old Marxist dream, was taken

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 4 (1969): 243.

<sup>87</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 168.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 4 (1968): 167.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 226.

seriously during the Great Leap Forward. The professionals were told to work with their hands and spend less time in classrooms and offices. The masses were told that the “mystique of technology” was a myth; technology was not the exclusive domain of the social elite.<sup>90</sup>

In this too, the WPK echoed the CCP's viewpoint. Kim Il Sung attacked those professionals who did not accept the leadership of the party and manifested pride in their technical learning. As early as August 1958, he began to attack “technical fetishism” or “machinery fetishism,” instructing the masses to oppose the “passiveness” and “conservatism” of those who disliked innovation and advance:

Today much conservatism remains in the sphere of machine-building factories. Those who dislike innovation and advance and like to comfortably sit down to make a mess of things are advocating machinery fetishism. They say that machinery has too much mystique to be easily touchable. What is the mystique? There is no mystique at all. . . . All is done and made by men.<sup>91</sup>

Kim was critical in particular of professionals who allegedly talked about technical learning as only accessible to the educated:

Certain “teachers” at the Academy of Science are saying that science is mystique and technology is also mystique, so that its study is not easily accessible. Thus, everything is reduced to the word “mystique.” Both science and technology alike are studied and developed by men. Those who boldly study and boldly practice are successful; those who harp on “fetishism” can accomplish nothing.<sup>92</sup>

Applying the mass line to science and technology, he continued to attack the arrogant convictions of the highly educated scientists:

Another harmful tendency is found in that certain scholars and technicians look down upon the workers and peasants for being ignorant. This sort of viewpoint is entirely wrong. It is not merely Ph.D.'s, M.A.'s, and college graduates who can develop science and technology. . . . The ability of the workers and peasants is making everything of the world. Is there anything in the world that was made without passing through the hands of workers and peasants?<sup>93</sup>

Have all these populist-like remarks of Kim Il Sung anything to do with his intellectual inferiority complex? One of the Maoist aims of the mass line practiced in the rectification campaign of the early 1940s is interpreted as “to undermine the authority of the party intellectuals, especially the returned

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<sup>90</sup>Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 91.

<sup>91</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 2 (1968): 176.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, 243.

students”<sup>94</sup> from Moscow. Kim, when criticizing his intellectual opponents earlier, ridiculed some of them as “doctor of constitutional law” or “party doctor.” On November 20, 1958, he warned local cadres not to be seized with “the disease of university fetishism,” that is, highly estimating anybody who is a college graduate and looking down on primary school graduates:

The university is not mystique at all. Anybody can reach the level of university if he studies only at home. . . . Even if he is in a remote country place . . . , he can study as much as he wants and attain the university level. This is impossible in the capitalist system, but quite possible in our socialist system.<sup>95</sup>

Kim’s denunciation of technical fetishism, of course, was intended not to disregard modern technology but to emphasize the “inexhaustible” potentialities of the working masses to be urgently developed by revolutionary zeal. Though giving precedence to political (or ideological) work, he did not neglect to tell professionals to advance their technical or practical abilities; similarly, the CCP leadership demanded that party functionaries at all levels be both “red” and “expert,” at least in theory.

Both the Great Leap Forward and the Flying Horse movement were pushed forward internationally in the turmoil of the Sino-Soviet dispute and internally under harsh economic conditions. Although Moscow cut off its military and economic aid to Beijing after 1959, Mao ambitiously attempted to accelerate the tempo of socialist construction. The Great Leap Forward was a reckless attempt by the CCP leadership to achieve a rapid industrialization of China by its own efforts on the basis of its own resources, despite the shortage of capital, scientific skill, and managerial know-how. Under these circumstances, Mao Zedong revived his slogan of “self-reliance” of the 1930s and the 1940s to arouse the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses to tackle these difficulties. Often during the civil war and the war against Japan, he had used self-reliance as an appeal to the revolutionary consciousness for increases in production and supplies when the CCP found it difficult to obtain outside assistance.<sup>96</sup>

### *The De-Stalinization Campaign and Self-Reliance*

Following Mao, Kim Il Sung began to call for “self-reliance” during the period of the Flying Horse movement. In terms of environmental circum-

<sup>94</sup>Harrison, *Long March to Power*, 346.

<sup>95</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 6 (1960): 140.

<sup>96</sup>When the hope of foreign assistance disappeared, Mao insisted on “self-reliance” for his revolutionary struggle. His first emphasis on self-reliance is found in his report given at a conference of party activists held on Dec. 27, 1935. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (original Chinese language text in one volume) (Peking, 1951), 147. In the English edition, *zili gengsbeng* (self-reliance) was often translated into “by our own efforts” or “regeneration through our own efforts.” On Jan. 10 and Aug. 13, 1945, and on other occasions, he reemphasized it. *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 3 (1967): 191, 4 (1969): 20.

stances, intentions, and its ideological setting, the appeal of self-reliance for North Korea was the same as that for China. When Kim started the Five-Year Plan in 1957, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign had seriously affected North Korean politics. Kim's "revisionist" opponents, the Moscow and the Yanan factions within the party, openly challenged the personality cult of Kim Il Sung and his radical economic policy of giving high priority to heavy industry and collectivizing agriculture at full speed. They were apparently given strong moral support by the Moscow leadership, who had no sympathy with Kim's Stalinist economic plan or with Mao's Great Leap Forward and the people's communes. *Rodong Sinmun* later revealed this rather honestly.<sup>97</sup>

For all the reasons noted above, Soviet curtailment of economic aid to China and to North Korea occurred almost simultaneously, even though North Korea was not completely on the side of Beijing in the Sino-Soviet conflict until 1963. The political environments of both countries stressed the struggle against American imperialism and Soviet revisionism. It was natural that North Korea was tempted to respond to the Chinese call for self-reliance. Since then, self-reliance has been a guiding principle of both parties, but especially of the KWP.

The spirit or policy of self-reliance is not the monopoly of Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung. Even General Ugkaki, the Japanese military governor of colonial Korea, set forth in the early 1930s a policy of self-reliance (*jiiriki kosei*) for the development of Korean agricultural communities. The first advocates of the communist policy of self-reliance must have been Lenin, and the second Stalin, although they did not coin the term. Under the circumstances of "capitalist encirclement," the "danger of imperialist intervention," and the absence of the proletarian revolution in Western Europe that was expected to help the Soviet Union, the Soviet people under Stalin were obliged to construct "socialism in one country" by their own efforts. In December 1925, Stalin, demonstrating his spirit of self-reliance, formulated his general policy line as follows:

The conversion of our country from an agrarian into an industrial country able to produce the machinery it needs by its own efforts, that is the essence, the basis of our general line.<sup>98</sup>

On April 13, 1926, Stalin again expounded his self-reliant policy line:

Industrialization, in our whole system of national economy . . . is assigned the

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<sup>97</sup>Editorial, *Rodong Sinmun*, Oct. 28, 1963: "In the past certain comrades did not show any proper understanding and support for the socialist construction of our party. They denounced our 'Five-Year Plan as fantasy'; or said that the 'tempo of farm cooperatives is too fast'; or 'how can a farm cooperative be possible without farm machinery?' making many other arguments even without knowing our situation. Of course, we followed our own decision, acting independently, so that no great loss was brought about because of these arguments."

<sup>98</sup>*Stalin zenshu* 7:358.

task of ensuring the economic independence of our country encircled by capitalist countries, and of protecting our country from becoming an appendage of world capitalism. A country of the dictatorship of the proletariat encircled by capitalism cannot continue to be economically independent if it does not produce instruments of production and the means of production by the country itself, if it remains for so long a time in the stage of development in which it cannot help subordinating itself to developed capitalist countries exporting instruments of production and means of production.<sup>99</sup>

Based on these fundamental ideas, Stalin developed his own pattern of forced industrialization and agrarian collectivization in the 1920s and the 1930s, marked by such characteristics as rapid tempo, planning from above, lack of foreign capital investment, absence of incentives for private profit, and totalitarian dictatorship. This Stalinist method must have been thought adequate by both Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung on the threshold of their economic construction. Since early March 1962, Kim Il Sung has emphatically advocated self-reliance on almost every occasion. His concepts and logic increasingly emulate those of the CCP formulated in “A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement” dated June 14, 1963. Their common characteristics can be summarized as follows:

1. In socialist construction, every socialist country must rely mainly on its own efforts and mobilize its own labor and its available resources fully.
2. Any socialist country that uses the pretext of nationalism to prevent other fraternal countries from building independent national economies by their own efforts is opposed.
3. A country that constructs socialism by its own efforts is faithful to proletarian internationalism.
4. It is necessary to practice mutual economic assistance and exchange, but this must be based on the principles of “complete equality” and “mutual benefit.”
5. The “great-power chauvinism” that, under the pretext of the “international division of labor,” hinders independent and synthetic development of other countries’ economies is opposed.<sup>100</sup>

Sino–North Korean self-reliance in the anti-Khrushchev context was necessarily accompanied by an “antirevisionist” standpoint in both countries in internal and international politics. During the period of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, after 1966, temporary tension was created between

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 8:150.

<sup>100</sup>This list is the result of a comparison between *The Sino-Soviet Rift*, analyzed and documented by William E. Griffith (1964), 280–81 and *Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 3 (1968): 328–29, 4 (1968): 223–24.

Beijing and Pyongyang perhaps because Kim showed no sympathy with the turmoil spreading on the Chinese continent. He was careful not to be involved in the power struggle within the Chinese leadership. Though denounced by the Red Guard as revisionist,<sup>101</sup> Kim was intensifying his own ideological and cultural revolution, calling for the “working classization” and “revolutionization” of the whole people. However, with Chou Enlai’s state visit to North Korea in the spring of 1970, friendship was restored. At the Fifth Congress of the WPK held November 2–13, 1970, Kim Il Sung reflected the Maoist tone and phraseology for denouncing modern revisionism during the period of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.<sup>102</sup>

### *The Continuing Revolution*

Kim Il Sung’s most important revolutionary tenet, identical in content with that of Mao, is found in this theory of the “continuing revolution.” Kim articulated it in October 1975 as follows:

In order to construct communism . . . we must capture the ideological fortress and the material fortress of communism. In order to capture them, we must vigorously carry on the ideological, technical, and cultural revolutions. The three great revolutions are the task of the continuing revolution for the party of the working class after the establishment of the socialist system.<sup>103</sup>

Kim’s formulation is no more than a slightly revised copy of the Maoist formula of the “continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat” that was loudly advocated in China during the Cultural Revolution. At the Ninth National Congress of the CCP, held in April 1969, Lin Piao eulogized it as the “great theory” set forth by Mao Zedong.<sup>104</sup> Since then it has been reiterated on almost every occasion in Chinese publications. At the Tenth National Congress of the CCP held in August 1973, Chou Enlai

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<sup>101</sup>After the beginning of 1967, Red Guard wall posters attacked Kim as a “revisionist” and “Khrushchev’s disciple.” The worst assault was made by *Wenge tongxun*, a Cultural Revolution bulletin, on Feb. 15, 1968. *Pukban ch’onggam*, 248–49. *Tong-A Ilbo* (East Asian Daily), Apr. 14, 1968.

<sup>102</sup>His view of revisionism, which he still maintains, is that it is “an opportunistic ideology which emasculates the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism. The most poisonous harm of revisionism is to negate the leadership of the Marxist-Leninist Party and dictatorship of the proletariat, to oppose class struggle, to obscure the demarcation between comrade and enemy, to fear the atomic blackmail of the U.S. imperialists and surrender before their knees, to make eyes at the imperialists while paying lip service to taking an anti-imperialist stand, to give up the struggle against imperialism and reactionaries, to be reluctant to see the oppressed peoples carry out revolution and to obstruct it.” *Rodong Simmun*, Nov. 3, 1970.

<sup>103</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 7 (1978): 217.

<sup>104</sup>*Important Documents on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China* (Peking, 1970), 4. Lin Piao also said, “This great work, like a radiant beacon, illuminates the course of China’s socialist revolution and socialist construction.”

emphasized the theory of the continuing revolution—thus making it official—together with the “three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production, and the scientific experiment,” in the party constitution of 1973,<sup>105</sup> and later in the preamble of the 1975 constitution of the People’s Republic of China (PRC).<sup>106</sup>

The ideological legacy of the Cultural Revolution in this respect lingered on until the Sixth Plenary Session of the CC/CCP in 1981 when Hua Guofeng was ousted. With Deng Xiaoping’s rise to real power, the theory of the continuing revolution was advocated no longer. However, North Korea holds fast to the theory as an essential component of Kim Il Sung’s revolutionary idea. This indicates that he was deeply influenced by Mao’s ideology even while it was gradually fading in China after Mao’s death. For clarification of Kim’s standpoint, certain additional historical factors should be analyzed.

In retrospect, Kim Il Sung has enforced the ideological, technical, and cultural revolutions since the very day his party was founded, though not always with the same phrases. Later, since early 1973, emulating the Maoist theoretical framework, he has systematized his idea and formulated the theory of the Three Great Revolutions. Studies of Marxism-Leninism show that Kim’s theory has the same ideological structure as that of Stalin and Mao Zedong, though Stalin did not use the term “three great revolutions.” Mao was probably the first to coin this term. Both Mao and Stalin, just as Kim, emphasized the determining role of ideology, technology, and culture for the accomplishment of socialist revolution and socialist construction.

Lenin was the first communist to use the term “cultural revolution,” but he himself did not use such terms as “ideological revolution” and “technical revolution.” Mao Zedong used the terms “technical revolution” and “cultural revolution” to mean the same things as Kim does but never used the term “ideological revolution.” Instead, he used such equivalent terms as “rectification campaign” or “socialist education movement.” It is worthy of notice that Kim Il Sung, in late December 1955, stressed “the need to conduct rectification as in the Chinese party”; he understood that “rectification is no other than hardening of the party-mindedness [*partinost*] and ideological education.”<sup>107</sup> Later he replaced Mao’s coinage with his own “ideological revolution.”

Mao’s initial use of the “three great revolutionary struggles,” referring to “class struggle, the struggle for production, and scientific experiment,” is found in his Directives on the Socialist Education Movement issued in May

<sup>105</sup>*The Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Documents)* (Peking, 1973), 62.

<sup>106</sup>English text of *The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China* (Peking, 1975), 8.

<sup>107</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 4 (1960): 346. Later, with Kim’s declaration of the Juche idea, this paragraph disappeared from all the new editions of his writings.

1963.<sup>108</sup> Thus, Kim's formula of the Three Great Revolutions is not always identical in form with that of Mao.

Although the idea of the Three Great Revolutions is not Kim's creation, its content constitutes the core of his current theory of revolution, meaning that there can be no suspension in the process of revolution until the great task of building the communist society has been achieved. He holds that revolution should not stop even after the workers' party has come to power and the social system has changed. Revolutions should continue in order to overcome hostile class maneuvers and the corroding effects of outdated ideologies, thus eliminating the class distinctions between the working class and the farmers and between the urban and rural areas. In other words, the working class must not be satisfied with success in one stage; the revolution must not end but must continue from the first stage of success to achievement of the next stage until the final construction of the communist society.<sup>109</sup>

The forerunner of Mao Zedong's continuing revolution is Trotsky's "permanent revolution," which was inspired by Marx and Engels, whose rudimentary idea of the permanent revolution or "the uninterrupted revolution" (*budan geming* in Chinese) is found already in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848)<sup>110</sup> and was more clearly articulated in the *Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League* (1850)<sup>111</sup> and Marx's *The Class Struggle in France, 1848–1850* (1850).<sup>112</sup> By the permanent revolution was meant the immediate passage from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the proletarian socialist revolution through class struggle in backward Germany around the middle of the nineteenth century.

<sup>108</sup>*Mo Takutō sbisō-banzai* (Long live Mao Zedong Thought) (Tokyo: Sanichi-shbo, 1976), 2:61.

<sup>109</sup>*Kim Il Sung sonjip* 6 (1960):138–39; *Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 5 (1972): 164–74.

<sup>110</sup>Marx and Engels here pronounced that "in Germany they [the communists] fight with the bourgeoisie whenever they act in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the [reactionary] petty bourgeoisie. But . . . after the fall of reactionary classes in Germany, . . . the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin. . . . The bourgeois revolution in Germany will be the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 362.

<sup>111</sup>Marx and Engels wrote, "While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, . . . it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, [has advanced]. . . . Their battle cry must be: The Revolution in Permanence." *Ibid.*, 367, 373.

<sup>112</sup>Marx wrote of the French revolution of 1848, "This socialism is the *declaration of the permanence of the revolution*, the *class dictatorship* of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the *abolition of class distinction* generally." Quoted from *Sino-Soviet Relations, 1964–1965*, analyzed and documented by William E. Griffith (1967), 319.

Leon Trotsky, who considered himself the true Marxist, presented his theory of permanent revolution in the early years of this century and elaborated it in his writings, such as *Results and Prospects* (1906) and *The Permanent Revolution* (1929). He elucidated the fundamentals of his theory as follows:

The perspective of permanent revolution may be summarized in the following way: the complete victory of the democratic revolution in Russia is conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which would inevitably place as the order of the day not only democratic but socialistic tasks as well, would at the same time give powerful impetus to the international socialist revolution. Only the victory of the proletariat in the West can protect Russia from bourgeois restoration and assure it the possibility of rounding out the establishment of socialism.<sup>113</sup>

In spite of rhetorical differences from Trotsky, Lenin said:

From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-consciousness and organized proletariat, begin to pass to the Socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution.<sup>114</sup>

Trotsky's postulate of the permanent revolution was attacked by Stalin (who was pretending to be always faithful to Lenin), especially after Lenin's death, in defense of his theory of Socialism in One Country. Even though Mao Zedong, as a Marxist-Leninist, criticized Trotskyism, his idea of a continuing revolution appears to have been strongly influenced by Trotsky. Nevertheless, the communist theories of uninterrupted revolution preceding Mao were strategies for immediately developing (bourgeois-) democratic revolution into socialist revolution; Mao's continuing revolution, beginning with the Great Leap Forward, was a strategy for developing the socialist system, established after democratic revolution, as quickly as possible into full-fledged communism, which is precisely what Kim Il Sung has emulated until now. During the Cultural Revolution, its concept was enlarged and sophisticated, being expressed as the "continuing revolution (*jixu geming*) under the dictatorship of the proletariat." Kim, who used to use the term "uninterrupted revolution," soon replaced it, following Mao, with the words "continuing revolution after the establishment of the socialist system."

<sup>113</sup>Trotsky, "Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution," Appendix in *Stalin* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1941), 433.

<sup>114</sup>V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude of Social-Democracy towards the Peasant Movement," in *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), 9:236–37.

The concept of uninterrupted revolution was first emphasized in China in 1958. On January 28 or 30 of that year, Mao Zedong explained its postulate:

Social revolution should be carried out day by day, and rectification should be continued without relaxing our efforts. . . . Let me talk about the uninterrupted revolution. After the liberation, we carried out the agrarian reform first, and after that, mutual-aid teams and cooperatives in the rural districts, also in 1957 rectification; now we further want to start the technical revolution. Conclusion of one task means the start of the next. One should strike while the iron is hot and should not let it cool down halfway.<sup>115</sup>

Against the backdrop of tense Sino-Soviet relations and the rising “anti-rightist struggle” (1957–58) inside China, Mao raised the task of the technical and cultural revolutions as a means of accelerating the transition from socialism to communism on the basis of people’s communes. It was at this time that the uninterrupted revolution theory resurfaced. Liu Shaoqi addressed the Communist Party convention in May 1958:

Marx, Engels and Lenin often pointed out that the watch-word of the working class should be “uninterrupted revolution.” In putting forward new revolutionary tasks in good time, so that there is no halfway halt in the revolutionary advance of the people, the revolutionary fervor of the masses will not subside with interruptions of the revolution, and Party and state functionaries will not rest content with the success won and grow arrogant or apathetic, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Comrade Mao Zedong have always guided the Chinese revolution by this Marxist-Leninist theory of uninterrupted revolution.<sup>116</sup>

Liu also said:

After the socialist revolution in the ownership of the means of production had basically been won, the Central Committee launched the Socialist revolution on the ideological and political fronts. “All this enabled the revolution to advance at the opportune moment from one stage to another, scoring one victory after another.” . . . The issuance of the call for the technical and cultural revolution means that our constantly developing revolution must now advance to a new stage.<sup>117</sup>

The Three Great Revolutions started in North Korea when Kim Il Sung organized the Three Great Revolution Squads in secret and dispatched them, in February 1975, to all factories, enterprises, and cooperative farms, and so on. The members were young, educated cadres and college students, whose mission was to push forward the Three Great Revolutions by which Kim intended to make a breakthrough from the stagnant economic produc-

<sup>115</sup>*Mo Takutō shisō banzai*, 2:215.

<sup>116</sup>Bowie and Fairbank, *Communist China*, 427.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, 152.

tion of that time. Even at the initial stage, their number exceeded tens of thousands.<sup>118</sup> They were ordered to struggle against the “conservatism,” “empiricism,” “departmentalism,” “bureaucracy,” and similar evils of “outdated,” “aged,” “indolent” cadres.

Kim Il Sung, emulating Mao Zedong (or Liu Shaoqi), has followed one revolution with another before enthusiasm supposedly cooled down. Thus, when the socialist system was established, he launched the Three Great Revolutions. In contravention of the facts, the idea of these revolutions has been highly praised as a result of Kim’s own creativity. In March 1975, the third year after the formation of the squads, Kim Il Sung boasted that thanks to the role of the teams, North Korea had joined the world’s advanced countries in per capita income.<sup>119</sup>

### *Running Counter to New Trends*

All of the above-mentioned elements of Maoism are now outdated “ancient stories” in China. However, they have been incorporated into Kim Il Sung’s monolithic ideological system, exemplifying his stubborn dogmatism even in the post-Mao era. He has been placed in a straitjacket by his past advocacies, hence unable to escape from old dogmas.

His perception of the international situation is not different. Since the early 1970s the weather map of world politics has gradually changed. Henry Kissinger’s dramatic secret visit to Beijing in July 1971 and Chou Enlai’s invitation of Nixon to the PRC astonished the world. It probably appeared to North Korea that the most reliable banner-bearer of the anti-American revolutionary struggle had begun to collaborate with those archimperialists for selfish reasons. In this grave situation Kim Il Sung, on August 6, 1971, vehemently denounced the “U.S. aggressors” and their “South Korean stooges” and the “Japanese militarists.”<sup>120</sup> He also gave a poignant repercussive warning to the Beijing leadership who were in pursuit of rapprochement with Washington:

As historical experience shows, the aggressive nature of imperialism never changes; even if its strength wanes, the imperialists refuse to retire from their old position of their own accord. The deeper the imperialists sink into a quagmire, the tighter they cling to the “double-dealing tactics” of holding an olive branch in one hand and brandishing a bayonet in the other and the more vicious they become in their manoeuvres of aggression and war under the cloak of “peace.”<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 7 (1978): 164. According to Hwang Chang-yop’s report delivered on Sept. 24, 1984, the total number of squad members dispatched since the beginning of the Three Revolution Squad movement had amounted to 108,700. *Rodong Simmun*, Sept. 25, 1984.

<sup>119</sup>*Kim Il Sung chojak sonjip* 7 (1978):175.

<sup>120</sup>Korean Central News Agency, International Service. P’yongyang, Aug. 6, 1971.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*

Kim Il Sung's ultra-anti-American viewpoints have so far never changed. Confronting the epoch-making international trend of détente, he has been taking relatively flexible countermeasures in past years, such as his diplomatic approaches to Japan, to West European countries, and even to the United States. In recent times North Korea proposed talks with the United States including South Korean representatives. This change of stance, however, by no means replaces the militant ideology of the WPK.

Kim Il Sung's recent remarks indicate that the more he takes a flexible, realistic policy on the diplomatic level, the more he calls internally for the armament of the North Korean people with an "invincible" revolutionary ideology similar to that of Mao Zedong, pre-Sino-American rapprochement. In Kim's current attitude there is not even the slightest symptom of sympathy with Deng Xiaoping's and Gorbachev's desperate efforts to reform their economic and political structures. Kim's policy line is actually running counter to the Chinese and the Soviet courses. The hard-line book and speech referred to at the outset of this study must be his resolute political signal to Beijing and Moscow that his ideological stand will never change.

## **Hanoi**

### *The New Look*

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) today appears to be an entirely different world from North Korea. A report written by a member of the delegation of the Japanese Communist Party to the Sixth National Congress of the Vietnam Communist Party (VCP), held in December 1986, described a relatively free and relaxed gathering.<sup>122</sup> Self-criticism of the party itself (not of any cadres) was surprising enough. The retiring general secretary, Truong Chinh, in his political report to the CC/VCP summed up with severe criticism the party's disastrous economic fiasco during the period since 1985. Truong Chinh's self-criticism at the congress was not new. At the Municipal Party Congress of Hanoi held in October 1986, he had been more concrete:

In the past several years we have been seized with the "left-wing infantile disease," and running along with idealism against objective laws. These errors lie concretely in the fact that favoring heavy industry, we attempted to construct an economic structure beyond our actual abilities, that we had to rely largely on foreign aid for living because we have maintained for so long a centralistic, bureaucratic managerial system, together with a subsidy program, having a huge superstructure beyond the substructure's capacity to sustain it, and that we too hastily abolished the nonsocialist economic sector

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<sup>122</sup>Wada Masana, "Shiren' to 'Sassin' no Todaikai" (The party congress of 'trial' and 'innovation'), *Sekai Seiji* (World Politics) (Tokyo), the 1st issue, on Feb. 10, 1987, 26–32.

in an excessive desire for the early completion of the socialist transformation. On the one hand, we were subjective, impatient, and wanted to achieve many things or to do quickly great things beyond our ability by jumping over developmental stages. On the other hand, when mistakes were made we were conservative, slow to cope with them, irresolutely prolonged the status quo, and lacked the courage and determination to correct them.<sup>123</sup>

As a result of such mistakes:

Production became stagnant, economic imbalance big, and productivity as well as quality and investment rapidly declined. Thus, materials and commodities decreased and circulation was paralysed. Not merely domestic potentialities but also a large amount of aid from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries was terribly wasted, instead of being effectively used.<sup>124</sup>

According to the Japanese delegate's report, a deputy to the Party Congress warned that "wages are not sufficient even for mere reproduction of the labor force. Perverted equality lingers on, the working ratio drops, workers' living is harsh because of high prices." Another speaker made the criticism that "the Party has lost the support of the people; . . . living of the people is hard; . . . the Party is doing nothing for the people; it does not give jobs to the people. They are too poor and get hungry."<sup>125</sup>

The atmosphere of the talks seems to have been amicable. A critical speech of a certain deputy was often interrupted by applause and laughter. The congress also introduced the plural-candidate system in the election of the Central Committee members of the party who were in turn to elect its top leadership. The report said that 124 full members of the Central Committee were elected from 250 candidates, and 49 alternative members from 126 candidates.<sup>126</sup> Apparently, the Vietnamese communists are learning some dear lessons from their own past failures and from Deng Xiaoping's and Gorbachev's reform policies. Such a new look is unthinkable in North Korea, where the Leader is almighty, the party always infallible, and 100 percent of the voters registered participate in all major elections and 100 percent of them vote for a single candidate in all constituencies.<sup>127</sup>

### *The Chinese Model*

In Hong Kong in February 1930, Ho Chi Minh founded the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) under Comintern instructions, following their anti-

<sup>123</sup>*Nhan Dan*, Oct. 20, 1986, retranslated from *To-A* (Asia Monthly) (Tokyo), Feb. 1987, 37.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*, 37–38.

<sup>125</sup>Wada Masana, "'Shiren' to 'sassin' no todaikai," 28.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, 28–29.

<sup>127</sup>In North Korean elections since 1964, such figures have been customary.

imperialist, antifeudal revolutionary line.<sup>128</sup> In September 1945, with the defeat of the Japanese military forces occupying the country, Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). It is interesting to see that nothing was mentioned about the socialist future or the bourgeois-democratic revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat in the Declaration of Independence of the DRV. Instead, it started with a partial citation of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America of 1776 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man promulgated at the time of the French Revolution of 1789.<sup>129</sup> Ho's group clearly sought to win the sympathy of the West while simultaneously attacking Western capitalist imperialism, using as a weapon bourgeois-democratic principles.

As early as 1941, Ho Chi Minh founded the Viet Minh (League for the Independence of Vietnam) in Gwangxi, South China, for the liberation of Vietnam from the Japanese and the French, which was a communist-dominated united front. On the basis of broadened membership of the Viet Minh, he organized the Vietnam Workers' Party (VWP) in 1951. It was a typical orthodox Leninist party. The manifesto and platform of the VWP made clear that "the theoretical foundation of the Party is Marxism-Leninism" and proclaimed its intention "to realize People's Democracy so as to gradually advance toward Socialism."<sup>130</sup>

No wonder the VWP was following People's Democracy in the 1950s; it was a universally accepted formula in Marxism-Leninism of a transitional ideology and form of power toward socialism, though its interpretations varied among Moscow, Beijing, and Belgrade. Mao Zedong had a strong ideological influence upon the VWP when the CCP won complete victory throughout China to found the PRC in October 1949. This historical event of profound significance shook the world, and Mao emerged as the eminent revolutionary figure in the socialist camp. Ho Chi Minh, struggling as a colonial communist under circumstances similar to China's, was enormously moved and encouraged by the victory of the communist revolution next door to his country, though he was not pro-Chinese.

The manifesto and platform of the VWP relied heavily on Mao Zedong for the ideological underpinnings of the party, defining the central task of Vietnamese communism as "to carry the War of Resistance to complete

<sup>128</sup>The Political Thesis of the Indochinese Communist Party includes the statement "In its initial period, the Indochinese revolution will be a bourgeois democratic revolution . . . [which] is a preparatory period leading to Socialist revolution." Robert F. Turner, Appendix A, in *Vietnamese Communism—Its Origins and Development* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), 316.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., "Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam," Appendix E, 334.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., "Manifesto and Platform of the Vietnam Workers' Party," Appendix F, 338.

victory, to build an independent, united, democratic, strong and prosperous" Vietnam.<sup>131</sup> This quotation is a copy of Mao Zedong's definition, frequently used in Chinese communist documents since publication of his article *On Coalition Government* (1945). As mentioned above, the definition was copied earlier by Kim Il Sung.<sup>132</sup>

Another striking ideological resemblance between Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh is seen in the concept of the people. Both of them defined the people as "the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie"<sup>133</sup> organized into a national united front under the leadership of the Communist Party. Like Mao, but unlike Stalin, Ho put particular importance on the role of the national bourgeoisie, who "shall be encouraged, assisted, and guided in their undertakings in order to contribute to the development of the national economy."<sup>134</sup> This is precisely what Mao mentioned in his *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship* in June 1949, a thesis drawn from early Comintern theses.<sup>135</sup> The VWP also adopted Mao's coinage "people's democratic dictatorship" as the epitomization of the power of the people,<sup>136</sup> the term that the Soviet Union, as discussed above, intentionally avoided.

Furthermore, the Constitution of the VWP upgraded Mao Zedong's position to the extent of saying that the VWP "takes Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism coordinated with Mao Tse Tung's revolutionary ideas and the real situation in Vietnam as its foundation and guide in every action"<sup>137</sup> and that one should "learn to raise one's political consciousness and broaden one's knowledge by the application of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism and Mao Tse Tung ideas."<sup>138</sup>

In the Statute of the VWP of 1960, probably reflecting the growing Sino-Soviet ideological conflicts after the death of Stalin, the Chinese term "people's democratic dictatorship" and the names of Stalin and Mao Zedong were dropped. The ideological foundation of the party was based merely on Marxism-Leninism. Nevertheless, the statute still preserved Mao's ideas on the need to "build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, rich, and strong" country. This statute was published on the eve of the First Five-Year Plan (1961–65) to construct a socialist economy in North Vietnam. The party set

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 338.

<sup>132</sup>See nn. 36, 40.

<sup>133</sup>Turner, *Vietnamese Communism*, Appendix F, 343.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 339.

<sup>135</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* 4 (1969): 417, 421.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 334.

<sup>137</sup>Turner, *Vietnamese Communism*, "Constitution of the Vietnam Workers' Party," Appendix G, 351.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 352.

forth its economic guidelines, similar to those of the Chinese Second Five-Year Plan (1958–62) and North Korean Five-Year Plan (1957–60) with the goal of “developing light industry and agriculture while giving priority to heavy industry” and vigorously carrying out a “cultural revolution” and a “technical revolution.” The statute certainly borrowed the guidelines previously established by Beijing and Pyongyang:

To fulfill its responsibilities during the transition to socialism in the North, the Party must . . . achieve socialist industrialization through the rational priority development of heavy industry, and at the same time endeavor to develop agriculture and light industry in order to build at a high speed a balanced and modern socialist economy and closely associate industry with agriculture.<sup>139</sup>

### *Three Revolutions, but Not People's Communes*

The statute surprisingly even urged three kinds of revolutions:

Along with the the transformation and development of the economy, the party must step up the revolution in the ideological, cultural, and technical fields, unceasingly improve the living conditions of the people, and continually raise the people's level in all fields.<sup>140</sup>

This is the same as Kim Il Sung's later formula of his Three Great Revolutions. In this respect, Ho Chi Minh was indubitably a forerunner of Kim Il Sung. Ho appears to have adopted from Mao the concept of the Three Great Revolutions that was later seasoned by the VWK to their own taste, being called the Three Revolutions in Vietnam. Although the appellation given was not precisely identical, the contents were almost the same as Mao's and Kim's concepts. What is meant by Three Revolutions in Vietnam? In February 1970, Le Duan clarified this, saying that “three revolutions are revolutions in the relations of production, technical revolution and the cultural-ideological revolution.”<sup>141</sup>

These revolutions are the Vietnamese version of the continuing revolution, which has actually been carried through since the First Five-Year Plan (1961–65). Its contents reflected Mao's revolutionary goals during the Great Leap Forward. But North Vietnam made no attempt to emulate the adventurist movement of China of which Khrushchev was extremely critical. Hanoi was also highly cautious on the question of the people's communes. Naturally,

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., “Statute of the Viet-Nam Workers' Party,” Appendix J, 394.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

<sup>141</sup>*Sekai seiji shiryō* (Materials of World Politics) (Tokyo), the 1st issue, on Mar. 10, 1970, 7. The first official appearance of the Three Revolutions was at the session of the CC/VWP on May 18, 1963. These revolutions are now contained in the new socialist constitution. See Nguyen Van Canh, *Vietnam under Communism, 1975–1982* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), 79–84.

Mao's sensational effort to create a new agrarian system was carefully watched in Hanoi, but "there was little intention of following Peking on that shaky ground," as Bernard Fall observed on the spot. Nevertheless, North Vietnam started its cooperative movement, as in China and North Korea, before mechanization had been prepared.<sup>142</sup>

The Constitution of the DRV adopted in January 1960 was a socialist constitution, though the republic was defined as "a people's democratic state based on the alliance between the workers and peasants and led by the working class." The 1960 Constitution was modeled on the Chinese Constitution of 1954.<sup>143</sup> Article 11 of the North Vietnamese Constitution stipulated that "during the present period of transition to Socialism, the main forms of ownership of the means of production are: state ownership, that is, ownership by the whole people; cooperative ownership, that is, collective ownership by the working masses; ownership by individual working people; and ownership by the national capitalists."<sup>144</sup> This article was a copy of Article 5 of the PRC's 1954 Constitution. This is one of many indications that Ho Chi Minh was very much impressed by Mao's method of transforming the Chinese backward economy "step by step" into a socialist economy.

Comparing the PRC's Constitution of 1954 with that of the DRV of 1960, one can see that they are virtually identical.<sup>145</sup> However, Mao's essential doctrines, such as the mass line, the self-reliant spirit, technical fetishism, revisionism, et cetera, are not found in the Vietnamese communist ideology. In economic questions, the Vietnamese communists have been consistently more cautious and practical than the Maoists. In long-drawn, harsh wartime conditions, they had to be concerned with day-to-day problems of survival. The post-Liberation Socialist Republic of Vietnam has pushed socialist construction of the economy, but due to various reasons outlined elsewhere in this volume, its efforts have proved to be ruinous. Because of the Chinese invasion during February–March 1979, in the milieu and its adoption of a pro-Soviet orientation since 1978, talk of Mao's ideological influence, withering away even at home, would have been impossible. Thus, in Vietnam as in the other Asian socialist societies, the future of ideology remains impossible to predict, but given their fate at home, the demise of Stalinism and Maoism would appear to be irreversible.

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<sup>142</sup>Bernard B. Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams—A Political and Military Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 161.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., "Text of the North Vietnamese Constitution of 1960," Appendix 1, 419. The quotation is from the Preamble of the Constitution.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 421.

<sup>145</sup>North Vietnamese emulation of the PRC's Constitution was lucidly analyzed in Turner, *Vietnamese Communism*, 194–201.

**Part Two**  
**Political Institutions**

### 3. Political Institutionalization in Asian Communist Societies: China, North Korea, and Vietnam

BYUNG CHUL KOH

Political institutions, regardless of how one defines them, are an integral part of all modern polities. Loosely construed, political institutions are all but synonymous with political structures—such as parliaments, government bureaucracies, courts, political parties, and interest groups. That these have become conspicuous fixtures in the political landscape of most countries needs no belaboring.

In a strict sense, however, the term “political institution” connotes not any structure with a political complexion but one that has displayed a significant degree of adaptability and legitimacy.<sup>1</sup> It is plain that the development of political institutions in this latter sense cannot be taken for granted. More often than not, it necessitates long and careful nurturing; it is likely to proceed by the circuitous route of trials and errors.

The process by which, and the degree to which, political institutions of the latter type emerge in a political system can be described as political institutionalization. In the words of Robert A. Scalapino:

Political institutionalization is the process whereby a political structure is made operational in accordance with stipulated rules and procedures, enabling more regularized, hence predictable, patterns of political behavior, minimal trauma in power transfer, and a foundation for the effective development of policies as well as the application of justice.<sup>2</sup>

Scalapino adds that if political institutions are to be both stable and effective, “they must rest upon a foundation of citizen acceptance.” Hence, “legitimacy must accompany or follow institutionalization.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Philip Selznick’s distinction between “organization” and “institution” is germane here: “The term ‘organization’ . . . suggests a certain bareness, a lean, no-nonsense system of consciously co-ordinated activities. It refers to an *expendable tool*, a rational instrument engineered to do a job. An ‘institution,’ on the other hand, is more nearly a natural product of social needs and pressures—a responsive, adaptive organism.” Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson & Co., 1957), 5.

<sup>2</sup>Robert A. Scalapino, “Legitimacy and Institutionalization in Asian Socialist Societies,” in Robert A. Scalapino et al., eds., *Asian Political Institutionalization* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), 59.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

From the above one can distill several criteria or indicators of institutionalization: (1) adaptability, (2) a set of rules and procedures that are not only durable but also effective, (3) a measure of predictability in patterns of political behavior, (4) a relatively smooth or conflict-free transfer of power at the top, (5) effective policy outputs, including a credible judicial system, and (6) legitimacy.

These are not mutually exclusive criteria. The second criterion subsumes the four that follow it. Legitimacy, moreover, hinges to a large extent on the fulfillment of the first five conditions. One may also question whether adaptability does not contradict the notions of durability and predictability. As Samuel P. Huntington has argued, however, given the instability of the environment, a political system cannot long endure without manifesting a capacity to adapt itself to changes and new challenges to which it is continuously exposed. Hence, durability of a political system implies its adaptability, which leads Huntington to suggest that adaptability be measured by three distinct manifestations of age: chronological, generational, and functional.<sup>4</sup>

Against this conceptual backdrop, I shall assess the status of political institutionalization in China, North Korea, and Vietnam. I propose to examine the salient trends in each of the three Asian communist countries sequentially, occasionally injecting comparative comments when appropriate. An overall comparative assessment will be essayed in the concluding section.

## China

How has the Chinese political system fared in terms of adaptability? As far as chronological age is concerned, the system has endured for nearly four decades; although surpassed by Vietnam and North Korea alike, this is nonetheless a respectable record. If one uses as the baseline, not the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), but the launching of the communist movement, however, China's chronological age not only increases by nearly three decades but also climbs to the top of the three Asian communist countries.

But what the chronological age reveals is not so much the adaptability of the Chinese system as its resilience. The two are not necessarily identical. No other political system, either communist or non-communist, has experienced as much turbulence as the PRC has, and to a striking degree this turbulence has been emblematic of its inability to adapt to the changing

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<sup>4</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), 12–17. In addition to adaptability, Huntington also proposes three other criteria of institutionalization: complexity, autonomy, and coherence. As Donald K. Emmerson points out, however, the utility as well as the internal consistency of these criteria is open to question. See Emmerson, "Rediscovering the State: Political Institutionalization in Southeast Asia," in Scalapino et al., *Asian Political Institutionalization*, 145–49.

needs and challenges emanating from its internal and external environment. That the system has weathered the storms is, of course, noteworthy. What merits greater attention, however, is the magnitude of destruction and suffering that the storms, largely man-made and preventable, have left in their wake.

As far as "generational age" is concerned, China may be on a par with North Vietnam and ahead of North Korea. At the highest level of power, we have witnessed the passing of the founder of the Chinese system, Mao Zedong, and the emergence of a successor regime. However, the new set of rulers is not new; until very recently, the surviving veterans of the Long March continued to dominate the apex of the political hierarchy. Known as the First Echelon, they included Deng Xiaoping (eighty-three), Chen Yun (eighty-two), Li Xiannian (seventy-eight), and Peng Zhen (eighty-five). These men finally stepped aside in October 1987, but in the case of Deng, at least, political authority continued. Sharing power with these aging leaders have been members of the Second Echelon, representing the anti-Japanese and civil war generations. Zhao Ziyang (sixty-eight) remains the most prominent member of this group after the "resignation" of Hu Yaobang (seventy-one) as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in January 1987. Now, Zhao has succeeded Hu officially as general secretary. The elevation of a number of younger persons to membership in the CCP Politburo, coupled with the replacement of sixty-four members of the CCP Central Committee, in September 1985 signaled the "arrival" of the Third Echelon.<sup>5</sup> This process was accelerated in the course of the Thirteenth CCP Congress in October 1987, with a new Central Committee of 175, among whom sixty-one were first term members. Changes in the Politburo were at least equally impressive; nine old members departed and seven new members were added.

Although the "greening of the Chinese revolution," hence generational change in China's leadership, is well under way, the 1987 downfall of Hu Yaobang indicates that the road ahead may not always be smooth. We shall return to this subject in connection with political succession.

"Functional age," another indicator of institutional adaptability, refers to an organization's capacity to change or diversify its purposes, constituencies, and functions in response to environmental change. The successful completion of its original mission or a fundamental change in its status makes such functional adaptation necessary.<sup>6</sup>

The CCP seems to have managed the initial transition from a revolutionary to a ruling party reasonably well. Its near disintegration in the second half of the 1960s stemmed not from its functional ossification but from the

<sup>5</sup>Richard Baum, "China in 1985: The Greening of the Revolution," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 1 (Jan. 1986): 32-36.

<sup>6</sup>Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 15-17.

dynamics of factional politics at the highest level, which in turn reflected the lack of institutionalization of the political system as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

An example of functional adaptability in the Chinese political system is the changing role of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC). Under the leadership of Peng Zhen, its chairman, the NPC Standing Committee has emerged as a wielder of considerable power in China. This development owes not only to Peng's political skills and membership in the CCP Politburo but also to a conspicuous upgrading of the NPC Standing Committee in the Constitution of the PRC adopted in November 1982. As vice-chairman of the Committee for Revision of the Constitution, Peng seems to have played a major role in bringing about such change. Because the chairman of the revision committee was Ye Jianying, who was in failing health, Peng may have been the principal architect of the new state charter.

It was Peng, not Ye Jianying, who made the report on the draft constitution to the Fifth Session of the Fifth NPC on November 26, 1982. In his words:

Some of the functions and powers which originally belonged to the National People's Congress are now delegated to its Standing Committee. The functions and powers of the Standing Committee have been expanded, and the Committee has been strengthened organizationally. Both the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee exercise the legislative power of the state; while the basic statutes are enacted by the former, other statutes are enacted by the latter.<sup>8</sup>

The 1982 PRC Constitution confers an awesome array of powers on the NPC Standing Committee. They include the powers to propose amendments to the constitution; to interpret it and supervise its enforcement; to enact and interpret statutes; to supervise the work of the State Council, the Central Military Commission, the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Procuratorate; to annul administrative rules, regulations, and decisions of the State Council that contravene the constitution or statutes; to annul regulations and decisions of government bodies at the provincial level on the same grounds; to appoint and remove a wide range of officials; to ratify and abrogate international treaties; to decide on general or partial mobilization; and to declare martial law throughout the country or in particular provinces or comparable units.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>For a theoretical analysis of factional politics in China, see Lucian Pye, *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1981). For an analysis of the Cultural Revolution per se, see Hong Yung Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>8</sup>"Report on the Draft of the Revised Constitution of the People's Republic of China," *Beijing Review* 25, no. 50 (Dec. 13, 1982): 18.

<sup>9</sup>See *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1983), 50–55 (Arts. 64 and 67).

The constitution empowers the NPC to establish special committees that will operate under the direction of the NPC Standing Committee; the special committees can cover the gamut of public policy. To enable members of the Standing Committee to devote full time to their work, the constitution prohibits them from holding "any post in any of the administrative, judicial or procuratorial organs of the state."<sup>10</sup>

Formal authority enshrined in a state constitution does not automatically translate into effective power in communist systems, but Peng Zhen seems to have accomplished such a feat in China. Peng's growing influence is believed to have been a major factor in the ouster of Hu Yaobang as CCP general secretary in January 1987 and the adoption of a hard-line policy by China's leadership toward domestic political reform.<sup>11</sup> The enhanced status of the NPC Standing Committee and its chairman, Peng Zhen, has been clearly discernible from the attention they have commanded in the Chinese media.<sup>12</sup>

If all this exemplifies institutional adaptability, does it also bespeak the crystallization of a set of rules and procedures that are both durable and effective? The PRC's past track record cautions us against drawing any optimistic conclusions. The rules and procedures embodied in formal documents such as state and party constitutions have not only undergone frequent changes but have also been disregarded, bypassed, and even jettisoned altogether. To cite but one recent example, the handling of Hu Yaobang's "resignation" seems to have been extralegal, that is, in technical violation of the 1982 CCP Constitution. Nowhere in the constitution can one find a stipulation authorizing an expanded meeting of the CCP Politburo not only to accept the resignation of the general secretary but also to appoint his successor, albeit on a temporary basis.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 51 (Art. 65), 56 (Art. 70).

<sup>11</sup>See *Asahi shinbun*, International Satellite Ed., Jan. 17–21, 1987. In one of the numerous articles and commentaries (Jan. 18, 1987) the Japanese daily noted that the full text of Peng Zhen's speech, "On Some Problems Concerning the Guiding Ideology in the Construction of Socialist Spiritual Civilization," delivered to a study session of delegates of the NPC in Oct. 1986, had been published in *Renmin Ribao* on Jan. 15, 1987, a day before Hu Yaobang's official ouster. For an interpretation that suggests that Deng Xiaoping was the force behind Hu's ouster, see Lowell Dittmer, "Mao and the Politics of Revolutionary Mortality," *Asian Survey* 27, no. 3 (Mar. 1987): 337–39.

<sup>12</sup>For examples of recent articles on Peng Zhen, see *Renmin Ribao*, Overseas Ed., Apr. 3, 5, 8, 12, 14, and 24 and May 2, 1987; "Peng Zhen Answers Questions," *Beijing Review* 30, no. 17 (Apr. 27, 1987): 14–15.

<sup>13</sup>Art. 21 of the CCP Constitution, adopted by the Twelfth Congress in Sept. 1982, empowers the Central Committee to elect the general secretary along with members of the Political Bureau (PB), the PB Standing Committee, and the Secretariat. The same article, however, does allow the PB and its Standing Committee to "exercise the functions and powers of the Central Committee" when the Central Committee is "not in session." See *Beijing Review* 25, no. 38 (Sept. 20, 1982): 15.

If, as has been posited above, the increase in the power of the NPC and particularly its Standing Committee was due to a large extent to the power of an individual political leader—Peng Zhen—then can it really be characterized as “institutional development”? Can personally instigated institutional change outlive its patron? On the other hand, we should not rule out the possibility that institutional change can generate its own momentum and unleash forces that help perpetuate it.

It is plain that the Chinese leadership does regard formalizing rules and procedures as important. Although they can be set aside from time to time, whenever the dominant coalition in Beijing’s inner sanctums of power finds it expedient to do so, the rules and procedures that have been officially promulgated do seem to define the perimeters of approved policy and permissible behavior. The decision of the NPC Standing Committee to block the submission of a bill to the fifth session of the Sixth NPC in March 1987 that would have strengthened the powers of managers in China’s state enterprises, for example, signaled a setback in China’s decentralization program; it meant at least temporarily the perpetuation of party control over and guidance of state enterprises.<sup>14</sup>

The preceding example also emits mixed signals regarding the emerging trend toward a clearer differentiation of power between party and state and an apparent aggrandizement of state power. The most obvious implication of what the NPC Standing Committee did is preservation of party hegemony in enterprise management. However, if the NPC Standing Committee under Peng’s leadership acted more or less independently in the matter, that in itself was symptomatic of the enhanced power of a state organ.

The frequency with which both state and party constitutions have been revised—five versions of each since 1949—as well as the impunity with which they have been bypassed, notably during the calamitous decade of the Cultural Revolution, shows that the patterns of Chinese politics have been singularly volatile. Nonetheless, precisely because the Cultural Revolution was such a wrenching experience, recurrence of major political upheaval seems exceedingly unlikely. However, as recent events have shown, China still has a long way to go before its basic political patterns become sufficiently

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<sup>14</sup>*Asabi Shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., Mar. 21, 1987. In an interview with reporters from Hong Kong and Macao on Apr. 8, 1987, Peng Zhen, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, predicted that the bill would eventually be passed. Asserting that he was the author of the idea behind the bill—the “director responsibility system”—Peng said that given its importance, the bill needed further study. He also revealed that “before the NPC Standing Committee decided to postpone the adoption of the enterprise law, I had discussed this question with Premier Zhao Ziyang.” This revelation is significant because it suggests the astonishingly narrow scope of intralite consultation on a key policy issue and serves to reinforce the impression of Peng’s growing power. For excerpts from the interview, see *Beijing Review* 30, no. 17 (Apr. 27, 1987): 15.

routinized to be predictable. This question is inseparable from those of political succession, effective policy outputs, and ultimately, legitimacy.

China's experience in political succession shows that, as in the other communist states, there are no regularized procedures for transferring power at the top. It also bolsters the propositions that succession under such circumstances spawns a struggle for power and that the outcome of such a struggle may lead to notable change in the personnel and policy directions of the communist system in question.<sup>15</sup>

Nor is it unusual that the outcome of the succession struggle was at variance with the wishes of the deceased leader, for that seems to be the pattern established in the Soviet Union. What is unusual about the Chinese experience is that Mao at one point had designated Lin Biao as his successor in a party constitution, an unprecedented move that was subsequently nullified by Lin's death in a plane crash in the wake of an alleged coup attempt.

If Mao helped to pave the way for Hua Guofeng's short-lived reign as his successor, the second rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping and Deng's subsequent emergence as China's paramount leader clearly ran counter to Mao's predilections. The ultimate arbiter of the succession struggle turned out to be not Mao's testament, alleged or real, but the dynamics of factional politics.

Because of Deng's advanced age, China has been forced to confront the succession problem again. Despite current favorable trends, will it be able to manage the longer-range process any more smoothly than it has in the past? Although the plan to establish the Third Echelon, should it be implemented without a hitch, would seem to be a significant step toward the institutionalization of succession, coalition building at the top is likely to remain the pivotal variable for some time to come.<sup>16</sup>

As noted, policy outputs and legitimacy are closely intertwined. Neither reliance on ideology nor attempts to expand the scope of citizen participation in politics within the boundaries of the "four cardinal principles"—(1) adherence to the socialist road, (2) the people's democratic dictatorship, (3) the leadership of the Communist Party, and (4) Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought<sup>17</sup>—have been notably efficacious in generating a sense

<sup>15</sup>For an elaboration of these ideas, see Myron Rush, "The Problem of Succession in Communist Regimes," *Journal of International Affairs* 32, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 1978): 169–80; Seweryn Bialer, "Succession and Turnover of Soviet Elites," *ibid.*, 181–83.

<sup>16</sup>For an insightful analysis of political succession in China, see Eberhard Sandschneider, "Political Succession in the People's Republic of China: Rule By Purge," *Asian Survey* 25, no. 6 (June 1985): 638–58. According to Sandschneider, China may have taken the initial step toward a Soviet-style "institutionalized leadership," for intraelite conflicts for succession, although "not yet completely regularized," "do not result in a thorough shake-up and ensuing crises for the whole political system" (p. 658).

<sup>17</sup>"Resolutely Combatting Bourgeois Liberalization," *Beijing Review* 30, no. 3 (Jan. 19, 1987): 15.

of legitimacy among the masses. As Scalapino points out, only “nationalism and material gain” may provide the best hope for the regime in its efforts to bolster legitimacy.<sup>18</sup>

Although the developments in the Chinese economy in the post-Mao period defy simple description, it is plain that some of the reform measures, notably the household responsibility system in agriculture, the legalization of small-scale private enterprises, experiments in autonomous enterprise management, and the opening up of the Chinese economy to the outside world, have combined to inject much vitality into the economic arena, to raise expectations on the part of most Chinese citizens, and on balance, to help improve their standard of living.<sup>19</sup>

As the events of late 1986 and early 1987 have demonstrated, however, an outward-looking economic policy entails political costs that China's leadership finds unacceptable. Will the accelerated campaign to “combat bourgeois liberalization” succeed in attaining its ultimate goals—namely, stemming the influx of Western ideas, resisting the tide of rising expectations of citizens, and inducing not merely acquiescence in but also commitment to the regime? Experience suggests that although the campaign may generate short-term payoffs, its long-term efficacy is problematic. The pervasive feelings of cynicism, fueled by the negative socializing effects of the Cultural Revolution, are likely to linger on for a long time to come.

Notwithstanding the adoption of a hard-line policy in early 1987, the regime does not seem to have ruled out controlled political reform as a means of bolstering legitimacy. The relevant measures include the introduction of direct election of deputies up to the county level; the upgrading of the role of people's assemblies, including the NPC; the rejuvenation of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC); and emphasis on “socialist legality.”

Electoral law in effect in 1987 not only forbids the designation of candidates for people's assemblies at the district and county levels by the higher level but also provides that “the number of candidates must exceed the number of seats by 30 to 100 percent.”<sup>20</sup> Members of the NPC Standing Committee are said to be freer to articulate their views than ever before; they now conduct inspection tours individually rather than in groups; voting is no longer done “by a show of hands but by pressing a button”; drafts of bills “are repeatedly revised and improved on the basis of . . . discussion.” Although all this may still fall short of making the NPC “the organ of state power and legislative body in the real sense of the word,” Beijing's assertion that the NPC

<sup>18</sup>Scalapino, “Legitimacy and Institutionalization,” 70.

<sup>19</sup>To cite but one set of statistics, the production of selected consumer goods grew at a spectacular rate between 1978 and 1986: bicycles, from 8.5 million to 35.7 million; television sets, from 517,300 to 14.5 million; refrigerators, from 28,000 to 2.2 million; washing machines, from 400 to 9 million. *Renmin Ribau*, Overseas Ed., Apr. 12, 1987.

<sup>20</sup>“China Speeds Up Democratization,” *Beijing Review* 30, no. 16 (Apr. 20, 1987): 17.

can no longer be “mocked as a ‘rubber stamp’” does seem to have some empirical basis.<sup>21</sup>

The CPPCC, which served as a constituent assembly for the PRC as well as a symbol of Beijing’s united front policy in the early period but had been in a limbo in subsequent years, was rejuvenated in the post-Mao period. Its eight constituent parties have been encouraged to recruit new members, and its branches parallel people’s assemblies at the provincial and local levels; the congresses of the CPPCC are held concurrently with those of the people’s assemblies at the national, provincial, and local levels.<sup>22</sup> According to published reports, CPPCC meetings, too, have become livelier than before, and its members now “exercise their democratic supervisory function over the government’s work.” A large proportion of the recommendations submitted by CPPCC members to state organs are reportedly implemented.<sup>23</sup>

Emphasis on “socialist legality” in the post-Mao era reflects the determination of the new leaders, most of whom had been victimized by the breakdown of legality, to restore a semblance of an institutional framework for the administration of justice. This has entailed, in addition to the adoption of new constitutions for both the state and the party, the promulgation of a new criminal code, the resurrection of judicial institutions, and the training of legal workers. Judicial decision making is said to have become independent of political meddling by party cadres. Zheng Tianxiang, president of the Supreme People’s Court, reported to the fifth session of the Sixth NPC in April 1987 that although “the problems of regarding a leader’s words as law and using force to inhibit enforcement of the law” were “quite common in some places,” China’s courts were “handling cases according to law regardless of who the case involves.” He cited statistics regarding the punishment of leading cadres for economic and other crimes, referring to one case in which a deputy secretary of a county party committee was executed for corruption and taking bribes.<sup>24</sup>

In sum, although China has yet to attain the goal of making its “political structure operational in accordance with stipulated rules and procedures,” it has nonetheless made some progress in the post-Mao era. However, the personalization of rule at the top continues. Although, strictly speaking, he is

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 16–17.

<sup>22</sup>The fifth session of the Sixth CPPCC was held concurrently with the fifth session of the Sixth NPC, receiving prominent coverage in the overseas ed. of *Renmin Ribao*. The fourteenth session of the Standing Committee of the Sixth CPPCC received particular attention in the paper. See *Renmin Ribao*, Overseas Ed., Mar. 16–Apr. 12, 1987.

<sup>23</sup>Of the 1,800 proposals submitted by CPPCC members in a one-year period ending on Mar. 10, 1987, 1,769, or 98.3 percent, were reported to have been acted upon. Ibid., Mar. 18, 1987. *Beijing Review* cited as a prominent example the “Three Gorges Project on the Changjiang (Yangtze) River,” which was reportedly canceled in 1985 pursuant to a recommendation to that effect by a CPPCC inspection team (30, no. 16 [Apr. 20, 1987]: 18. The quotation in the text is *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Beijing Review* 30, no. 16 (Apr. 20, 1987): 19.

not the top party leader or the chief executive or even the chief of state, Deng Xiaoping has remained the paramount leader of China and may well continue to do so despite his recent retirement from all positions except the chairmanship of the Military Commission. Such a phenomenon is not duplicated in any other Leninist state.<sup>25</sup> This adds uncertainty to the succession situation. Whether the Deng Xiaoping succession will be conflict-free after Deng's death, and the post-Deng leadership will be able to depersonalize—or institutionalize—rule at the top, remains to be seen.

### North Korea

North Korea's chronological age, narrowly defined, is between those of Vietnam and China. When a broader definition is applied, however, it turns out to be the youngest. Although the Korean communist movement is almost as old as those of China and Vietnam, the regime that came into being in 1948 cannot legitimately trace its lineage to the mainstream of the communist movement. At best, it was an offshoot of the anti-Japanese guerrilla campaigns conducted by Kim Il Sung and his colleagues in Manchuria in the 1930s in affiliation with the Chinese communists; more realistically, it was a creature of the Soviet occupation authorities.<sup>26</sup> In short, unlike Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il Sung did not come to power as the result of a successful revolution.

If it is nonetheless remarkable that the regime has endured for nearly four decades, one needs to be reminded that North Korea, too, came perilously close to disintegration. Whereas the Chinese system ultimately overcame its most serious crisis on its own, the North Korean system was saved from extinction by an external power—ironically, China. Although the Chinese intervention in the Korean War, soon after the conclusion of its own civil war, did not stem from altruistic or ideological motives (such as “proletarian internationalism”) but from a coolheaded calculation of national self-interests,<sup>27</sup> it nonetheless accomplished the professed aim of “resisting America and aiding [North] Korea” in a tangible way.

Longevity, then, does not necessarily imply adaptability. The factional struggle that preceded Kim Il Sung's consolidation of power, although it occasionally entailed a bloodbath, pales in comparison to the Chinese

<sup>25</sup>Deng intimated in June 1987 that he might give up his membership in the Standing Committee of the CCP Politburo at the Thirteenth Party Congress scheduled for Oct. In a talk with Japanese visitors, Deng indicated that his personal wish to retire completely, however, would not be fulfilled “because many people would not support such a move.” In short, Deng would continue to rule China without occupying a key leadership position in the CCP. *Asahi shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., June 19, 1987.

<sup>26</sup>See Dae-Sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918–1948* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967); Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea: Pt. 1, The Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

<sup>27</sup>See Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1960).

Cultural Revolution. That Kim has emerged victorious is less a sign of systemic adaptability than a proof of his personal political prowess.

The amazing durability of Kim's rule signals North Korea's relative youth in "generational age." Alone among the three Asian communist states under consideration, North Korea has yet to accomplish political succession at the top. Equally unique is North Korea's methodical preparation for a dynastic succession. We shall return to this subject shortly.

However, the composition of the top elite in North Korea has not been stable. The turnover rate in the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) has averaged over 50 percent. Of the nineteen persons elected to the WPK Politburo at the Sixth Congress in October 1980, eleven were newcomers. Six were elected for the second time, albeit not necessarily consecutively. Only two—Kim Il Sung and Kim Il—had been members since the First Congress in August 1946.<sup>28</sup>

This suggests that generational change is under way. Significantly, it was at the Sixth WPK Congress that Kim Jong Il made an official debut as a de facto successor designate to his father; the elevation of many new members to the top organs of the party was clearly aimed at laying the groundwork for the anticipated succession at the summit. Even though nothing that is comparable to China's Third Echelon has yet emerged in North Korea, the existence of the Second Echelon is indisputable. It is noteworthy that the new elite includes the second generation of leadership in a literal sense—in addition to Kim Jong Il, Kang Sŏng-san and O Kŭk-nyŏl. Kang, who served as premier of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Administration Council from 1985 to 1986 and is a member of the WPK Politburo, is the son of the late General Kang Kŏn, a comrade of Kim Il Sung in the anti-Japanese guerrilla campaigns in Manchuria. Kang Kŏn served as chief of the general staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA) during the Korean War. General O Kŭk-nyŏl, who served as chief of the general staff of the KPA from 1979 to 1988, is the son of the late O Chung-hŭp, who was also Kim Il Sung's comrade in arms in Manchuria.<sup>29</sup>

In terms of "functional age," North Korea, too, has manifested a capacity for institutional adaptation. The most significant change has to do with the growing weight of state vis-à-vis party. Unlike China, however, what is occurring in North Korea is not so much a change in the role of an existing institution as the appearance of a new institution endowed with vast powers. Because it probably exemplifies functional innovation, this development has implications for stability of rules and predictability of political patterns as well.

<sup>28</sup>Dae-Sook Suh, *Korean Communism, 1945–1980: A Reference Guide to the Political System* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), 312, 340–41. Kim Il died in 1984.

<sup>29</sup>Dae-Sook Suh, "North Korea in 1985: A New Era after Forty Years," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 1 (Jan. 1986): 82. O was replaced by Ch'oe Kwang in February 1988; *North Korea News*, no. 413, Feb. 29, 1988.

On both counts, North Korea merits higher marks than China. The socialist Constitution of the DPRK, promulgated in December 1972, for example, was only the second state constitution; it is also the last. The 1972 DPRK Constitution, however introduced notable institutional changes. Most important, the office of the president (*chusŏk*) of the DPRK and the Central People's Committee (*chung'ang inmin wiwonhoe*) were created as entirely new state organs. In addition, the cabinet (*naegak*) was renamed the Administration Council (*chŏngmuwon*).<sup>30</sup>

The office of the president of the DPRK was tailor-made for Kim Il Sung, the only person who has occupied that office to date. It combines the powers of head of state, chief executive, supreme commander of the armed forces, and the head (*suwi*) of the Central People's Committee (CPC).

The CPC is declared to be "the highest leadership organ of state power" in the DPRK. It consists of the president and vice-presidents of the DPRK and the secretary and members of the CPC. Its powers encompass setting domestic and foreign policies; directing the work of the Administration Council and local people's assemblies, people's committees, judicial and procuratorial organs, and national defense and state security; serving as the guardian of the constitution, annulling the decisions and directives of state organs that contravene it; establishing or abolishing ministries and other organs of the Administration Council; appointing or removing vice-premiers, ministers, and other members of the Administration Council upon recommendation of the premier; appointing or recalling ambassadors and ministers; appointing or removing high-ranking military officers; issuing orders for mobilization in case of emergency; and proclaiming a state of war.

From the beginning, there has been a striking overlap between the WPK Politburo and the CPC in terms of membership. Of the fifteen members of the CPC in early 1987, for example, eleven were either full or candidate members of the Politburo; the remaining four were members of the WPK Central Committee.<sup>31</sup> The CPC has, in effect, become a functional equivalent of the

<sup>30</sup>For an English text of the 1972 state constitution, see Suh, *Korean Communism, 1945–1980*, 502–22; for the Korean-language text, see *Pukhan chŏnsŏ 1945–1980* (North Korean Handbook, 1945–80) (Seoul: Küktong Munje Yŏnguso, 1980), 788–94; for a North Korean exposition of the constitution, see "*Chosŏn Minjujuŭi Inmin Konghwaguk sabŏjuŭi hŏnpŏp*" *haesŏl* (Exposition of "the socialist constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea") (Pyongyang: Inmin Kwahaksa, 1973).

<sup>31</sup>Members of the CPC in Jan. 1987 were Kim Il Sung, O Chin-u, Pak Sŏng-ch'ŏl, Yim Ch'un-ch'u, Yi Chong-ok, Yi Kŭn-mo, Hong Sŏng-nam, So Yun-sŏk, Hyŏn Mu-gwang, Kang Hi-won, Cho Se-ŭng, Yun Ki-bok, Chi ch'ang-ik, Kim Pyŏng-yul, and Paek Pŏm-su. All but the last four are members of the WPK Politburo. Of the four, Yun Ki-bok, Kim Pyŏng-yul, and Paek Pŏm-su are full members of the WPK Central Committee, and Chi Ch'ang-ik is a candidate member. Chi, however, serves concurrently as the secretary of the CPC. Yun had been elected as candidate member of the Politburo at the Sixth WPK Congress in Oct. 1980 but was apparently demoted in early 1986. See *Vantage Point* (Seoul), 10, no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 16–17; *ibid.*, 9, no. 12 (Dec. 1986; special ed.): 15; Suh, *Korean Communism, 1945–1980*, 333–36.

Politburo in North Korea's state (or government) structure. Indicative of its pivotal role in policy-making is the emergence of a novel procedure—joint meetings of the Politburo and the CPC. This device, as Dae-Sook Suh has noted, enables those members of the Politburo who are not on the CPC to participate in the policy-making forum. Suh also points out that the frequency of the plenary meeting of the WPK Central Committee has “dwindled to once or twice a year, and the items discussed are routine matters.” In contrast, not only does the CPC meet frequently but also its agenda tends to be “important state business.”<sup>32</sup> However, as Scalapino points out, “the overlap in membership in the KWP Politburo and the CPC makes it very difficult to determine whether in fact the power of state organs has been strengthened in comparison with the party.”<sup>33</sup>

If the 1972 DPRK Constitution has thus provided an institutional basis for subtle change in the *modus operandi* of the North Korean political system, it has also served to bridge the gap between form and reality. As Chong-Sik Lee has noted, not only did the new constitution formalize the exalted status and awesome powers of Kim Il Sung but also it explicitly affirmed, for the first time in the state's basic charter, the “socialist” nature of the DPRK.<sup>34</sup>

As noted, the longevity of Kim Il Sung's rule has precluded the development of a regularized procedure for political succession at the top. However, the extraordinary care with which Kim Il Sung has been preparing for a smooth succession over the past fifteen years suggests that a procedure of sorts has emerged, if not for succession in general then at least for the Kim Il Sung succession. Even though it is the antithesis of institutionalization, what has happened thus far seems nonetheless noteworthy.

Just as Mao Zedong was unsure about his first choice of successor, so Kim Il Sung, too, seemed to have had second thoughts about his initial plan, which appeared to be the grooming of his younger brother, Yong Ju. After a meteoric rise in the WPK hierarchy in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, Yong Ju, who is ten years younger than Kim Il Sung, suddenly disappeared from public view. In September 1973, Jong Il, Kim Il Sung's eldest son by his first marriage (born in 1942), was reportedly appointed as a WPK secretary in charge of organization, propaganda, and agitation. Thus began Jong Il's apprenticeship, or probationary training, for the mantle of his father's leadership.<sup>35</sup>

Over the next seven years Jong Il was given abundant opportunities to test

<sup>32</sup>Dae-Sook Suh, “The Organization and Administration of North Korean Foreign Policy,” in Robert A. Scalapino and Hongkoo Lee, eds., *North Korea in a Regional and Global Context* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), 10.

<sup>33</sup>Robert A. Scalapino, letter to the author, July 24, 1987.

<sup>34</sup>Chong-Sik Lee, “The 1972 Constitution and Top Communist Leaders,” in Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee, eds. *Political Leadership in Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 192–95.

<sup>35</sup>For a detailed analysis, see B. C. Koh, “Political Succession in North Korea,” *Korea and World Affairs* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1984): 557–74.

his mettle, to familiarize himself with the workings of the North Korean system, to build up a record of accomplishments in various fields and to consolidate a power base of his own. Concurrently, a campaign was launched to educate both North Korean cadres and citizens about the emerging succession arrangements. By the fall of 1980 Jong Il had passed the test; Kim Il Sung must have concluded that Jong Il was indeed fit to be his successor and that sufficient groundwork had been laid for Jong Il's debut to the outside world.

The bestowal of triple crowns on Jong Il at the Sixth WPK Congress—the posts of the second-ranking secretary (outranked only by his father), the fourth-ranking member of the Politburo and its Presidium (outranked by his father and two old veterans of Kim Il Sung's anti-Japanese guerrilla campaigns), and the third-ranking member of the Military Commission—left little doubt that Jong Il was the successor designate, although it was not officially acknowledged. Of the two party elders besides his father who had technically outranked Jong Il, one (Kim Il) died in March 1984 and the other (O Chin-u) is two years older than Kim Il Sung. Since early 1984 the North Korean press has accorded Kim Jong Il precedence over O Chin-u.

If explanation is needed for the unprecedented succession arrangements in North Korea, it may be found in a juxtaposition of Rational Actor Model and the concept of "revolutionary immortality."<sup>36</sup> Kim Il Sung's craving for symbolic immortality may have been intensified by the high stakes—the preservation of myths and legends about his past that he has carefully nurtured over the years. If the perpetuation of the unparalleled cult of personality surrounding Kim Il Sung after his death is beyond reach, Kim seems nonetheless eager to avert the fate of other fallen tyrants such as Stalin. Nor does he relish the prospects of following in the footsteps of Mao Zedong.

Driven by a strong incentive to devise reliable succession arrangements, Kim Il Sung eventually opted for grooming his own son, who was not only of the right age (thirty years his junior) but also physically and mentally fit. This is an option that Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh lacked. Having eliminated all potential rivals through successive purges, Kim Il Sung probably did not fear any substantial opposition to his scheme. The only significant question that remained to be answered was whether Jong Il would be capable of meeting the challenge in intellectual ability, political acumen, and leadership traits. As mentioned above, after entrusting Jong Il with heavy responsibilities and closely monitoring his performance, Kim Il Sung seems to have satisfied himself that Jong Il would be a worthy successor.

Nevertheless, Kim Il Sung's assessment of his son's fitness to inherit his

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<sup>36</sup>For Rational Actor Model, see Graham T. Allison, *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); for the concept of revolutionary immortality, see Robert J. Lifton, *Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1968).

mantle of power may well turn out to be faulty. It is one thing for Jong Il to inspire awe and obedience from the North Korean people while riding the coattails of the Great Leader who is still very much alive, well, and symbolically omnipresent, but quite another to lead without the protective umbrella of his father's authority and charisma.

However, the longer Kim Il Sung lingers on, the sturdier the foundation of Jong Il's power. Jong Il can preside over the transfer of power from the old to the younger generation in all sectors of North Korean society. The Second Echelon that is already in place will be augmented by the Third Echelon. Simultaneously, Jong Il will continue to gain valuable experience in the exercise of power, becoming increasingly adept in steering the ship of the North Korean state. In sum, Kim Il Sung may have at least an even chance that his revolutionary legacy will be prolonged, if not perpetuated, after he passes from the scene. If it is, he will join that exclusive club of dead communist leaders who have thus far escaped denigration at the hands of their successors, which counts among its members Lenin, Tito, and Ho Chi Minh.

How is the succession process likely to affect the legitimacy of the North Korean political system? As far as internal legitimacy is concerned, the effect may well turn out to be negligible. To the extent that the North Korean people accept the legitimacy of Kim Il Sung's rule, they have little or no incentive to oppose his plan. After all, the plan would not materially change the manner in which the system operates. On the contrary, there is a distinct possibility that material inducements may increase because the regime's need to generate diffuse support among its populace will become more salient than in the past.

Adding urgency to Pyongyang's task of reinvigorating its sagging economy and improving the living standard of the North Korean people is the need to compete with, or at least not to be completely eclipsed by, the booming economy of its archrival in the south and the example of China. The Third Seven-Year Economic Development Plan approved by the second session of the Eighth Supreme People's Assembly in April 1987 places a major emphasis on the expansion of foreign trade and consumer goods industry. The plan envisages a 3.2-fold increase in foreign trade and a 1.8-fold increase in the production of consumer goods. Its targets in the output of grains, marine products, and textiles are 15 million metric tons, 11 million tons, and 1.5 billion meters, respectively.<sup>37</sup>

The linkage between legitimacy and material gain on the part of the populace is likely to be no less strong in North Korea than it is in China. Coercive power alone cannot sustain a regime indefinitely, and it is particularly deficient as means of ensuring a smooth transition in the political arena. Normative power, on which the North Korean system has relied to a greater extent than the Chinese and Vietnamese systems, may well have reached the

<sup>37</sup>*Asabi shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., Apr. 22, 1987.

point of diminishing returns. What remains, then, is “utilitarian power”—the use of material incentives.<sup>38</sup> However, the economic problems that have plagued North Korea in recent years appear to have been serious enough to undermine legitimacy. References to a “paradise on earth” in Pyongyang’s official rhetoric have been replaced by emphasis on the need to solve the problem of clothing, feeding, and housing the people. North Korea continues to encounter difficulty in servicing its trade debt, estimated to be in the range of \$2 billion. Most important, it delayed the launching of the third Seven-Year Plan for two full years.<sup>39</sup>

All this implies that the foremost challenge facing the North Korean leadership today is to ameliorate its economic situation. The idea of political reform, no matter how limited, seems all but irrelevant. There are no signs that the ritual of “elections” has been modified in any way: they are completely devoid of competition; officially nominated candidates equal the number of positions to be filled, and 100 percent of the eligible voters allegedly turn out to provide 100 percent support for the official slate.<sup>40</sup>

Nonetheless, the adoption of an increasingly outward-looking strategy toward economic development is bound to generate some political fallout. The harder North Korea tries to expand economic ties with the outside world, the more difficult it will be for the regime to insulate its citizens from “bourgeois” ideas.

In sum, the level of political institutionalization in North Korea remains as low as, if not lower than, that of its economic development. In some ways North Korea finds itself in a more precarious position than China.

## Vietnam

At first glance, the Vietnamese political system has manifested an extraordinary degree of adaptability. Because, like its counterpart in China, it can

<sup>38</sup>The typology of modes of control implicit in this discussion is based on Amitai Etzioni, *The Active Society: A Theory of Societal and Political Processes* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 365–66, and *Modern Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 59–61.

<sup>39</sup>Although tales of near starvation in North Korea that appear in the South Korean press, particularly after the arrival of defectors from the North, should be treated with a grain of salt, there is credible, albeit fragmentary, evidence that the food situation has noticeably deteriorated. One indicator is the proliferation of the slogan Let Us Conserve Foodstuff (*singnyang ul choryak haja*) in apartment buildings. While the generally Spartan conditions of North Korean life are readily visible to most visitors to North Korea, clues to the pervasiveness of problems, such as the above, are not easy to obtain. My impression is based on unpublished accounts of recent visitors who have had more access to the grass roots than is typically allowed outsiders. In Mar. 1987, North Korea owed various Japanese firms a total of 60 billion yen (approximately \$430 million) in unpaid bills. *Asahi shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., Mar. 19, 1987.

<sup>40</sup>See the report on the election of deputies to the Eighth Supreme People’s Assembly in *T’ongil sinbo* (Pyongyang), Nov. 8, 1986. The repetition of the perfect record—100-percent turnout and 100-percent support for official candidates—is said to have “demonstrated once again the unshakable political ideology and indomitable power of our people who are marching powerfully, completely united behind the Workers’ Party of Korea and the Great Leader.”

legitimately trace its lineage from the communist movement launched in the 1920s, its de facto chronological age rivals that of China.<sup>41</sup> If we equate the birth of Vietnam as an independent state with the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the heels of the August Revolution in 1945, Vietnam is officially the oldest of the three Asian communist states under study.<sup>42</sup>

What is more, Vietnam has fought two prolonged wars against formidable enemies, the second of which has culminated in national reunification, a feat that neither China nor North Korea has managed to duplicate. In view of this track record, Vietnam deserves high marks for having successfully weathered all the challenges. However, Vietnam's transition from a divided to a unified state has not been easy. To a striking extent, the full integration of the South and the North, hence a reunification in the true sense of the term, remains to be accomplished.

Vietnam may arguably be the most advanced of the three Asian communist states in terms of "generational age." Whereas China has experienced either one or two successions, depending on how one defines a succession, and North Korea has yet to experience a full-fledged succession, Vietnam has witnessed two or three: the Ho Chi Minh succession in September 1969, the Le Duan succession in July 1986, and the retirement of three top leaders during the Sixth Congress of the Vietnam Communist Party (VCP) in December 1986.

The Sixth VCP Congress clearly marked a watershed in the generational change in Vietnam's political leadership. In addition to the three veteran leaders—Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, and Le Duc Tho—3 other members of the Politburo were also replaced. Of the 14 members of the newly constituted Politburo (13 full members and 1 candidate member), 5 were new. No less important, about half of the new Central Committee, expanded from 151 to 173 members (including 49 candidate members), were new faces. To be sure, the new general secretary, Nguyen Van Linh (born in 1913), did not represent a new generation; nonetheless, he was six years younger than his predecessor, Truong Chinh, and was expected to serve as a bridge between the old guard and the younger generation.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>According to Douglas Pike, "Vietnamese communism was born, if so amorphous a development as a modern mass movement has a fixed time and place of birth, in Canton in 1925." See his book, *History of Vietnamese Communism, 1925–1976* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 1. Because it was not until 1930 that the Vietnam Communist Party was formally organized, however, the difference in the chronological age of the communist movements in China and Vietnam may increase by nine years. *Ibid.*, 10–13.

<sup>42</sup>William J. Duiker, *Vietnam: Nation in Revolution* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983), 39–40; see also the preamble of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in *FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service) Daily Report*, vol. 4, Asia and Pacific, Dec. 22, 1980, Vietnam, K 1.

<sup>43</sup>*Asabi shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., Dec. 18, 19, 1986.

As far as “functional age” is concerned, we encounter mixed indicators. On the one hand, the evidence is indisputable that the Vietnamese political system has failed to adapt smoothly to the dramatic change in its environment—the attainment of the long-sought goal of territorial reunification in 1975. As noted, not only has the task of fully integrating the two previously separated parts of Vietnam proved to be elusive but also economic and social conditions have deteriorated throughout the country. The responsibility for this state of affairs, according to Douglas Pike, lies with the leaders of Vietnam’s political institutions, who “display classic symptoms of neurosis: a paranoid world view, a low adaptability level, perfidy consistently perceived in the motives of others, merit found in the emotion of hate, a mystique of an omnipotent Party, and perpetuation of a cult-type leadership capable of believing the illogical, the irrational, even the absurd.”<sup>44</sup>

However, like their counterparts in China and North Korea, Vietnamese leaders have also displayed a capacity for institutional adaptation. They have created new institutions, and adjusted the functions of existing ones, as need arose. The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), adopted by the National Assembly in December 1980, for example, has indirectly upgraded the role of the National Assembly by creating a new structure within it: the Council of State (CS). The CS is both “the highest continuously functioning body of the National Assembly” and “the collective presidency” of the SRV. However, members of the CS, all of whom must be deputies of the National Assembly, are not equal; its chairman “commands the people’s armed forces of the whole country, and is concurrently the chairman of the National Defense Council.”<sup>45</sup>

The creation of the CS, which bears a striking resemblance to both the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the NPC Standing Committee of the PRC, in effect amounted to the institutionalization of “what has been the philosophic concept for the State since the death of Ho Chi Minh in 1969 and for the Party since its founding in 1930.”<sup>46</sup> One difference between the CS of Vietnam and the NPC Standing Committee of China is that unlike the latter, the former is constitutionally subordinate to the National Assembly. Article 100 of the SRV Constitution expressly provides that although the CS is empowered to create or dissolve ministries or state committees, to appoint or dismiss the vice-chairmen of the Council of Ministers, ministers, and heads of state committees, and to declare a state of war in the face of foreign aggression *when the National Assembly is not in session*, it is obligated to

<sup>44</sup>Douglas Pike, “Political Institutionalization in Vietnam,” in Scalapino et al., *Asian Political Institutionalization*, 43.

<sup>45</sup>See Chap. 7 (Arts. 98–103) of the SRV Constitution in *FBIS Daily Report, Asia and Pacific*, Dec. 22, 1980, Vietnam, K 18–20.

<sup>46</sup>Douglas Pike, “Vietnam in 1981: Biting the Bullet,” *Asian Survey* 22, no. 1 (Jan. 1982): 70.

submit all of these decisions to the next session of the National Assembly for ratification.<sup>47</sup>

In efforts to deal with the problems of integrating the South into the socialist framework, Hanoi has experimented with new structures that embody the principle of joint party-state control—for example, the Private Capitalist Industry and Commerce Reform Department and the Committee on the Reform of Agriculture in the Southern Provinces; these structures come under the joint supervision of the VCP Central Committee and the Council of Ministers. The Committee on the Reform of Agriculture has a “unified chain of command’ from top to bottom (district level).”<sup>48</sup>

One notable, though not entirely original, aspect of the institutional arrangements in Vietnam is the role of mass organizations. Article 9 of the SRV Constitution describes the Vietnam Fatherland Front as “a firm prop of the state,” spelling out its multiple functions—promoting national unity, “tak[ing] part in building and consolidating the people’s power,” serving as an agent of political socialization, et cetera. Article 10 stipulates that the Vietnam Confederation of Trade Unions “takes part in state affairs and supervises the work of state bodies.” Article 86 empowers both of these mass organizations and others—such as the Vietnamese Association of Collective Peasants, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, and the Vietnam Women’s Union—to “submit draft laws to the National Assembly.” Finally, Article 106 accords the president of the Vietnam Confederation of Trade Unions “the right to attend meetings of the Council of Ministers” and provides that “the president of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and leading representatives of mass organizations affiliated [with] the Front may be invited to attend meetings of the Council of Ministers, when necessary.”<sup>49</sup>

Such an institutionalization of the political role of mass organizations in a state constitution is not duplicated in either China or North Korea, notwithstanding the de facto salience of mass organizations in their systems. The state constitutions of these countries make clear that deputies of their national legislatures have the exclusive right to submit bills. However, the Soviet Constitution of 1977, after which the SRV Constitution is believed to have been modeled, does provide for legislative initiative by mass organizations.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup>Art. 100 of the SRV Constitution in *FBIS Daily Report*, Asia and Pacific, Dec. 22, 1980, Vietnam, K 19. Emphasis added.

<sup>48</sup>David W. P. Elliott, “Institutionalizing the Revolution: Vietnam’s Search for a Model of Development,” in William S. Turley, ed., *Vietnamese Communism in Comparative Perspective* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), 211–12.

<sup>49</sup>*FBIS Daily Report*, Asia and Pacific, Dec. 22, 1980, Vietnam, K 4, 16, and 20.

<sup>50</sup>Robert Sharlet, “The New Soviet Constitution,” *Problems of Communism* 26 (Sept.–Oct. 1977): 7. For a view that underscores the resemblance between the 1980 SRV Constitution and the 1977 Soviet Constitution, see Nguyen Van Canh, *Vietnam under Communism, 1975–1982* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), 50–52.

According to Scalapino, the degree to which Vietnam has formalized the role of mass organizations “testifies to the heavy reliance on [united front] tactics [using mass organizations] throughout the VWP’s [Vietnam Workers’ Party], history—as a means not only of rallying support within Vietnam, but also of appealing to the French and Americans on the international front.”<sup>51</sup>

For a regime that has endured for so long and overcome much adversity, Vietnam displays a remarkable durability of basic rules and an amazing stability of political patterns. It has had only three state constitutions, which places Vietnam in the middle of the three Asian communist states in terms of the frequency of fundamental constitutional change. In one key respect, however, Vietnam has clearly outperformed the other two: orderly succession at the top.

The smoothness with which the Ho Chi Minh succession was accomplished owed primarily to the institutionalization of collective leadership under Ho’s long tutelage.<sup>52</sup> Le Duan, who succeeded Ho as *primus inter pares* upon the latter’s death in 1969, had, moreover, been groomed by Ho for that role. After being “chosen by Ho to assist him in the daily task of conducting the Party’s affairs” in the fall of 1956, Le Duan in effect became “Ho’s righthand man, . . . the acting Secretary-General of the Lao Dong.”<sup>53</sup>

When Le Duan died at the age of seventy-nine in July 1986, what ensued was not a real succession but a transitional arrangement. Truong Chinh, chairman of the Council of State, who succeeded Duan as general secretary of the VCP, was also seventy-nine. Along with two other surviving members of the “inner circle of five”—namely, Le Duc Tho and Pham Van Dong—Chinh was expected to step down at the Sixth Party Congress.<sup>54</sup> As we have seen, that is precisely what happened in December 1986. Two of the three retiring members of the Politburo, however, retained their positions in the state structure; Chinh continued to serve as the chairman of the Council of State, and Dong remained as the chairman of the Council of Ministers (premier) until June 1987, when they were replaced by Vo Chi Cong (seventy-three) and Pham Hung (seventy-five), respectively.<sup>55</sup>

That these top-level personnel changes have occurred without precipitating any major political crisis reflects another remarkable aspect of Vietnamese politics. As several observers have noted, Vietnam may be the only com-

<sup>51</sup>Scalapino, letter to the author.

<sup>52</sup>Pike, “Political Institutionalization in Vietnam,” 48.

<sup>53</sup>Thai Quang Trung, *Collective Leadership and Factionalism: An Essay on Ho Chi Minh’s Legacy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), 29. Hoang Van Hoan, a VCP Politburo member who defected to China in 1979, accused Le Duan of “steadily building up his faction” and dominating decision making. Scalapino, letter to the author.

<sup>54</sup>John H. Esterline, “Vietnam in 1986: An Uncertain Tiger,” *Asian Survey* 27, no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 102; *Asabi shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., July 11, 1986.

<sup>55</sup>*New York Times*, June 19, 1986; *Asabi shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., July 7, 1987.

munist country that has not experienced a full-scale purge. Not only has “suppression of internal debate . . . not been followed by spectacular purges”<sup>56</sup> but also party leaders who commit errors are more likely to be demoted than to be expelled from the party. Some of those have later been “rehabilitated”; two examples are Truong Chinh and Nguyen Van Linh, the man who succeeded Chinh as general secretary of the VCP in December 1986.

The institutionalization of collective leadership, to which reference was made earlier, does not mean the absence of factionalism. In Pike’s words: “The subordination of ego that is demanded leads to tension and generates a need for self-assertion that perpetually threatens to confront the idea of consensus. The outlet for this is factionalism, the one form of political competition permitted under the politics of collective rule.”<sup>57</sup> Another scholar, Thai Quang Trung, goes so far as to argue that collective leadership has been seriously eroded, even replaced, by factionalism. In his view what has been institutionalized is not collective leadership but factionalism.<sup>58</sup> As noted, Le Duan has been accused by his former colleague in the Politburo Hoang Van Hoan of having contributed to this tendency.

If, as noted previously, legitimacy is to a large extent a function of policy outputs, Vietnam is confronted with a crisis of legitimacy. The abysmal state of the Vietnamese economy, the hardship and suffering to which Vietnamese citizens are subjected daily, the corruption, inefficiency, and incompetence of party and state cadres, and the apathy, cynicism, and alienation of the Vietnamese people—all these problems have not only been noted by visitors to that country but also acknowledged by Vietnamese leaders with singular candor.<sup>59</sup>

The political report of the Central Committee to the Sixth VCP Congress held in December 1986 summed up the situation in these words:

The life of the people . . . is beset with many difficulties. A great number of working people are unemployed or are not fully employed. Many basic legitimate material and cultural necessities of life of the people are not met. There is a shortage of common consumer goods and medicines in the rural areas. Housing, hygienic conditions, and cultural life in some areas are still poor.

Negative phenomena in society have increased. Social justice has been violated. Law and discipline are not strictly observed. Abuse of power and

<sup>56</sup>Georges Boudarel, “Influences and Idiosyncrasies in the Line and Practice of the Vietnam Communist Party,” in Turley, *Vietnamese Communism in Comparative Perspective*, 138.

<sup>57</sup>Pike, “Political Institutionalization in Vietnam,” 48.

<sup>58</sup>Thai Quang Trung, *Collective Leadership and Factionalism*, 27–40, 79–95.

<sup>59</sup>An example of visitors’ accounts that reveal these problems is the five-part series on Vietnam in *Asabi shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., Feb. 13–17, 1987, and a concluding pictorial essay, Mar. 3, 1987.

corruption by a number of state cadres and employees and the activities of persons engaged in illegal business have not yet been severely punished in time.

The aforementioned state of affairs has lessened the confidence of the masses in the party leadership and the functioning of state organs. Generally speaking, we have not yet achieved the objective set by the fifth party congress, namely, stabilizing in the main the socioeconomic situation and the people's life.<sup>60</sup>

The Central Committee placed a lion's share of the blame for these problems on "the mistakes and shortcomings in the activities of the party and state," which included "wishful thinking and hastiness," failure to "select appropriate forms of organization," "bureaucratic centralism," "slackening of discipline, and failure to seriously implement the party lines and principles." Saying that "the state apparatus and those of the party and mass organizations were left to grow too big, overlapping, and dispersed," the Central Committee conceded that the primary responsibility for the errors rests with itself, the Politburo, the Secretariat, and the Council of Ministers. It stressed that "the delay in correctly effecting a transition in the nucleus of leadership was a direct cause for the inadequacy of party leadership in recent years."<sup>61</sup> Although a rectification of these mistakes, to which leadership change implemented by the Sixth Congress was intended to contribute, would require both an imaginative approach and herculean efforts, what the Central Committee offered was nothing new: "consolidate the relationship between the party and the people"; "conduct a constant struggle to prevent and overcome bureaucratism"; "always proceed from reality and observe and act upon objective laws"; "effect a change in concepts and renovation in thinking"; and the like.

To the extent that political participation can reduce a sense of alienation on the part of the citizenry, there appeared to be a slight improvement in the situation. National Assembly elections in Vietnam have always allowed some choice to the voters; the number of candidates has exceeded the number of seats to be filled. In this respect, Vietnam has been more advanced than both China, which has only recently begun to offer limited choice to its electors in local elections, and North Korea, which has yet to introduce any change in its orthodox electoral system.

In the National Assembly election held in April 1987, however, Vietnamese voters had more choice than they ever had before. The number of candidates increased sharply: 828 candidates for 496 seats (as opposed to 613 candidates for 538 seats in the April 1981 election). This meant that choice was available in all of the 167 election districts throughout the country. Moreover, latitude was allowed in the selection of candidates in the first place; at least one

<sup>60</sup>*FBIS Daily Report*, Asia and Pacific, Dec. 17, 1986, Vietnam, K 4.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, K 4-9.

province was reported to have relied on secret balloting in candidate selection.<sup>62</sup> What needs to be stressed, however, is that “all candidates are screened by the party. Thus, the perimeters of real choice may be more limited than it appears.”<sup>63</sup>

In sum, although Vietnam, too, faces the unfinished task of making its political structure fully operational in accordance with stipulated rules and procedures, in some respects its track record compares favorably with, or even surpasses, those of China and North Korea.

## Conclusion

The lowest common denominator of the three Asian communist states is a constellation of political structures that has become the hallmark of communist systems everywhere: the omnipotent Communist Party, a state bureaucracy that is theoretically subservient to the party but nonetheless wields formidable power, politicized and powerful armed forces, and mass organizations encompassing virtually the entire populace.

“Democratic centralism” is translated in practice into elite control of the rank and file, both in the Communist Party and in the society at large. Overlap in membership among the key institutions, notably between the party on the one hand and the state bureaucracy and the armed forces on the other, both facilitates party control of the other two institutions and impedes the putative goal of separating spheres of responsibility.

Measured against the criteria of institutionalization, however, the three Asian communist states display both parallels and dissimilarities. In general, their level of institutionalization is low, which means that all three have experienced, and are likely to experience, difficulties in adapting to the changing environment.

One trend in China and North Korea is the growth in the power of the state vis-à-vis the party. This is manifested in the ascendancy of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress in China and of the Central People’s Committee in North Korea. In neither country, however, does the state eclipse the party. As noted above, overlap in the personnel of leading state and party organs serves to dilute the significance of the phenomenon somewhat.

None of the three countries has succeeded in regularizing the process of political succession, but Vietnam seems to have made more progress than either China or North Korea. Vietnam has not only had somewhat more experience in political succession than China but also has managed the process with a minimum of conflict, let alone trauma. The transfer of power in China has generated much turmoil, but China is probably ahead of North Korea, where the outcome of the first incipient succession is still uncertain.

<sup>62</sup>*Asabi shimbun*, International Satellite Ed., Apr. 19, 20, 1987; *New York Times*, Apr. 19, 20, 1987.

<sup>63</sup>Scalapino, letter to the author.

Jurgen Domes has posited that political development may occur in three stages: (1) charismatic rule, (2) transitional rule, and (3) institutionalized rule.<sup>64</sup> As Scalapino points out, however, "a progression from charismatic to institutionalized rule will [not] be easy or 'pure.' . . . Charisma and institutionalization may go together—or be in some degree compatible, the latter restricting but not wholly controlling the former."<sup>65</sup> With these caveats in mind, then, we can say that North Korea remains in the stage of charismatic rule while both China and Vietnam may be in the midst of transitional rule in which the role of charisma is being gradually deemphasized. However, Vietnam may be ahead of China; it may even be argued that Vietnam has come close to the threshold of institutionalized rule.

As far as policy outputs are concerned, China may well be the most advanced of the three. It has witnessed the most dramatic change in its economic situation, and both the aggregate outputs of industrial and agricultural goods and the people's living standard have improved appreciably. Although both North Korea and Vietnam are experiencing difficulties in the economic arena, the situation in the former is incomparably better than that in the latter. However, whatever gains China may have made in the political arena—in loosening up controls and allowing a measure of openness—are in danger of dissipation as the regime continues to implement its new hard-line policy. Whether the apparent attempt by the Vietnamese leadership to enlarge the scope of citizen participation in its political process, as reflected in the National Assembly election of April 1987, can compensate for the continuing economic hardship of its populace is problematic. Meanwhile, there are no signs that North Korea has taken even symbolic steps toward political liberalization, even though it has been moving slowly but surely in the direction of more openness in economic policy. All this implies that a crisis of legitimacy will most probably persist in all three countries.

Also common to all three communist states is the bureaucracy problem. Although efforts are under way to solve it, the Chinese bureaucracy continues to be bedeviled by overstaffing, "one high and one low"—that is, the high average age of cadres and their low level of education.<sup>66</sup> Vietnam has the same set of problems for much the same reasons: the need to reward veterans of revolutionary struggle, their predominantly rural background and consequent lack of education of these veterans, and the difficulty of removing older cadres who have outlived their usefulness. In addition, the Vietnamese penchant for organizational solutions may have contributed to the prolifera-

<sup>64</sup>Jurgen Domes, *The Government and Politics of the PRC: A Time of Transition* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), 249–53.

<sup>65</sup>Scalapino, letter to the author.

<sup>66</sup>Hong Yung Lee, "Deng Xiaoping's Reform of the Chinese Bureaucracy," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 1, no. 2 (June 1982): 21–25.

tion of bureaucracy in Vietnam. A commitment to “rational-bureaucratic” organizations on the part of the Vietnamese leadership,<sup>67</sup> however, appears to have aggravated, rather than alleviated, the bureaucracy problem. The current leadership in Hanoi is trying to solve it. Although the situation in North Korea is not crystal clear, one gets the impression that “one high and one low,” if it exists, may not be as serious there.

In the degree to which power is centralized, North Korea and China may lie at opposite poles; that is to say, North Korea is most centralized, China most decentralized. The size of the two countries goes a long way toward explaining the difference, as does the legacy of regionalism in China. Experiments in decentralization, such as the household responsibility system in agriculture and the director responsibility system in state enterprises, have not been duplicated in North Korea. Vietnam seems to lie midway between the two. Vietnam’s “product contract system” in agriculture seems all but indistinguishable from China’s household responsibility system.<sup>68</sup> However, the VCP Central Committee’s “recent decision to encourage decentralization and remove the dead hand of the central bureaucracy on the economic sector”<sup>69</sup> remains to be implemented.

In short, each of the three countries has outperformed the other two in at least one area. China has done the most in the realm of economic reform and, notwithstanding the recent retrogression, in political openness as well. North Korea has displayed the highest degree of stability in basic rules and political patterns, although it has yet to pass the crucial test of political succession. Vietnam has made the most headway in routinizing political succession; yet it is facing an economic crisis that continues to erode the already shaky foundation of political legitimacy. All three countries face a long and uncertain journey to reach the destination that has thus far eluded them— institutionalizing their revolutions.

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<sup>67</sup>Elliott, “Institutionalizing the Revolution,” 209.

<sup>68</sup>William J. Duiker, “Vietnam in 1985: Searching for Solutions,” *Asian Survey* 26, no. 1 (Jan. 1986): 109.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 108.

## 4. Political Institutions in Asian Communist Societies: China and North Korea

CHONGWOOK CHUNG

An analysis of political institutions may take various forms. It may emphasize the importance of participation as political institutions are conceived as channels through which citizens participate in politics. The main concern here is the efficacy of the institutions in accommodating popular demand for participation. As Huntington theorized, political stability is assumed to be dependent on how the participatory demand is met by the established political institutions.<sup>1</sup> Another way of looking into political institutions is in terms of legitimacy. As Scalapino pointed out, coercion, although useful in establishing the perimeters of permissible behavior for the citizenry, is increasingly inefficient and costly as a method of governance, especially in an era when homage is paid to democracy.<sup>2</sup> What is required of political institutions is popular acceptance of them, which in return requires that rules and procedures stipulated for institutions be legitimate. Also important for legitimacy are adaptability and flexibility; those institutions that have displayed a significant degree of adaptability and flexibility in the face of changing environments may acquire legitimacy over time.

A simpler way of examining political institutions from a comparative perspective is to analyze the pattern of how power and authority are distributed among various political institutions; this is the approach this study will adopt. Power sharing between party and state, as well as within the state, takes on a unique dimension in the communist system because of the dominant role played by the party. The party that follows the Leninist tradition justifies its predominance in the power structure by claiming to be the party of the vanguard class. All other political institutions are relegated to a secondary position; they are mere assistants to the party that exercises the dictatorship on behalf of the proletariat.

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), 12–17.

<sup>2</sup>Robert A. Scalapino et al., eds., *Asian Political Institutionalization* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986).

What makes the implementation of this concept complicated is the changing nature of political functions as the Leninist society evolves. As functions change, suitable adjustments have to occur in political institutions. The experiences of the communist system so far have demonstrated that these changes are generally in the direction of increasing separation of the powers of party and state and expansion of the autonomy granted to various other political institutions. Although homage is still paid to the ideal of the dictatorship of the party, power and authority are progressively decentralized, with the result that the party confronts constant challenges to its omnipotency. How these changes are accommodated in reality by governmental and party structures is a matter of great importance in the comparative study of political institutions.

### **China**

A new state constitution was adopted at a plenary session of the Fifth National People's Assembly (NPA) in December 1982. Before its formal adoption, a draft was widely circulated throughout the country, from April of the same year, invoking the participation of, and debate by, scholars, professional legalists, and party and state cadres. Compared to its three predecessors of 1954, 1975, and 1978, the 1982 constitution in some significant aspects resembles that of 1954 and differs from the other two. Hu Sheng, a deputy secretary-general of the Committee for Revision of the Constitution, described the new constitution as "the second constitution" of the People's Republic of China, the first one being the 1954 constitution.

The constitutions of 1975 and 1978 reflected the unique and tortuous developments that the political system of China had to undergo between 1954 and 1982. The 1975 constitution, first drafted in 1970 and formally promulgated five years later, was primarily designed to accommodate changes in the political structure brought about by the Cultural Revolution and, in a more special sense, by the fall of Lin Biao. The most significant changes included the creation of the revolutionary committees as the core administrative organs at various levels of the state structure. The 1978 constitution followed a series of events that rapidly evolved after the death of Mao Zedong, including the purge of the Gang of Four and the elevation of Hua Guofeng to top leadership positions. With the fall of Hua and his followers and the coming to power of a pragmatic group headed by Deng Xiaoping, the need for a new constitution arose.

At the level of formal structure, a striking resemblance between the 1954 constitution and the 1982 constitution is found in the state chairmanship. The state chairman represents the highest state authority separate from that of the party. Mao himself had occupied that position from the day it was created until 1959, when he relinquished it to Liu Shaochi in the wake of the Great Leap Forward disaster. Understandably, when Liu was purged in the early

stage of the Cultural Revolution, the position of state chairman virtually disappeared as a political institution, and the constitutions of 1975 and 1978 had no provisions for it. Perhaps Mao, who was the chairman of the party, did not want the creation of any political institution in the state sector from which his authority might be challenged.

The restoration of the state chairmanship in the new constitution, along with the abolition of the party chairmanship in the new party constitution also adopted in 1982, probably reveals the preference of the current Chinese leadership for separation of the powers of party and state. No doubt the state chairman is essentially a figurehead, performing ceremonial functions. His authority as the head of state derives from the National People's Congress (NPC), to which he is made accountable, and which as the highest organ of state power, appoints or dismisses him. The state chairman under the 1982 constitution does not have such institutional supporting bodies as the National Defense Council and the Supreme State Conference, which the 1954 constitution provided for its state chairman. Mao Zedong, as state chairman, made frequent use of the Supreme State Conference as a channel to influence the work of the various branches of government and to mold public opinion. The most noted example of this was a session of the conference on February 27, 1957, when Mao made the famous speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People."<sup>3</sup>

Despite the largely symbolic nature of the position, the state chairman under the new constitution is equipped with an impressive array of powers. Elected by the NPC to a five-year term, he promulgates laws and decisions made by the NPC and its standing committee. He also appoints and removes the premier and other members of the State Council, confers medals and honors, proclaims martial law, and declares a state of war and military mobilization. Furthermore, as the head of state, he carries out diplomatic functions, including the reception of diplomatic envoys, the dispatch and removal of plenipotentiary representatives, and the ratification and abrogation of treaties and agreements with foreign countries.

Of course, this is not to argue that the state chairman under the present constitution wields enough political power to ensure even a rough balance of power between party and state. The People's Republic of China, the constitution stipulates, is a socialist state under people's democratic dictatorship. The party constitution, in turn, declares that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the vanguard of China's working class and the leading core in implementing socialism in China. In other words, the CCP is the organizational weapon with

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<sup>3</sup>For discussions of the 1982 constitution, see Lowell Dittmer, "The Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of China," *China Quarterly*, no. 93 (Mar. 1983): 108–24; Byron Weng, "Some Key Aspects of the 1982 Draft Constitution of the People's Republic of China," *ibid.*, no. 91 (Sept. 1982): 492–506. Also, for discussions on the 1954, 1975, and 1978 constitutions, see Jerome Cohen, "China's Changing Constitutions," *ibid.*, no. 76.

which the dictatorship of the proletarian class is exercised throughout the society, including the state sector. This places the CCP above and beyond all other political institutions in China.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the party leadership intends to emphasize the importance of differentiation between the functions of party and state rather than fusion of the two. Hu Yaobang, for instance, in his report to the Twelfth Party Congress in September 1982, made clear that the party is not “an organ of power which issues orders to the people.” Issuing orders is the state responsibility. “The party should of course exercise leadership,” he continued, “but party leadership is mainly political and ideological leadership in matters of principle and policy.” Party leadership should not be equated with administrative work.<sup>4</sup> Hu also stressed that the party should act within the limits defined by the constitution and law. The party is part of the people, he stated, and activities of party organs, from the center down to the basic level, should not violate the constitution and law.

Deng Xiaoping made a similar point when he spoke on the leadership structure of the party and the state at an enlarged Politburo meeting in August 1980. In that speech, which is believed to have laid down important elements of institutional reform just about to start, Deng specifically said that the State Council and local people’s governments below the central level should make decisions and announce them without obtaining orders from the party center and local party committees, as long as those decisions were concerned with their own work and within the law.<sup>5</sup> In short, the restoration of the state chairmanship in the 1982 constitution was a small, yet symbolically significant measure in the movement toward functional separation of the powers of party and state.

Reinforcing this movement was the increase in the power invested in the National People’s Congress and its standing committee. NPC supremacy is manifest in the organization of the central government apparatus: the state chairman, the State Council, the Central Military Council, the Supreme People’s Court, and the Supreme People’s Procuratorate. These organs are all responsible to the NPC and subject to its supervision. The NPC and its standing committee are provided with the power to appoint the commissions of inquiry, to protect deputies against arrest or trial, and to decide on military mobilization and martial law. All these powers were stipulated in the 1954 constitution, but absent in the 1975 and 1978 constitutions.

Under the new constitution, the NPC standing committee acquired some real power in lawmaking and will probably function more as a legislative body should. According to Peng Zhen, who made the report on the draft constitu-

<sup>4</sup>FBIS (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*), 1, no. 174 (Sept. 8, 1982): K 3–12.

<sup>5</sup>*Deng Xiaoping Wenxian* (Selected works of Deng Xiaoping) (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1983), 280–302.

tion to the NPC plenum, "some of the functions and powers which originally belonged to the NPC are now delegated to its standing committee." Peng added:

The functions and powers of the standing committee have been expanded, and the committee has been strengthened organizationally. Both the NPC and its standing committee exercise the legislative power of the state: while the basic statutes are enacted by the former, other statutes are enacted by the latter.<sup>6</sup>

Specifically, the powers of the NPC standing committee have been expanded in several ways: (1) it is to supervise the enforcement of the constitution, a task formerly reserved only for the NPC; (2) it can enact and amend not only decrees but also laws, excepting those to be enacted by the NPC, that is, "basic laws concerning criminal offences, civil affairs, the structure of the state and other matters";<sup>7</sup> and (3) when the NPC is not in session, it can also partially amend and supplement the basic laws enacted by the NPC and approve necessary adjustments to development plans and to the state budget. The unwieldy size of about three thousand deputies and the infrequency of its meeting once a year has rendered the NPC quite an ineffective institution to carry on the constitutional powers entrusted in it. Hence, its standing committee, whose members are now prohibited from holding concurrent positions in the administrative, judiciary, and procuratorial organs of the state, has to carry out functions and powers given to the NPC.

One of the primary roles of the NPC has been to enhance the legitimacy of the People's Republic, and its achievements on this score should not be underestimated. Yet one can take a skeptical attitude toward the degree to which the NPC has exercised genuine powers as a legislative branch. Mao made the decision to launch the Cultural Revolution without bothering to go through the legal formality of convening either an NPC session or a meeting of its standing committee.

Now, the trend seems to be that the NPC and its standing committee may be expected to go beyond merely providing legitimacy for the party's dictatorial rule. Although the Western ideal of checks and balances among different branches of government is, and will continue to be, an alien concept in Chinese political institutions, there are plenty of reasons to believe that efforts will be made to make the state sector less dominated by the party and to increase the autonomy of the former. The Four Modernizations program, among others, requires separation of the powers of state and party. As the experiences of other communist countries demonstrate, the party dominance over the state may have positive effects in the socialist transformation

<sup>6</sup>*Beijing Review* 25, no. 19 (May 10, 1982): 25.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

period and in the early phase of socialist construction, but as the extensive mobilization period comes to an end and the start of a new stage of economic growth based on intensive use of resources, human and material, gives a premium to functional specificity, the party has to be less omnipotent.

In a way, Mao's death removed one of the most formidable obstacles to political institutionalization. Mao's reluctance and ambivalence about regularized, predictable procedures of operation forced him to claim, at least occasionally, that he, not the NPC or even the party, represented the will of the populace. Mao could do this because of his enormous charismatic appeal in Chinese society. Only Mao could substitute, in certain degree, his own personal rule for political institutionalization. This is why the post-Mao leadership in Beijing has taken the form of collective leadership. Prior to the Thirteenth Party Congress, the legislative branch was headed by Peng Zhen, the executive branch by Zhao Ziyang, and the party by Hu Yaobang; since his resignation in January 1987 from the post of general-secretary, Deng himself has played a key role assisted by Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili, among others.

Another development in China's political institutions is the creation of the Secretariat, the Central Advisory Committee, and the Central Discipline Inspection Committee. The Secretariat is designed to take charge of the daily administration of party work, the implementation of decisions made by the Politburo, its standing committee, and the Central Committee. The general-secretary supervises the activities of the Secretariat while he simply "bears the responsibility of calling the Politburo and its standing committee into session."<sup>8</sup> There is no longer a party chairman. The Central Advisory Committee offers advice and makes suggestions to the Central Committee; the Central Discipline Inspection Committee is a watchdog organ upholding discipline among the party members. These, and other, institutional changes are intended to strengthen the division of labor and the decentralization of power within the Chinese power structure.

One ultimate test facing Chinese political institutions is whether they can survive the generational change in leadership. Deng, the primary architect of the present political institutions, is in his mid-eighties and has not formally retired. His retirement will signal the end of an era in which the first generation leaders with strong revolutionary credentials have occupied important positions of power. Deng has made enormous efforts to prepare for the generational change. The formation of the Central Advisory Committee, for instance, was designed to provide a smooth transition of power from a generation of old revolutionaries to a new generation of young and better-educated leaders many of whom have functionally specific expertise. Whether the present political structure is capable of coping with this crucial test, however, remains a key concern relevant to the near future.

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<sup>8</sup>Dittmer, "Twelfth Congress."

## North Korea

North Korea's current state constitution was adopted in December 1972 at the Fifth Supreme People's Assembly (SPA). It was the second state constitution for North Korea. The first was adopted on September 8, 1948, at the first SPA. That the first constitution was patterned after the 1936 Stalin constitution is understandable in view of the circumstances under which the communists came to power in the northern half of the Korean peninsula. The North Korean regime was formed not through an essentially domestic and national revolution but by the Soviet occupation forces. The second constitution differed from the first, reflecting the changes that had occurred during the twenty-four years of the first constitution's span of operation.

In the new constitution, which was claimed to have been "conceived and authored in person" by Kim Il Sung,<sup>9</sup> drastic changes were effected in political institutions, and in the administrative organs of the state in particular. The administrative restructuring of the state institutions looks similar to that of the People's Republic of China. The Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), as the NPC of China, is defined as the highest organ of state power, exercising exclusive legislative power. Specifically, it has the authority to (1) adopt or amend the constitution, laws, and ordinances; (2) establish the basic principles of domestic and foreign policies of the state; (3) elect the president of the republic; (4) elect or recall, on the recommendation of the president, such officials as the vice-presidents and the secretary and members of the Central People's Committee, the premier of the Administration Council, the vice-chairman of the National Defense Commission, and the president of the Central Court; (5) approve the nation's economic development plan and the state budget, and (6) decide on the questions of war and peace. Also, the standing committee of the SPA is described, as China's NPC standing committee is, as the SPA's permanent body, examining and deciding on bills and amending and interpreting laws and ordinances in the intervals between sessions of the SPA, which meets once or twice a year. Furthermore, the 1972 document of North Korea has a provision for the office of the president of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), who is the head of state and represents state authority—which bears a striking resemblance to China's new state chairman.

Yet, on close examination, the governmental structure in North Korea turns out to be drastically different from the Chinese structure in its basic conception and in the way in which power is distributed between the legislative and the executive branches of the government, as well as within the executive organs.

First, the president of the DPRK is completely different from the state

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<sup>9</sup>Se-jin Kim and Chang-hyun cho, eds., *Korea: A Divided Nation* (Silver Springs, Md.: Research Institute on Korean Affairs, 1976), 41–45.

chairman of the PRC.<sup>10</sup> He is not only the head of state but also the supreme commander of all the armed forces of the state and the chairman of the National Defense Commission. The Chinese constitution does not provide its state chairman with the authority to command the armed forces. That authority belongs to the chairman of the Central Military Council, a new body created within the state sector.

Also, China's state chairman is prohibited from holding the position for more than two terms, whereas the North Korean president is under no such prohibition. Furthermore, the Chinese constitution has a provision for succession by the state vice-chairman to the chairmanship in case of vacancy. In contrast, the vice-president of the DPRK is a mere assistant to the president, and there is no stipulation for succession.

These differences lead one to conclude that the DPRK's presidency is tailor-made for a particular person, namely, Kim Il Sung, who can be a lifelong president. He is the only president the DPRK has had since the office was established in 1972.

A second important difference between North Korea's governmental restructuring and that of China is found in the existence of the Central People's Committee. Defined as the highest leadership organ of state power, the committee has a wide range of power that has no parallel in China. Its duties and authority, according to Article 103 of the socialist constitution, include (1) drawing up domestic and foreign policies; (2) directing the work of the Administration Council and local people's assemblies and people's committees, as well as judicial and procuratorial organs; (3) guiding the work of national defense and state political security; (4) ensuring the observance of the constitution, laws, and ordinances; (5) establishing or abolishing ministries and executive bodies of the Administration Council; (6) appointing or removing vice-premiers, ministers, and other members of the Administration Council; (7) appointing and recalling ambassadors and ministers; (8) appointing or removing high-ranking officers and conferring the military titles of generals; (9) proclaiming a state of war and issuing orders for mobilization in case of emergency, and (10) granting general amnesties.

In China, many of these powers granted to North Korea's Central People's Committee are invested in the National People's Congress or its standing committee, as well as in the State Council. In short, the Central People's Committee is a supercabinet, combining both legislative authority and executive power.

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<sup>10</sup>Chin-wee Chung, "The Evolution of a Constitutional Structure in North Korea," in Robert A. Scalapino and Jun-Yop Kim, eds., *North Korea Today: Strategic and Domestic Issues* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1983); also, an article by the same author in Scalapino, *Asian Political Institutionalization*, 18-41; Dae-Sook Suh, *Korean Communism, 1945-1980* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981).

The president of the DPRK is the head of this powerful organization, whose membership includes the vice-presidents of the DPRK and the secretary. At the end of 1987, there were sixteen members, including Kim Il Sung himself, three vice-presidents, and the secretary. Of the sixteen, eight were the party's full Politburo members and four were its alternate members. One might say that the Central People's Committee is a functional equivalent, for the state sector, of the party's Politburo.

With its own far-reaching legislative authority, the Central People's Committee overshadows the Supreme People's Assembly, to which the constitution stipulates it is accountable. In China, reforms in the governmental structure have expanded the power of the National People's Congress; in North Korea, the Supreme People's Assembly has been reduced in status and power by the establishment of the Central People's Committee. Whereas in China the trend has been toward separation of the powers of the legislative and the executive organs, in North Korea the trend has been just the opposite. As Chong-Sik Lee has pointed out, the concentration of power in the Central People's Committee has shattered the myth of legislative supremacy, as well as the fiction of the separation of the power and authority of party and state.<sup>11</sup>

The creation of the Central People's Committee has also rendered the Administration Council a mere organ for administration and execution of decisions made by the committee. The main functions of the Administration Council are (1) to direct the work of the ministries; (2) to work out the state plan for the development of the national economy; (3) to compile the state budget; (4) to conduct external affairs, including the conclusion of treaties with foreign countries; (5) to build up the people's armed forces; and (6) to adopt measures to maintain public order. In carrying out these functions, the Administration Council is under strict guidance and supervision of the president and the Central People's Committee. Unlike the old constitutions, which made the premiership the centerpiece of the North Korean administration, the new constitution makes the premier "a senior administrator who carries out decisions made elsewhere and serves as the chief link between the President and the administrative agencies."<sup>12</sup>

It is not difficult to understand why, in North Korea, the changes in political institutions have been in the direction of functional fusion rather than functional differentiation. North Korea has been a monarchy, ruled by one man. Neither China during the height of Mao's reign nor the Soviet Union under Stalin came close to North Korea under Kim Il Sung in the pervasiveness of the cult of personality and of the power wielded by one man. Both ideology and organizations are personalized under Kim Il Sung, as Scalapino

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<sup>11</sup>*Pukhan nyungam* (The yearbook of North Korea) (Seoul: Research Institute of North Korea, 1983), chap. 5.

<sup>12</sup>Chin-wee Chung, "Evolution of a Constitutional Structure."

and Lee have pointed out.<sup>13</sup> Because all meaningful power ultimately derives from Kim, it is only sensible that political institutions, government and party structure, should reflect this political reality.

So far, this political structure in North Korea has worked quite well in institutionalizing the legitimacy of the regime, in efficiently ruling the country, and in molding a highly disciplined and indoctrinated population of 18 million. As in China, the real test may come in the not too distant future when Kim Il Sung no longer commands North Korea's political structure. Of course, he has made meticulous arrangements for political succession by his son, Kim Jong Il. Yet, precisely because the structure is designed for the personalized rule of Kim Il Sung, it is not clear that the same structure will demonstrate flexibility and adaptability under his son's rule.

### Conclusion

This analysis of political institutions in China and North Korea has revealed two different trends. In China, the trend has been toward separation of the powers of party and state, as well as a division of power within the state sector; the legislative branch has become more important than ever before. Although the principle of party dictatorship is still upheld with vigor, and the primary role assigned to representative organs such as the National People's Congress and its standing committee is still to provide a facade of legality for the party, the Chinese leadership in recent years has stressed constitutionalism and an appropriate division of functions among various political institutions. The role of the party should be to provide ideological and political guidance, not administrative and executive orders. Also, within the state sector, decentralization and differentiation, not fusion, of functions have been emphasized.

In North Korea, however, the trend has been toward creating new institutions with highly centralized power and authority. The president (*chusok*), for instance, unlike the state chairman of China, is not a mere head of state. The presidency is the most powerful office in the country, whose power overshadows all political institutions and has no precedents in other communist countries. Invested in the office is a wide range of power that encompasses the legislative branch, the executive organs, and the judiciary. Also, the power to command the armed forces is entrusted to it. Assisting the president in exercising these enormous powers is the new institution called the Central People's Committee. This institution enjoys both legislative and executive powers, and through this organ, the president controls both the Supreme People's Assembly, which in theory is the highest organ of state authority, and the Administration Council, whose functions are confined to

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<sup>13</sup>Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), chap. 11.

implementing decisions made by the president and the Central People's Committee.

One explanation for these differences between China and North Korea is that North Korea is under highly personalized rule; the cult of personality pervades the country's political life, and the ideology of *chuch'e* is upheld as the cardinal principle of the country's political activities. China, by contrast, is in the process of establishing a collective leadership. Deng Xiaoping has certainly been the principal leader of the nation, but his power could hardly be compared to that of Mao or Kim Il Sung. Perhaps, having paid dearly under the reign of Mao Zedong, Deng and other Chinese leaders are fully cognizant of the danger of personalized rule unchecked by institutional restraints.

Another explanation could be that North Korea faces strong rivalry in South Korea. Although China is also a divided nation and unification remains its sacred professed goal, the competition between the two Chinas is not as severe as that on the Korean peninsula. While constantly playing on the danger of war and the threat to its security from the South, North Korea's leader seems to feel that a highly regimented and centrally controlled system is needed. The intensity of competition between the two Koreas, never low, was at its apex in the early seventies, when developments in both the domestic situation of South Korea and the external environment relating to the peninsula, including Sino-American détente, were ominous. It was at this time that Pyongyang created the new office of president as well as the Central People's Committee.

Whatever the explanations may be, the future for North Korea is uncertain. Kim Il Sung may not live long; the relationship between the two Koreas may change in the near future and the intensity of confrontation may be reduced. What is more important is that North Korean political institutions so far have developed little capacity, if any, to cultivate in the individual citizen a range of graduated, diverse political responses to changing individual or group interests. China has begun to adjust its political institutions in this direction, and in North Korea individuals and political groups may become increasingly assertive as pressure for more openness mounts.

**Part Three**  
**The Role of the Party**

## 5. Changing Roles of the Communist Parties in China, North Korea, and Vietnam: A Historical Perspective

HONG YUNG LEE

This chapter is a preliminary effort to compare the changing roles of three communist parties—those in China, North Korea, and Vietnam—in the light of the theoretical insights offered by such Western social scientists as Huntington, Jowitt, and Lowenthal.<sup>1</sup> My reliance on their insights is particularly extensive because the available data on the three communist parties vary greatly—ranging from enough information on the Chinese Communist Party to make some tentative generalizations, to merely a few indications about the possible direction of change in North Korea, to the almost complete absence of directly relevant data on Vietnam. On the whole, the predictions of Huntington, Jowitt, and Lowenthal appear to be born out by the recent changes in China, and to a lesser extent, by the events in North Korea and even in Vietnam.

### Origin and Evolution

As the ruling communist parties in Asia, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Korean Workers' Party (KWP), and North Vietnam Workers' Party (VWP) share many similarities as well as differences. The socioeconomic and political conditions that gave birth to the three communist parties were quite similar. Deeply influenced by Confucianism, the three countries had developed quite early in their history elaborate centralized bureaucratic systems with the emperor or king at the top. The bureaucracies were staffed by an educated gentry, mainly selected through the civil service examination system.<sup>2</sup> Although Korea and Vietnam frequently experienced military pressures from the Chinese court, they managed to maintain their political

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<sup>1</sup>S. Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics of the One Party System," in S. Huntington and C. H. Moore, eds., *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1979); K. Jowitt, "Inclusion and Mobilization in European Leninist Regime," *World Politics* 27, no. 1 (Oct. 1975): 69–98; M. H. Lowenthal, "Development vs. Utopia in Communist Polity," in C. Johnson, ed., *Change in Communist System* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970).

<sup>2</sup>For a brief history of Vietnam, see Troung Buu Lam, *New Lamps for Old* (Hong Kong: Maruzen Asia, 1982); Andre Schonberg, *Social Structure and Political Order: Traditional and Modern Vietnam* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979).

independence. However, with the opening of Asia to the Western powers, Vietnam and Korea became colonies and China found itself in the position of semicolon. The political crises involved in this process precipitated the emergence of the communist movements. Thus, the communist movements in all three countries were strongly nationalistic from the beginning.

The socioeconomic conditions from which the three communist parties arose did not even approximate what Marx believed to be the basis for a proletarian revolution. Capitalism was at most incipient, and the industrial workers were a meager minority; most of the population were peasants. What appealed to the leaders of the initial communist movements was not so much Marxist philosophy as the action-oriented Leninist theory of party building and of the national liberation movement. In addition, Comintern agents helped establish the communist parties in the three countries.

The Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921 by thirteen intellectuals, who represented the fifty-seven party members of the regional Marxist groups that had sprung up after the May Fourth movement.<sup>3</sup> These thirteen delegates were from the best-educated group in China at the time; six of them had studied abroad, and all of them except two high-school graduates had college educations (see table 1). They were very young; their average age at the time was twenty-nine, the oldest being forty-six and the youngest twenty. None of them appeared to have studied natural science. Instead, they had studied the humanities and the social sciences, approximating what Lasswell called "symbol manipulators." Although there is little, if any, available background information on the fifty-seven party members, a Chinese source reports that all but four were intellectuals.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the founders of the CCP were the May Fourth generation of intellectuals who had been searching for the solution to China's political, economic, and social problems.<sup>5</sup> As the first generation of modern Chinese intellectuals to receive Western-style educations, they looked for a Western ideal to make China strong and wealthy. Unfortunately, they were frustrated by the continuing imperialistic policies of the Western powers. As the offspring of traditional Confucian intellectuals, they were conscious of their roles and responsibilities in solving China's problems and building a new modernized nation. They were also painfully aware of the failure of various methods ranging from complete rejection of Western values, to the limited adoption of westernization in the formula of Ti-yung, to the radical reforms that their predecessors had tried. They were iconoclasts disenchanted with Chinese tradition and willing to blame all the ills of modern China on Confucianism. Ambivalent toward Western ideas and institutions, they were deeply impressed by the drastic changes in the Soviet Union after the October

<sup>3</sup>Cao Yunfang and Pan Xianying, eds., *Zhongguo Gongchandang jiguan fazhan shi* (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Dangan shi), 11–20.

<sup>4</sup>*Dang shi yanjiu*, 1981, no. 2:65.

<sup>5</sup>Jerome B. Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China* (New York: Free Press, 1981).

**Table 1**  
Backgrounds of the Thirteen Founding Members of the CCP

Name	Area Represented	Birthplace	Age	Education
Li Hanjun	Shanghai	Hubei	1890–1927	Tokyo Imp Univ
Li Da	Shanghai	Hunan	1890–1966	Tokyo Imp Univ
Zhang Guotao	Beijing	Jianxi	1897–1979	Beijing Univ
Liu Renjing	Beijing	Hubei	1902–	High School attached to Wuhan Univ
Chen Gongbo	Guangdong	Guangdong	1892–1946	Beijing Univ
Pao Huizeng	Guangdong	Hubei	1890–1927	Tokyo Imp Univ
Tung Piwu	Wuhan	Hubei	1886–1975	Studied in Japan
Chen Tanqiu	Wuhan	Hubei	1896–1943	Wuchang Normal Univ
Mao Zedong	Changsha	Hunan	1893–1976	1st Normal School of Hunan
He Shuheng	Changsha	Hunan	1876–1935	1st Normal School of Hunan
Deng Enming	Jinan	Guizhou	1901–1931	1st Middle School of Jinan
Wang Jinmei	Jinan	Shandong	1898–1925	1st Normal School of Shandong
Zhou Feihai	Japan	Hunan	1897–1948	7th Normal School of Japan

SOURCES: *Dangshi Cailiao Zhengli Wieyuanhui*, 1986, no. 7:20–28. Also see Shin Yujun, “Zhonggong Dangde Jianshe Lilun Zhi Yanjiu” (M.A. thesis, National Political University of Taiwan, 1978), 117.

Revolution, and also by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, which offered the most powerful and systematic critiques of Western capitalism, although it originated in the West.

Tracing the origin of the communist movement in Korea is not as simple as it appears because there were several different groups in different regions, who sometimes collaborated and at other times competed for the attention of the Comintern.<sup>6</sup> The factionalism of the Korean leftist movement was due primarily to the tight political control that the Japanese colonial authority

<sup>6</sup>For the origins of the Korean communist movement, see Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-sik Lee, *Communism in Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), Pts. 1, 2.

kept over Korea. Unable to develop any coherent anti-Japanese organization in Korea, the patriotic Korean leaders with leftist leanings had to exile themselves in China or Siberia, seeking support from the local Korean immigrants. Because most of the immigrants to China and Siberia were from the lowest rung of the traditional Korean society, the Korean socialist movements failed to produce a visionary leader with the powerful intellectual capability to articulate their causes in terms of Marxism-Leninism and to operationalize goals into a concrete strategy.<sup>7</sup> The young radical students in Korea who had been exposed to Marxism in Japan organized a Korean communist party, but the efficient Japanese police destroyed it immediately after its inception.

When World War II ended, the Korean communist movement lacked ideological coherence as well as towering leaders such as Ho Chi Minh, whose prestige and seniority could rally the different factions into a unified communist party. The task of unifying the different factions fell on young Kim Il Sung, who had the backing of the Soviet Red Army in the northern half of the Korean peninsula. Relying on his former guerrilla comrades—known as the Kapsan faction—Kim founded the North Korean Workers' Party by merging the Yanan faction, the domestic faction, and the Russian faction. Although we do not know the socioeconomic and educational background of the Kapsan faction, it is likely that most of its members were from economically disadvantaged social groups with low education levels. The only political experiences that they had had at the time were those of guerrilla warfare.

In this regard, the NKWP differed from the CCP and the VWP, both of which had relied on their own strength to capture political power. One can argue that the NKWP was created by an elite group that had already been granted political power to them by the occupying Russian Red Army.

As with the Korean communist movement, the origin of the Vietnamese communist movement can be traced to the various political organizations that sprang up in the 1920s dedicated to Vietnam's independence. But Ho Chi Minh succeeded in unifying the different groups into the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930.<sup>8</sup> The credit for the success of uniting different factions should go to Ho's leadership and political acumen. As we will see later, the core party members around Ho Chi Minh managed to remain ideologically and organizationally coherent while effectively dealing with various other national organizations. The initial leadership around Ho Chi Minh is still in power. One of their characteristics "was the nonproletarian background of most top leaders. In fact, the majority was not even from the middle class (which hardly existed in colonial Vietnam anyway) but came from mandarin, gentry, or intellectual/professional backgrounds. What dis-

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Douglas Pike, *History of Vietnamese Communism, 1925–1976* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978).

tinguished these early Party leaders from their fellow Vietnamese—in and out of the Party—was education; they were among the few who were educated, surrounded by vast masses who were not.”<sup>9</sup>

Several times in the process of a prolonged struggle for power, the CCP adjusted its basic strategy to the specific political conditions of the moment, for example, from urban worker-oriented revolutionary strategy to Mao’s peasant-based guerrilla strategy, from the united front with the Kuomintang (KMT) against the invading Japanese to the all-out war against the KMT. When the CCP founded the PRC in 1949, the CCP had basically completed the task of national liberation—except for Taiwan and Hong Kong—and its legitimacy as the ruling party was accepted by a large segment of the population. It had, for the first time since the Opium War, expelled all foreign interests and set up an effective national government whose authority reached every corner of China. The party created the Red Army and the state according to its own image. In the thirty years of its existence, the party has also developed many traditions and myths—such as the Long March—which work as rallying points for the Chinese people.

By 1956, the CCP had completed its tasks of “transformation” and “consolidation” and was ready for the next task of economic development through “adaptation.” Land reform brought an end to the political influence of the landlord class. The collectivization of agriculture shifted control over economic resources from individual peasants to the state, thus depriving the society of resources with which to challenge the state’s authority. The peaceful transformation of industry deprived the capitalist class of resources while absorbing some of them individually into the state apparatus as managers of enterprise. The introduction of the material allocation system through the state plan politically emasculated the urban population, making it completely dependent on the state for income.

However, starting with the antirightist movement in 1957, the overall direction of the party’s ideology and policy program shifted further left, resulting in a series of political campaigns—including the Great Leap Forward in 1958–61 and the Socialist Education movement of 1964–65—which eventually culminated in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. During this radical period, the party engaged in excessive “class struggle,” discriminating against intellectuals and anyone with an undesirable class background, condemning material incentive, rational division of labor, and functional specialization, and attaching inordinate importance to egalitarianism rather than efficiency, distribution rather than production, and Mao’s Thought rather than the structural legitimacy of the party. Without doubt, Mao was responsible for the leftist tendency. An equal share of blame, however, should go to the structure of the party-state that the CCP had created since 1949 and to the

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 97.

peasant mentality of the CCP, which was largely composed of hired laborers and poor peasants.

Viewed in this broad context, what is amazing in China is the strength of the political forces that resisted the seemingly inevitable process of institutionalization and adaptation of the ruling party. Mao's hopelessly idealistic endeavor to create a new socialist man and a new social system free from bureaucratism had devastating consequences on the consolidation of the party's rule because rampant factionalism at the top level and ruthless political campaigns substantially undermined the legitimacy and credibility of the CCP that had been successfully built up in the early 1950s. After Mao's death, the party began to rebuild its own legitimacy by promising rapid economic development. Only after paying a high price did the CCP resolve, with great difficulty, the question of Mao's successor. Whether the past experience will ease China's next succession problem, however, remains to be seen.

The Vietnamese communists' ascendancy resembles that of the Chinese rather than that of the North Koreans. The group of dedicated communist leaders around Ho Chi Minh managed to build up a large anti-French coalition known as the Viet Minh while retaining the leadership of the united front organization in their own hands. They skillfully mobilized the Vietnamese peasants into the strong guerrilla force that defeated the French by 1954, having earlier founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the northern half of Vietnam. While consolidating its rule as well as carrying out the transformation of North Vietnam's economic and social structure, the party led the "national liberation movement" in South Vietnam. By 1975, the VWP had completed its task of national liberation by defeating the most powerful nation in the world. Rightly, the Vietnamese communists regarded the unification as a great victory for the Vietnamese nationalism to which they had subscribed from the beginning.

Pike attributes their success to the unity and continuity of the top leadership. "The men of the Politburo had known and worked with each other for most of their lives, and all by now past the half-century mark. There is enormous unity in such long associations, even those marked by ancient arguments and long standing philosophical or operational difference of opinions." The tight unity of the top leaders enabled the Vietnamese communists to effectively use the united front strategy; it enabled them to nominally disband their party in favor of a broad united organization more suitable for mass mobilization without losing control over the movement. Their unity also helped the party handle the death of Ho Chi Minh without much difficulty. After Ho's death, the remaining eleven Politburo members adopted the system of collective leadership, "not replacing Ho Chi Minh, but going on exactly as before."<sup>10</sup> As a result, save for the two claimed by death,

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 128.

the leadership of 1950 was also the leadership of 1975. While maintaining tight unity among themselves, the top leaders developed their own constituencies within the society. "In practice it created the unwritten rule that while a decision that was highly objectionable to some member could be taken, no decision could be a total anathema to any Politburo member."<sup>11</sup> This provided various bureaucratic and social groups with the opportunity to have their views reflected in the top-level decision-making process.

Unlike the CCP and the VWP, the KWP can boast of neither a long revolutionary tradition nor a spectacular success record in its national liberation effort. North Korea's effort to unify Korea by force ended with the disastrous defeat that almost destroyed the NKWP's own existence. Nonetheless, blaming the failure of the invasion on his political adversaries, Kim purged his political opponents one by one—first the domestic faction headed by Park Hyon Yong and then the Yanan faction and the Soviet factions. By the early 1960s, no political force within the party was left to oppose his rise to absolute power.

Thereafter, the personality cult of Kim was steadily built up. The history of the Korean communist movement was rewritten to exclusively glorify the guerrilla experiences of Kim's group in Manchuria. This personality cult is not limited to his person but extends to his family members and ancestors, who are deified. All meritorious acts and achievements are attributed to the supreme, beloved Great Leader, Kim.<sup>12</sup>

By emphasizing *chuch'e*, Kim underscores the need to domesticate communism; however, it is difficult to find any sign that the ideology of *chuch'e* influenced the organizational structure of the political system or policy choice—with the exception of the foreign policy arena. It seems that the ideas of *chuch'e* served Kim only to develop one of the most tightly controlled and rigid political systems in the world. It is ironic—and unfortunate for all Koreans—that the division of the peninsula has been used as an excuse to justify Kim's autocratic rule in the North and the undemocratic military regime in the South. Kim's personality cult may have helped reduce factional strife within the NKWP, but it transformed the party into a mere instrument for Kim's personal rule. The excessive propaganda of Kim's cult, constant demands for "monolithic ideology" and "unconditional obedience" by all party members, cannot but undermine the corporate identity of the KWP.<sup>13</sup>

Worse still, Kim Il Sung's own son is succeeding him. An official justification is: "Since the North had the misfortune of confronting super powers from

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>For the personality cult, see B. C. Koh, "The Cult of Personality and the Succession Issue," in C. I. Eugene Kim and B. C. Koh, eds., *Journey to North Korea* (Berkeley, Calif.: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1983).

<sup>13</sup>In the resolution adopted by the Sixth Party Congress, the Great Leader Kim Il Sung is mentioned sixty-five times.

the beginning of its birth, it has to be tightly organized for its survival. Kim's succession will not only save it from a post-Stalin or post-Mao type of crisis, but will also prevent remnants of the pro-Soviet or pro-Chinese faction from requesting intervention or assistance from either Moscow or Beijing."<sup>14</sup> Whether the first feudalistic succession in the communist world succeeds or not will tell more about the KWP than anything else.

### Membership Structure

Broadly speaking, two factors determine what roles a communist party will play at any given moment. First, as Lenin argued, the specific goal a party has chosen in the light of the concrete historical conditions of the moment will determine its role.<sup>15</sup> The second factor is the characteristics of the party members. Although the Leninist principle of democratic centralism more often justified the flow of authority from top to bottom than vice versa, all ruling communist parties, being the locus of political power, tend to develop their own corporate political interests.

#### *The Chinese Communist Party*

In the six decades of its existence, the CCP has developed into the largest communist party in the world, with 41 million party members organized in 2 million party branches (see table 2). The party members constitute 4.1 percent of the total population. Until recently, the CCP recruited its members largely from the "activists"—who had proved themselves in each movement. The main criteria for recruitment were political loyalty and reliability rather than functional competency.

The party members are mostly peasants: 17.77 million, constituting almost 46 percent. But they are underrepresented; only 0.4 percent of the peasant population are party members (see table 3). In contrast, 8.8 percent of all Chinese workers are party members. Party membership in the military is quite high; if one assumes that the total People's Liberation Army (PLA) strength is 4.2 million, then almost half of all those in uniform are party members. It is likely that almost all officers belong to the party. The percentage of party members who are specialists is reportedly 7.82 (3.04 million), which constitutes only 7.8 percent of all specialists as reported in the 1982 census data.<sup>16</sup>

The Chinese source cited in table 3 leaves about 20.6 percent (8.02

<sup>14</sup>Yung-Hwan Jo, "Succession Politics in North Korea: Implications for Policy and Political Stability" *Asian Survey* 26, no. 10 (Oct. 1986): 1092–1117.

<sup>15</sup>Park Chang Ai, vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the NKWP, recognized this point. Quoted in Park Dong Un, "Bukhan Gongsandang ei Sasang, Jojik chekgecho wa gigu unyong," in *Bukhan jungchi chege yangu* (Seoul: Asian Munje Yenguso, 1972), 286, 271.

<sup>16</sup>Another source reports that only 22.8 percent of 10.18 million specialized cadres had party membership in 1983.

**Table 2**  
Growth of CCP Membership, 1921–84

	Population (In Millions)	No. of Members
1st revolutionary civil war	—	
1921 1st Congress	—	57 (S)
1922 2nd Congress	—	123 (S)
1923 3rd Congress	—	432 (S)
1925 4th Congress	—	950 (S)
1925 Nov	—	10,000 (Y)
1926 July	—	30,000 (Y)
1927 5th Congress	—	57,965 (S)
1927 After "April 12"	—	10,000 (S)
2d revolutionary civil war	—	
1928 6th Congress	—	40,000 (S)
1929 2nd Plenum of 6th, June	—	50,000 (Y)
1930 3rd Plenum of 6th, Sept	—	60,000 (Y)
1930	—	122,318 (S)
1931 4th Plenum of 6th, Jan	—	68,000 (Y)
1932 August	—	107,000 (Y)
1933	—	200,000 (Y)
1934 5th Plenum of 6th	—	300,000 (S)
1937 After the Long March	—	40,000 (S)
Anti-Japanese war	—	
1938 Jan	—	200,000 (Y)
1939	—	300,000 (Y)
1940	—	800,000 (S)
1941	—	763,447 (S)
1942	—	736,151 (S)
1943	—	700,000 (Y)
1944	—	853,420 (B)
1945 7th Congress	—	1,211,128 (S)
3d revolutionary war	—	
1946	—	1,348,320 (S)
1947	—	2,759,456 (B)
1947	—	1,700,000 (C)
1948	—	3,065,533 (S)
1949 Sept	541	4,488,080 (S)
Post-Liberation		
1950	551	5,821,604 (S)
1951	—	5,762,293 (S)
1952	574	6,001,604 (S)
1953	589	6,612,254 (S)
1954	602	7,859,473 (S)
1955 June	—	8,545,916 (A)
1955	614	9,393,394 (S)
1956 8th Congress	628	10,734,384 (S)

**Table 2. Continued**

	Population (In Millions)	No. of Members
1957	646	12,720,000 (S)
1959	672	16,960,000 (S)
1961	658	17,000,000 (S)
1964	704	— (S)
1965 End of	—	18,000,000 (D)
1966 August	—	18,000,000 (J)
1969 9 Apr	806	22,000,000 (A)
1971 June	852	17,000,000 (J)
1972 Oct	—	20,000,000 (J)
1973 10th Congress	892	28,000,000 (B)
1976 Sept	—	34,000,000 (J)
1977 11th Congress	949	35,000,000 (A)
1979 Jan	—	36,000,000 (J)
1980 March	987	38,000,000 (J)
1981 6th Plenum of 11th	—	38,923,569 (E)
1981 June	—	40,000,000 (J)
1981 Dec	—	39,657,212 (J)
1983 June	—	40,000,000 (J)
1984 End of	—	41,000,000 (J)

SOURCES: (S) Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, 129.

(A) *Zhonggong Gongchan Dang Lici Daibiao Dabui*, 11.

(B) James R. Townsend and Brantly Womack, *Politics: China*, 3d ed., 285.

(C) Xian Fu, *Xin Shigi Zhengdang Jianghua* (Beijing: Xin Hua Chu Ban She, 1984), 147.

(D) *Renmin Ribao*, April 14, 1980.

(E) *Dangde Jichu Zhisbi Wenda* (Henan: Chuban She), 96.

(Y) Shin Yujun (see table 1), 186, 263.

(J) *Zhong Guo Zhonglan*, 1984, 24.

million party members) unaccounted for. In all probability, the remaining group consists of the party members among the cadres. There are two types of cadres: administrative and functional. Because it is unclear whether or not the functional cadres are included in the category of specialists, I provide two figures; one is the number of administrative cadres; the other includes the functional cadres as well. Regardless of the way one calculates, it is clear that the percentage of members among cadres is high.

The distribution of the party members among the functional cadres varies from area to area and sector to sector. The membership rate is higher in industry, for instance, than in the educational institutes.<sup>17</sup> The membership rate changes greatly from factory to factory. For instance, only 4.1 percent of the workers in the Shanghai 17th Textile Factory are party members, whereas almost 66 percent of the workers in the Sea Transportation Company are reportedly party members. Within each factory, the party membership rate

<sup>17</sup>The party membership among high-school and middle-school teachers was only 8 percent, whereas it ranged from 25 to 40 percent in industrial enterprises. Liaoning reports that 27 percent of its half a million specialized cadres are party members. See *Gongchandangyuan*, 1983, nos. 11–12:22.

**Table 3**  
 Distribution of CCP Members by Occupation in 1981  
 (Total = 39 Million)

	A	B	C	D
Peasants	17.77	45.5	377	0.4
Workers	7.34	18.8	83	8.8
Military	1.9	4.8	4.2	45
Service	0.93	2.4	—	—
Specialists	3.09	7.8	26	7.8
Administrative cadres*	8.2	20.6	12	6.6

- A: Total number of party members in the category  
 B: Percentage of party members in relation to total party members  
 C: Total number of persons employed in the category  
 D: Percentage of party members in relation to the workers employed in the category

\*Estimated.

Source: *Diaocha Yu Yanjiu*, no. 144 (November 2, 1982).

among the management is almost three times as much as that among the workers, and the difference appears to be widening.<sup>18</sup>

Among the intellectuals, the percentage of party members varies with age; it is high among the old intellectuals, whereas the middle-aged group shows the lowest membership rate. Among the 1.28 million college students, the number of party members fluctuates substantially from year to year—from 3.8 percent in 1980 to 1 percent in 1982, and then up to 2.5 percent in 1984.

The average age of party members is not available, but it seems that it is much higher than that of the population. According to an official source, in 1950, 26 percent of the party members were below twenty-five; in 1983, the same age group constituted only 2.25 percent. Despite the official effort to recruit young people, they are still reluctant to join the party.<sup>19</sup>

The overall educational level of party members is rather low (see table 4). Only 4 percent have received college educations. This means that less than half of all the college graduates in China have joined the party. A majority of members have only had a primary school education—42.2 percent—and the other 10.1 percent are illiterate. As we will see later, the CCP now endeavors to recruit educated young people.

### *North Korean Workers' Party*

After its founding, the NKWP expanded at a fantastic speed, increasing its

<sup>18</sup>*Dangqian wuguo gongren jieji diaocha ziliao huibien* (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang shujichu yanjiushi lilunzu, 1983).

<sup>19</sup>Song Renqiong, director of the Organizational Department of the CCP, concedes this point.

**Table 4**  
Education of CCP Members  
(as of 1983)

	No. of Members (In Millions)	% of Members
College graduates	1.60	4.0
Specialized middle school & senior high	5.52	13.8
Junior high*	12.00	30.0
Primary school	16.88	42.2
Illiterate	4.04	10.1
Total	40.00	100.0

SOURCE: *Zuo Hao Zai Zhishifenzi Zhong Fazhan Dangyaun Gongzuo* (Beijing: Beijing Xinhua Chuban She, 1985), 58.

\*Estimated figures.

membership sixty times during seven months in 1946 (see table 5). The fast growth rate continued through 1947. At the time of the Korean War, the total membership registered about 800,000, but the war must have killed many NKWP members.

On the question of how to rebuild the demoralized party, Kim Il Sung clashed with his director of the Organization Department, who advocated a cautious Leninist approach. After purging his opponents, "Kim Il Sung evidently decided to launch a movement to rebuild the Party in a new mold, or to engage in a concerted effort to strengthen the Party organizations."<sup>20</sup> In a short time, the NKWP recruited half a million new members. If the estimate of the 1980 membership figure is accurate, the expansion accelerated in 1970, and since 1976 about 300,000 new members a year have joined the party. If so, it is likely that most of the recruits in the 1970s came from the postwar generation, which Kim Jong Il intentionally cultivated as his power base through the Three Revolution Team movement.<sup>21</sup>

The only available information on the occupational distribution of membership was published in 1956. At that time, 22.6 percent of the party members were workers. The poor peasants constituted 56.8 percent; the middle peasants, 3.7 percent; the office workers, 13 percent; and other categories, 3.9 percent.<sup>22</sup> At the Fourth Congress, held in 1961, Kim reported that the workers had increased from 17.3 percent in 1956 to 30 percent in

<sup>20</sup>Chong-sik Lee, *Korean Workers' Party* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 93.

<sup>21</sup>Yung-hwan Jo, 1092–1117.

<sup>22</sup>Scalapino and Lee, 286.

**Table 5**  
Growth of NKWP Membership, 1945–80

Date	No. of Members	% of Population
12/45	4,530	0.0005
7–8/46	276,000	4
8/47	366,000	
8/47	680,000	7
1/1/48	708,000	8
3/48	725,762	8
Early 1949	800,000	9
11/51	600,000	6
12/52	1,000,000	9
1/1/56	1,164,945	10
8/1/61	1,311,563	12
11/30/64	1,500,000	12–13
10/10/65	1,600,000	12–13
End of 1967	1,600,000	12–13
11/70	1,700,000	11–12
1975	2,000,000 <sup>a</sup>	13
1980	3,000,000 <sup>b</sup>	

SOURCE: Scalapino and Lee, 713, with exceptions of 1975 and 1980.

<sup>a</sup>Chong-sik Lee, *Korean Workers' Party*, 114.

<sup>b</sup>Department of the Army, *North Korea: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C., 1981), 180.

1961.<sup>23</sup> One source estimates that 10–15 percent of the NKWP are intellectuals.<sup>24</sup>

The NKWP has the largest party membership in proportion to the population of all the communist countries. The justification is that the NKWP represents all Koreans, including the ones in the South. If one assumes that North Korea's population was 19 million in 1980, and that both those younger than eighteen and those older than sixty-five constituted 20 percent of the population (the school-age population in 1974 was 4.03 million)<sup>25</sup>, then the party membership amounts to about a quarter of the adult population. If one assumes that an average family has about five persons, about one out of two families should have a party member.

Thus, it is difficult to regard the NKWP as a vanguard party. It is close to being a mass party, a party of all people. Its bylaws do not require any specific class or social background to join.<sup>26</sup> Chong-sik Lee's assertion made in the 1970s appears to be valid still, despite the intense ideological indoctrination.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 286.

<sup>24</sup>Park Dong Un, 286.

<sup>25</sup>Department of the Army, *North Korea: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C., 1981), 249.

<sup>26</sup>For the bylaws, see Dae-sook Suh, *Korean Communism, 1945–1980* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), 525–45.

“In spite of a large number of recruits, or because of them, the KWP had remained a hodgepodge of barely literate elements seeking security, status and power.”<sup>27</sup> The basic function of the NKWP, it seems, is not to lead the state and the society but to serve the Great Leader for the purpose of political control.

### *The Vietnam Workers’ Party*

The VWP expanded rapidly between 1945 and 1951, increasing its membership almost fifteen times (see table 6). The rapid expansion probably served the party’s effort to mobilize the peasants into guerrilla forces against the French. Membership declined to 725,000 by the Third Party Congress, then doubled between 1961 and 1976. According to Pike, the recruits during

**Table 6**  
Growth of VWP Membership, 1935–81

		No. of Members
1935	1st Party Congress	a few hundred
1945	August Revolution	5,000
1951	2d Party Congress	727,211 (or 760,000)
1960	3d Party Congress	725,000
1976	4th Party Congress	1,553,500
1981	January	1,580,000*

SOURCE: Douglas Pike, *History of Vietnamese Communism*, with exception of 1981.

\**Daily Report*, Vietnam, Jan. 19, 1981, k 2.

this period were mainly from the young and from the *ban co* (landless poor), the lower middle class, and the workers. The VWP must have made a conscious decision to increase its members in order to carry out the war in the South and to consolidate the socialist transformation in the North. Membership did not rise from the time of the Liberation to 1981, when the VWP reexamined the qualification of each party member and reissued membership to the cadres. If one assumes that the Vietnamese population is about 50 million, the party members constitute less than 3 percent of the total population.<sup>28</sup> Unlike the NKWP, the VWP intends to keep itself an elite vanguard party.<sup>29</sup>

There is not much information on the characteristics of the VWP members. However, it is likely that most of them are old because it seems that more than half of the total party members joined before 1951. “The educational level was low—85 percent had less than four years’ formal education. At least half of the estimated 110,000 key managers of the DRV (Democratic Republic

<sup>27</sup>Lee, 101.

<sup>28</sup>Pike, 97.

<sup>29</sup>*Daily Report*, Vietnam, June 19, 1981.

of Vietnam) economic system were Party members, a figure that was to rise steadily. Women comprised about 10 percent of the Party.” Despite the low educational level of the majority of party members, according to Pike, the top leaders are better educated and largely from nonproletarian backgrounds: “Virtually all of the 1960 Central Committee members were well-educated, experienced officials; about one third of them were specialists in some field; and another third were what might be called educated generalists. Little new blood was added at the time to the top leadership. All of the Politburo members named at the congress had Party records dating back at least to the early 1930s; half of the Central Committee had been Party members since before World War II.”<sup>30</sup>

### **The Imperative of Economic Development and Its Implications**

After shifting the main task of the party from revolution to economic development in 1978, the CCP embarked on economic and political reforms to make the entire system more conducive to economic development. The adaptive efforts included rationalization of its structure, decentralization of economic decision-making authority to the enterprise level, use of economic leverage rather than administrative authority to manage the economy, upgrading of the quality of the cadres and the party members, and making a distinction between the party's functions and those of the government. The most important of these changes, with the greatest direct bearing on the role of the CCP, have been the new policy in recruiting party members and the redefinition of the role of the party committees at the basic levels.

Openly declaring that all recruitment work should be geared to the major task of economic development, the CCP now targets the better-educated youth for recruitment. The CCP's overall goal is that members having college or specialized middle-school educations should constitute 40 percent of the party by 1990. For this purpose, the party has gradually changed the admission criteria. Although not official, an educational qualification is now stressed for membership. Cadres and workers have to have a senior high school education to join; a junior high school education is required for the peasants and the PLA. As a rule, “The illiterate should not be recruited.”<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, the party downplays political criteria.

As a result, the proportion of specialists among the new recruits has been steadily growing: 8.2 percent in 1978; 19.1 percent in 1980; 21.4 percent in 1981; 23.6 percent in 1982; 37 percent in 1983; and about 40 percent in 1984. The available information indicates that almost 50 percent of the new

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<sup>30</sup>Pike, 97.

<sup>31</sup>Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu, ed., *Zuobao zai zhishifenzi zhong fazhan danguan gongzuo* (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1985), 47–56.

recruits can be classified as intellectuals. Most of the new recruits are young; among the 1984 recruits, about 50 percent are below thirty-five.<sup>32</sup> In the rural areas, the specialized households, now regarded as the advanced elements, are eagerly sought after. For instance, 58 percent of the new recruits in one county of Jilin consists of specialized households. Generally, the specialized households are made up of younger farmers with a higher level of education.

The regime also endeavors to separate the party from the government. The structure of the government and the party are already to a certain extent separated, although the party committee system within the government organs continues. Even in functional terms, the roles of the party committees and the government agencies can be clearly distinguished. The party committees exercise political leadership, whereas the government agencies are responsible for administration and economic management.

How should political authority and power be divided between the party and the government? The official answer is in such a way as to ensure the political authority of the CCP while at the same time preventing the party organs from taking over the functions of the government. But the question of how to achieve these seemingly contradictory goals is not yet resolved.

According to the official view, the party committees are responsible for the following five areas: (1) the implementation of the party line and policy; (2) ideological and political works; (3) the management of the party organizations; (4) all decisions on "important matters"; (5) the cultivation, selection, use, and supervision of the cadres.<sup>33</sup>

These rather abstract guidelines, however, do not greatly help to distinguish the party from the government at the lower levels. Lower-level party committees complain that without substantial power, they cannot supervise their counterparts in the government organs in implementing the party policy. For instance, how can a factory party committee make sure that the managers carry out the party policy when the committee does not have any authority over the manager?

Very few Chinese individuals or party leaders object to the idea that the party will be in charge of political and ideological work. However, the meaning of political work is ambiguous because the relationship between political and other functional work is not clearly delineated and ideological work is losing its relevance and importance. No party cadre wants to do ideological work. Limiting the party's task to the party's internal work, such as managing and educating its members, is one solution, but the CCP, being the ruling party, can not restrict its activities to such a narrowly defined scope. Another controversial question is how, and by whom, which matters are the "important matters" will be determined. For example, after extensive debate

<sup>32</sup>*Xuan quan shou che*, 1985, no. 13: 3-4.

<sup>33</sup>*Shaanxi Ribao*, Oct. 26, 1983.

on the question of “important problems,” a county party committee and the county government decided to consider every issue jointly.

In brief, the official guidelines on how to separate the party from the government are not only ambiguous but also contradictory. While criticizing the party committees’ involvement in functional work, the top party leaders still uphold the prerogatives of the party committees at various levels. For instance, the political report to the Twelfth Party Congress insists on the separation of the party from the government. At the same time, it specifies that “the important problems of the government work and the economic work should be decided by the party committees.” On the one hand, the party committees were instructed not to become directly involved in economic matters. On the other hand, the upper party committees tell the lower party committees to “spend 70 percent of their time on economic matters.” The question facing the secretary of the lower level party committee is how he can spend most of his time on economics while not directly managing it.

The party cadres at the middle and lower echelons eagerly exploit the ambiguity and contradictions in the official policy because they are not only accustomed to the “habit of unified leadership” but also do not want to lose their turf. Usually they adopt the defensive tactics of foot-dragging and rear guarding, instead of squarely challenging the official policy of separating the party from the government.<sup>34</sup>

Numerous reports prepared by Chinese scholars after fieldwork at the county level indicate that the party committees still dominate the administrative organs. For instance, the minutes of a county party committee meeting show that the county party committees still discuss a wide range of issues—from economics to party affairs, from legal political questions to external relations. In many counties, the party committee and administrative branches still issue orders jointly and call for meetings under joint sponsorship. Consequently, many people are saying that “at the moment the party secretary does the work of the magistrate and the magistrate does the work of the director of county bureaus.”

One of the most controversial questions of the newly adopted “manager responsibility system” is whether the manager or the party secretary will have ultimate authority over personnel management. Under the previous system of “manager responsibility under the leadership of the party committee,” the party committees managed all cadres—party, administrative, and technical—and all personnel matters, including observation, recruitment, appointment, evaluation, transfer, promotion, and demotion.

Now the reformers insist that the manager should be given full authority over the administrative and technical cadres and that the party committee’s authority should be limited to the party member cadres. The party commit-

<sup>34</sup>*Zheng zhi yu xing zheng yan jiu*, March 1985, 15.

tees strongly object to this idea on the grounds that it will violate the general principle of "the party managing all cadres." Having given up their authority over materials, finance, planning, and other aspects of economic management, the enterprise party committees are not willing to give up their authority over personnel management.

At the moment, the usual practice is for the manager to nominate administrative cadres, seek the opinion of the party committee, and then discuss the matter in the management committee of the factory. Because the management committee usually includes members from the labor union and the disciplinary committee, both of which are under the party committee, the party committee's domination over personnel management continues.

Frustrated by the stubborn resistance of the party committees, some Chinese wanted to abolish the party committee system at the enterprise level, claiming that party committees in economic enterprises are unnecessary political organizations detrimental to efficient economic management.<sup>35</sup> Regardless of how much the CCP is committed to economic growth, such demands must be construed as a frontal challenge to the communist party. Holding Hu Yaobang responsible for the bourgeois trends that constituted the background for such demands, Deng Xiaoping fired him in January 1978.

The Deng Xiaoping group in China could make a drastic break with Mao's legacy of emphasizing revolution because they had been the victims of Mao's political purges. The political situation in North Korea is quite different, and thus, the shift of emphasis from revolution to economic construction in North Korea can only come gradually and in a subtle way. Kim Il Sung cannot make an abrupt turnabout in his emphasis without undermining his own personal authority on which his son's succession depends. Kim Jong Il is not in a position to openly repudiate his father's commitment to revolution.

At the same time, Kim Jong Il's need to develop his own legitimacy and power base is apparent. Because the unification of Korea is a remote possibility, the only alternative available to the junior Kim for building up his legitimacy is economic development. Moreover, the new generation of cadres, whom the junior Kim has been actively cultivating through the Three Revolution Team movement, are better prepared for economic development. Their claims to leadership positions are based on functional competency, whereas the old leaders have more convincing credentials as revolutionaries. This will reinforce Kim Jong Il's commitment to economic development.

Despite the excessive cult of *chuch'e* and his voluminous writings, the Great Leader has never developed a systematic leftist ideology one-sidedly emphasizing revolution over production. Unlike Mao, Kim Il Sung has maintained a balance between economic development and revolution, experts

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<sup>35</sup>*Shixing changzhang fuzezhibou qiye dangwei juho gongzou* (Beijing: Jiefangjun Zhengzhi Xueyuan, 1985), 31–45.

and reds, in his ideology. There is therefore more room in Kim Il Sungism to shift the emphasis to economic development than there is in Mao's Thought. But there is a caveat; the Great Leader's grip over the party is so thorough that he is the party. It will be impossible for the junior Kim, even when he has consolidated his succession, to control the party as tightly and completely as his father did. If he wants to institutionalize the party, allowing it to play a more positive role for economic development, he has to allow it to develop its own identity separate from the leaders and government organs. How Kim Jung Il will manage these contradicting demands remains to be seen.

Although subtle, there are indications that the NKWP is moving in a new direction that can be termed an adaptation process. Kim Il Sung and other leaders attach increasing importance to technological advancement and economic development.<sup>36</sup> The widening gap in the living standards of the North Koreans and the Koreans in Yenbian (the Korean autonomous region in China) must be a source of embarrassment to the NKWP. Beijing may have been putting pressure on North Korea to change its economic policy, and the frequent visits to China by NKWP's high-level officials indicate North Korea's interest in China's reforms.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, North Korea has already adopted a joint venture law obviously designed to attract foreign capital and technology. Consisting of five chapters and twenty-six articles, the law promises to protect the investments of foreign parties and "all their legal rights" in North Korea. However, to what extent North Korea will open itself to the world is uncertain because of domestic political constraints. If the CCP has difficulty with "spiritual pollution," one can readily imagine the possible effects of North Korea's open-door policy.

As an initial move to rationalize economic management, the North Korean regime established "provincial committees for guiding economic development." The move is designed to decentralize economic decisions from the central government to the provincial level and to separate the economic decision-making organs from the administrative ones. The regime also reorganized the central government by reducing economic ministries and setting up various commissions. This change indicates the regime's increasing awareness of the importance of plan, coordination, information flow, and technology in economic management. In this sense, the management philosophy underlying the reorganization contradicts "the Daan management system," which emphasizes the party's control, moral incentive, and political mobilization.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, the recent rise of a younger generation of technocrats is a

<sup>36</sup>Young Whan Kihl, "North Korea," *Asian Survey* 24 (Jan. 1984): 103; Dae-sook Suh, "North Korea in 1986," *ibid.*, Jan. 1987, 62.

<sup>37</sup>Dae-sook Suh, "North Korea in 1986," 69.

<sup>38</sup>*Buk Chosen chonglam* (Tokyo: Huan Tapyongyang Munje Yen Gu So, 1986), 330-31.

positive sign both for the shifting of North Korea's priorities and for Kim Jong Il's succession. When the deaths of "many important guerrilla comrades and high ranking government officials"<sup>39</sup> created vacancies, they were filled by a group from the younger generation who were not only better equipped to deal with the complicated task of economic development but also had close personal ties with Kim Jong Il. A good example is the recent premier, Kang Song Sang, the son of the late general Kang Kon, who is believed to be an expert on economics. O Kuk-yu, son of Kim Il Sung's former guerrilla comrade O Chung-hup, was made the chief of staff, and Son Song-p'il, son-in-law of the late vice-president, became the chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly. According to Dae-sook Suh, "These leaders together with the technocrats recruited from the ranks constitute the core of the leadership in the new era, and they seem to support Kim Jong Il's succession in North Korea."<sup>40</sup>

To summarize, the NKWP recognizes the need for rapid economic development and has taken some preliminary steps to prepare the party for that task. But the unresolved question of unification, as well as that of Kim Jong Il's succession, rules out any drastic changes in basic orientation and rhetoric. Kim Jong Il will not be able to consolidate his power without delivering tangible economic benefits to the North Koreans. His support comes largely from the younger generation of technocrats who can base their claims to the leadership only on economic success. This new group of leaders will not be as obedient and docile as the former guerrilla fighters were under the Great Leader. So far, the two Kims have been skillfully balancing continuity against change, political calculation against economic considerations, and personal interest against the necessary change of the ruling structure.

There are a few indications that Vietnam is also entering the adaptation stage, leaving the militant rhetoric of revolution and socialist transformation behind. Declaring that Vietnam would skip the stage of capitalism by directly moving into socialism through continuing revolutionary struggle, the Fourth Congress of the VWP, held in 1976, designated three specific tasks for the party: transformation of the means of production in South Vietnam, scientific and technological revolution to enhance productivity, and ideological and cultural revolution. Of these three, the VWP considered "scientific and technological revolution . . . the kingpin."<sup>41</sup> Doctrinaire as the Vietnamese leaders might be, the war compelled them to appreciate the importance of the sciences, technology, and expertise.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup>*Political Report of the Central Committee* (Hanoi, 1976), 44.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>"Party members must have not only a high revolutionary fighting spirit but also adequate knowledge and ability to fulfill their tasks." "The quality of cadre is determined by a combination

The VWP's effort to pursue socialist transformation while increasing production apparently failed to produce the expected results; during the First Five-Year Plan, industry grew by 1.5 percent a year and agriculture by 2 percent.<sup>43</sup> Thus, with the adoption of the Third Five-Year Plan there came a decision to accelerate economic growth even at the cost of slowing down socialist transformation. The reform package included decentralization of economic authority to the district level, more autonomy for the state-run industry, material incentives in the form of bonuses and piecework wages, and the introduction of the contract system in the agricultural sector. The Fifth Congress of the VWP, held in the spring of 1982, explicitly authorized the temporary retention of private capitalist activities for the production and distribution of such consumer goods as food and fish.<sup>44</sup>

The pragmatic policy appeared to have paid off. The economy picked up during the third Five-Year Plan, despite the small capital accumulation and the declining efficiency of capital use. Industrial production grew at a rate of 15.2 percent and agricultural production at 5.9 percent a year.<sup>45</sup> Later, however, economic problems intensified. Moreover, at the moment, the VWP leadership is concerned with two problems. First, they know that Vietnam cannot afford to have two different economic systems for a long time—a socialist system in the North and a capitalist system in the South. The longer the socialist transformation in the South is delayed, the more difficult it will be to collectivize the South's economy. Second, ideological erosion and corruption are spreading among the cadres and party members. An editorial in August 1986 in the *Tap Chi Cong San*, the party's theoretical review, noted that "slackening for a period of time of the socialist transformation of privately owned bourgeois industry, commerce, small-scale industry, handicrafts, and petty trade, and the delay in the readjustment of land and cooperativization of agriculture in Nam Bo, have caused many difficulties for the economic situation." Caught between economic benefits and ideological purity, the VWP is trying to tighten party discipline by expelling some party members. How long the VWP can juggle the two conflicting priorities remains to be seen.

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of his political qualification and working ability, as shown in how he fulfills his task. These cannot be separated from each other or opposed to each other since the lack of either aspect makes the Party and State cadres unqualified, particularly with regard to leading and management cadres." "In meeting the ever great need of cadres at present and in the future, and in coping with the effort to foster and improve the quality of the existing contingent of cadres, the urgent problems arise of training and appointing a great number of new young cadres of workers, working peasant and revolutionary intellectual stock." Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Tetsusaburo Kimura, "Vietnam—Ten Years of Economic Struggle," *Asian Survey* 26 (Oct. 1986): 1039–55.

<sup>44</sup>William Duiker, "Vietnam," *Asian Survey* 25 (Jan. 1985): 97–105; Duiker, "Vietnam in 1985," *Asian Survey* 26 (Jan. 1986): 102–11.

<sup>45</sup>Tetsusaburo Kimura, 1039–55.

During the same period, the VWP also made initial moves to adjust itself to the task of economic reconstruction. The Resolution on Organizational Work adopted by the Politburo in November 1980 called for “effectuating a profound organizational change in order to strengthen leadership and management, especially in the economic domain.” Although we do not know the extent to which the resolution has been carried out, it made clear what changes the VWP viewed as necessary. First, the regime publicly recognized that the readjustment of the party to economic construction was a “pressing political task.” Second, the regime intended to use “the socialist business method” instead of the administrative method to manage the economy. Third, the resolution stressed the need to educate “party cadres and members, especially leading, managerial and organizational cadres, in the fundamentals of the science of organization with an emphasis particularly made on practical knowledge of the theory of system, the theory of information, the science of leadership, psychology and so forth.” Fourth, it upheld the “director responsibility system” while warning that “basic Party committees must not assume the function of guiding production and business, which belongs to the director. Party committees must strengthen control over the implementation of the party line, policies and resolution and the state law. Through the ideological, party and mass work, they must create favorable conditions for enhancing the effectiveness of the director’s guidance.” Fifth, recognizing the crucial importance of information for economic management, the regime promised to strengthen its capability to collect and to distribute information.<sup>46</sup> Sixth, the regime set up various “consultative councils” staffed by “talented economists, scientists, technicians and specialists.” Lastly, noting that many cadres are too old, it demanded that the party organs at the various levels prepare for generational change by recruiting “reserve cadres”—similar to the CCP’s Third Echelon of cadres.<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusion

As Huntington, Jowitt, and Lowenthal predicted, because of the imperative of economic development, the three communist parties opt for rational division of labor, functional specialization, decentralization of economic

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<sup>46</sup>*Daily Report*, Vietnam, Jan. 8, 1981, K 1–16. “In economy, importance must be attached to analyzing statistics and reporting them to the leadership. All institutes and commissions of science should establish the system of collecting scientific and technological information at home and abroad and reporting it to the Party central committee and the government once or twice a year.”

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.* “In the immediate future, each level and sector must complete the recruitment of reserve cadres from positions under their management. Within the first six months of 1981, they must complete the reserve cadres for key leading and managerial positions, that is, from the positions of bureau and deputy bureau chief at the central level, beginning with those who must be replaced immediately or will be replaced under the next five year plan.”

decision making, and efficient coordination. For rational decision making, they co-opt experts, stress the crucial importance of information, and set up consultative groups in each field. Instead of moral incentives and administrative command, they now pay more attention to material incentives. However, the concrete measures taken by the three parties toward adaptation vary. China is moving farther than the other two. But as China graphically demonstrates, there are two constraints. First, because many parts of the communist system are inextricably interrelated, any effort to redefine the tasks of the party requires corresponding changes in many other areas, such as ideology, organizational structure, and membership characteristics. Second, any drastic change in a communist society always threatens the political interests of certain groups—for example, the party, as well as some of the party members; thus, reformers need as much political skill as revolutionaries do.

In the Asian communist parties, the impetus to reform comes largely from the leaders who realize the imperative need for economic development. In this respect, the three Asian communist parties differ from the Eastern European communist countries where the initial impetus to the adaptive process came from social change and economic development. In the three Asian countries, the adaptation is initiated by the political leaders in order to lead the nations to economic development. In other words, the sequence of social change and regime change assumed by many social scientists is reversed in these three countries. For this reason, the process of adaptation is more vulnerable to reversal than in other communist countries.

All three parties appear to have gone through the processes of transformation, consolidation, and entering adaptation. However, the boundaries of the stages and their sequence are not as clear as most social scientists imply. As drastically demonstrated in Poland, the process of adaptation entails political risks for the party and its leaders. This is particularly true in North Korea, where feudalistic family succession is taking place. Any adaptation process entails the weakening of the official ideology, and how much each party is willing to sacrifice the official ideology for the sake of economic development may turn out to be the crucial political variable determining the speed of adaptation.

Adaptation to the requirement of economic development takes place at a historically important juncture when the first generation of old revolutionaries are being succeeded by a new generation of leaders. The next generation of the leadership in all three countries appears to be better educated, more sensitive to the functional prerequisites of managing a modern industrial society, and better prepared than the preceding generation for nation building and managing a complex economy. But they are not liberals committed to democratization. They are “technocrats” who will use their competency to make the system work smoothly and efficiently rather than transform the system drastically. The ruling communist party and its members have

much at stake in the existing system, and any effort to make rapid changes in the system will cause a violent reaction. The coercive elements in the political process will further decline in the three countries, but this does not mean that the system will be democratized in a strict sense.

## 6. Changing Roles of the Party in Asian Communist Societies

BYUNG-JOON AHN

### Three Emerging Types of Communist Parties in Asia

As Asian communist societies experience the inevitable crises involving political succession and economic reforms, the role of the party also is bound to undergo change. In this study, I shall try to analyze the changing role of the party in three Asian communist societies: China, Vietnam, and North Korea.

At the outset it is necessary to make some broad observations about the way in which the Communist Party is interacting with the state and society in Asian countries. In this perspective one can delineate three emerging types of the party: the *Leninist-corporatist* party in China, the *Leninist-collectivist* party in Vietnam, and the *führerist* party in North Korea.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) until recently under Deng Xiaoping, maintains hegemony but tries to develop leadership and co-optation relations with the state and society by allowing a measure of autonomy in each sector. The Vietnamese Workers Party (VWP) seems to control the state and society mainly through a collective leadership at the top. And the Korean Workers Party (KWP) is in command of the state and society through the cult of personality centered on Kim Il Sung.

These differences are a matter of degree, for all the communist parties share similarities in their ideological and structural manifestations based on the teachings of Marxism-Leninism. In varying degrees, the Asian parties also reveal other common elements, such as the emphasis placed on the mass line and the phenomenon of highly personalized leadership. Each of them took the Bolshevik model as their point of departure when they assumed power in their societies. But in China, the party gradually turned führerist when Mao Zedong assumed one-man rule. Only after his death did the party begin to show a collective leadership under Deng Xiaoping. In North Korea alone has the party remained under the same leader since its takeover.

Despite these similarities, for our purpose it is necessary to pay more attention to the existing differences. These differences can be studied by

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<sup>1</sup>For these terms, see Byung-joon Ahn, "The Cultural Revolution and China's Search for Political Order," *China Quarterly*, no. 58 (Apr./May 1974): 249-85.

analyzing the roles of the parties in exercising power, in defining the Marxist ideology, in making policy, and in assuming leadership. The CCP is distinguished by its attempts to share power with the state and society, to uphold an ideology of "seeking truth from facts" instead of calling for class struggle, to divide and decentralize policy-making, and to cultivate a second and a third echelon leadership with younger and more professionally qualified cadres. This kind of party can be called Leninist-corporatist because it combines hegemony and co-optation in its relations with the state and societal organizations.

The VCP presents more of the Leninist and less of the corporatist elements that are found in the CCP. It presents a good example of Marxist-Leninist organizational principles and leadership, such as class struggle, democratic centralism, and collective leadership, although these are manifested in Vietnamese styles.

In many ways, the KWP seems to approximate a prototype of the führerist party. Kim Il Sung himself represents the very incarnation of the party, for he is the ultimate source of power, ideology, policy, and leadership. His rule resembles Mao's rule in China but contains peculiarities unique to North Korea, as we shall see below. One overarching characteristic of the North Korean political system is that there is little distinction between the party, the state, and society. In this sense, it can still be characterized as a totalitarian system.

What can account for these differences? As a general statement about the overall trend of development in all communist political systems, one can say that the role of the party has to change when it takes up the task of accomplishing modernization as its primary goal instead of promoting revolution. As a result, the Communist Party is compelled to make peace with the state and society because of the requirements of efficiency necessary for modernization.

More specifically, changes in the top leadership, the imperatives of economic reforms, the composition of the party membership, and the degree of foreign inputs cause substantial differences in the role of the party. But it is not easy to ascertain precisely how these affect the changing roles of the party. All that can be said with some confidence is that the more changes occur, the more likely the party is to lose its monolithic position and to develop towards a corporatist or at least a "soft authoritarian" type.<sup>2</sup>

### *The CCP: Leninist-Corporatist*

Since Mao died in 1976 and Deng assumed leadership in 1978, the CCP has exhibited both Leninist and corporatist elements in its relations with the state

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<sup>2</sup>Robert A. Scalapino, "Legitimacy and Institutionalization in Asian Socialist Societies," in Scalapino, Seizaburo Sato, and Jusuf Wanandi, eds., *Asian Political Institutionalization* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), 94.

and society. While maintaining hegemony over other institutions and serving as the ultimate source of authority following the Leninist legacy of party dictatorship, the CCP has enabled the state apparatus to perform more important functions and even encouraged some individuals and groups to carry out autonomous activities, albeit within limits. But now that Deng has stepped down from the Politburo, at the Thirteenth Party Congress in October 1987, the CCP seems to be entering a transitional stage with no certainty about its future.

Before the current state evolved, China had experienced a more orthodox Leninist party and under Mao's leadership came to represent a prime example of the führerist party. These two types had alternated until the Deng leadership inaugurated the modernization program. From 1949 through 1957, and especially in the wake of de-Stalinization in 1956, the CCP sought to build a Leninist party. Emphasizing the importance of collective leadership and party discipline at the Eighth Party Congress, Deng himself was busy consolidating a highly centralized hierarchy directed by the Politburo and the Secretariat. Commenting on this trend, Mao once likened the Politburo to a "voting machine like the U.N."<sup>3</sup> During the Great Leap Forward in 1957–60, Mao regained the status of a führer by resorting to the mass line. After the Leap failed, however, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping again resumed a Leninist party. Mao's Cultural Revolution was an attempt to revive the führerist party, even though it was justified on ideological grounds.<sup>4</sup>

After the turmoil of Mao's final years, it was very difficult for his successor to sustain a führerist party. For a short period, Hua Guofeng did try by drawing upon Mao's authority, but without success. Deng has skillfully maneuvered to build a collective leadership, especially since he made Hu Yaobang general secretary of the party, Zhao Ziyang premier of the State Council, Li Xiannian chairman of the state, and Peng Zhen chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in 1980–83.

The advent of the Four Modernizations program and the subsequent reforms has necessitated the increasingly autonomous authority and contribution of the state and society, each making its special contributions. Because administering economic development and reforms is entrusted to state agencies, it is natural that they enjoy enhanced power and prestige. Because the economic reforms, in particular, aimed at revitalizing the market mechanism and individual initiatives, they have enlivened society.

It is important to note that the leadership change after 1978 has made it possible for the party to undertake reforms without too much difficulty.<sup>5</sup> Most

<sup>3</sup>Byung-joon Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution: Dynamics of Policy Processes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 15.

<sup>4</sup>Byung-joon Ahn, "Cultural Revolution," 266.

<sup>5</sup>Byung-joon Ahn, "Changing Leadership in China," in *Political Leadership in a Changing Society*, Proceedings of the 2d APPSA Conference, Seoul, Oct. 16–18, 1986 (Seoul: Asia-Pacific Political Science Association, 1986), 29–40.

of the leaders who rose to power during the Cultural Revolution have been purged, and those who lost power have come back to their original or to other positions. Deng has made deliberate efforts to cultivate a new type of younger, more educated and professionally qualified leader through either generational circulation or training programs. Of significance in this regard is the current attempt to raise a group of third-echelon cadres and recruit them into strategic positions of leadership.

In connection with this search for pragmatic and competent leadership, China's open-door policy has had some influence on the role of the party. The availability of new ideas, information, technology, and personnel from abroad has awakened the top leadership to the need for redefining their reform tasks. That the party leadership has committed themselves to introducing some capitalist and pluralist practices from the West attests to this influence of foreign inputs in Chinese development and party life.

Under these circumstances, the role of the CCP had to change. Although the party still controls the state and society, a division of roles is slowly emerging in their relations. Instead of mass mobilization in the name of Maoist ideology, the party regards the task of accomplishing modernization as its primary goal. For this reason, it has yielded some of its policy-making authority to other state and even societal organizations and groups. Its leadership role has been somewhat reduced, to that of mediating and coordinating conflicting interests without necessarily granting them complete freedom, thus displaying a corporatist intermediating of interest representation.<sup>6</sup>

What distinguishes the CCP from other communist parties is its sharing of power with the state by separating the prerogatives of party and state according to the constitution. According to Article 5 of the constitution, "All state organs, the armed forces, all political parties and public organizations and all enterprises and undertakings must abide by the constitution and the law."<sup>7</sup> A literal interpretation of this article means that even the Communist Party should abide by the constitution.

Under the new constitution, moreover, the National People's Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee are greatly strengthened in legislative power. When the NPC is not in session, the Standing Committee is empowered to enact legislation and to approve appointments. Indeed this committee, under Peng Zhen's leadership, has been quite active in legislating a series of laws and in appointing new ministers to the State Council. It is interesting that this committee has thus far eschewed adopting the law governing bankruptcy and responsibility of enterprise directors. No less

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<sup>6</sup>Li Fan, "The Question of Interests in the Chinese Policy Making Process," *China Quarterly*, no. 109 (Mar. 1987): 64–71.

<sup>7</sup>*Beijing Review*, no. 50 (Dec. 13, 1982): 11–17.

interesting is the possibility that the party Secretariat may have proposed these issues since they have been experimented with for almost two years at various places.<sup>8</sup>

Before Hu Yaobang was forced to resign in January 1987, the party's Secretariat had been manned by specialists and performed a more active role than the Politburo.<sup>9</sup> There seemed to have been a power struggle between Hu and Peng; the former may have been more reformist than the latter. Indeed, there was an accusation that Hu had ignored the NPC.<sup>10</sup> That these conflicts took place provides telling evidence of the separation of the party and the state in terms of power and prestige.

Should the law governing enterprise directors be adopted, the party will have to yield its appointment power to the directors as far as management is concerned. It has already ceased to intervene in the household responsibility system in the countryside. As for determining prices, the market mechanism is being deliberately encouraged. For specialized functional activities, the research institutes and professional associations enjoy some measure of autonomy.<sup>11</sup> In this manner, the party is sharing power with society, too.

Because both the party charter and the constitution clearly state that modernization takes priority over class struggle, the party's role in mobilizing and educating the masses for the Marxist ideology has substantially eroded. In the recent campaign against "bourgeois liberalism," for example, Zhao Ziyang said that it should be confined to the party and carried out not as a mass campaign but as a rectification.<sup>12</sup> To be sure, the party is committed to upholding the so-called four cardinal principles: Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought, the party leadership, socialism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. But by no means can these become the guide for innovative action and, especially, socialist transformation. What they can do is to allow the party to act as the final authority in delimiting liberalism. It is true that the party is in charge of ideological education. However, even this seems to be used mainly to disseminate the basic direction of party policy and guidelines rather than to inculcate Marxist or Maoist doctrines.

As already pointed out, the party's policy-making role has also been shared by state and societal agencies and groups. The top party organs such as the Politburo and the Secretariat are setting the broad directions of policy. But as the tasks of economic reforms involve increasingly technical complexity,

<sup>8</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, Jan. 15, 1987, 46.

<sup>9</sup>Christopher M. Clarke, "Reorganization and Modernization in Post-Mao China," *China's Economy Looks toward the Year 2000* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), vol. 1, *The Four Modernizations*, 96.

<sup>10</sup>*International Herald Tribune*, Jan. 14, 1987, 1.

<sup>11</sup>A. Doak Barnett, *The Making of Foreign Policy in China: Structure and Process* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), 119–30.

<sup>12</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 11, 1987, 34.

more specific policies are reached through an incremental process rather than made from on high, similarly to all modern societies. Invariably, those who are directly concerned with specific issues have to be consulted before decisions are made. In this situation, party organizations are likely either to become technocratic themselves or to delegate their power to qualified specialists.

In the CCP, too, the number of technocrats and intellectuals has been on the rise in recent years. But they do not constitute the majority; therefore, they have to engage in consensus and coalition building. In effect, factions are present tacitly, if not formally, at all levels of policy-making. Unless they challenge the unity and stability of the party, they are implicitly tolerated. After those calls for fighting “bourgeois liberalism” temporarily dominated the Chinese media, for example, signs have emerged that a coalition of reformers gained the upper hand, for defense of the reforms subsequently acquired new momentum.<sup>13</sup>

Policy-making is also subject to legal procedures and institutionalized practices. Limiting the tenure of top leaders to two consecutive terms is a good example of this trend. Success of reforms called for further regularization and institutionalization so that intellectuals and experts could participate in policy-making. But when Professor Fang Lizhi demanded multiparty rule and unbridled freedom of expression, he overstepped the bounds of what was permissible. Hence, the primacy of party had to be reasserted by Deng.

Such primacy is being constantly guarded by the party’s leadership role. Since the CCP is now dealing with new actors such as technocrats, professional groups, critical intellectuals, and protesting students, it has to adapt to their demands.<sup>14</sup> But in so doing, it must also preserve its primary position, and hence, the Leninist legacy. By resorting to the power of appointment and reorganization, the top party echelon sets out to protect its leadership role.

Understandably, we find that there are tensions between the Leninist principle of guarding the party’s leading role and the corporatist practice of eliciting the support of societal forces. Nothing can illustrate these tensions more vividly than the conflict between the party and intellectuals.<sup>15</sup> In the final analysis, the party always prevails by asserting its leading position over other actors. The personnel reshuffling at the Thirteenth Party Congress indicates that the CCP has entered a post-Deng era. What this shift portends is not yet clear, but it will be determined by the new top leaders placed in authority by Deng.

<sup>13</sup>*International Herald Tribune*, May 27, 1987, 7.

<sup>14</sup>Samuel Huntington and Clement Moore, eds., *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 33.

<sup>15</sup>Byung-joon Ahn, “Chinese Communist Party Policy toward Intellectuals since 1949: A Critical Analysis,” in Yu-ming Shaw, ed., *Power and Policy in the PRC* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), 301–20.

### *The VWP: A Leninist-Collectivist Party*

In many respects, the Vietnamese Workers Party resembles the Chinese Communist Party. The difference is a matter of degree in the sense that the former displays more Leninist principles and collective leadership than the latter. The degree to which the VWP is committed to socialist transformation and Leninist party control is relatively high.

One reason for this is that there was nothing like the Cultural Revolution in Vietnam. On the contrary, the party leadership in Vietnam has been united and has continued to sustain a collective tradition since Ho's rule. His personality and leadership style, coupled with the exposure of his colleagues to a French education, have reinforced this tradition. But the current failure of Ho's successors in economic policy seems to have divided the party leadership. Consequently, even though autonomy for state and society may not be granted in Vietnam as it has been in China, it may be taken by default.

There is reason to believe that recent attempts at reform in Vietnam may have been stimulated by the success of similar reforms in China and the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's *glasnost* policy in particular is beginning to have influence on the VWP's leadership.

Thus, in Vietnam too, the passing or physical weakening of first-generation leaders is forcing the party to change some of its policy and methods of rule. Initially, however, the tenure of Le Duan from September 1969 through July 1986 did not indicate any significant departure from Ho Chi Minh's rule, for Le Duan had been groomed as an alter ego by Ho for many years. Yet however slowly a leadership change is definitely occurring in the party. General Secretary Le Duan's death made way for Nguyen Van Linh to assume the top position. At the Sixth Party Congress in December 1986, three of the most senior leaders, namely, Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, and Le Duc Tho, decided to retire from the Politburo. Roughly half of the Central Committee members were newly elected at this congress.

This trend continued at the National Assembly convened in June 1987. This assembly elected Pham Hung as premier, Vo Chi Cong as president, and Le Quang Dao as president of the assembly. Although all of these leaders are in their seventies, they are trying to implement a process of renewal to generate growth in the stagnating economy.<sup>16</sup> They represent a transitional team before a truly new generation of younger and more technically competent cadres takes its turn.

The urgency of economic reforms has prompted the party to search for methods of weathering agricultural crises. In the South, agriculture has been managed by a system of contracts between the peasants and the state. Even in the North, the party has widened the range of material incentives that the peasants and workers can seek within the framework of collective economic

<sup>16</sup>*International Herald Tribune*, June 19, 1987, 2.

planning. Recently, the Vietnamese authorities are reported to have sought joint ventures with Japan and other Western capitalist countries.

As the party places more emphasis on economic development, the familiar phenomena of corruption and "decadent living" have appeared within cadre ranks. The party's organ, *Nhan Dhan*, has carried unusually candid reports on the crimes and misdeeds committed by the cadres.<sup>17</sup> Presumably, these are more prevalent among younger cadres. Thus, the efforts to bring new blood into the party leadership are encountering some of their inevitable side effects.

Like the CCP, the VWP shares power with the state, but its leadership seems to be more entrenched than in China. Like the NPC and its Standing Committee, Vietnam's National Assembly and the Council of State are empowered to exercise legislative and appointment functions, but there are more overlapping appointments between the party and the state apparatus. In effect, the highly centralized party organizations enforce a unified policy line for the state and society.

Because the South was taken over only in 1975 and a war is being waged in Cambodia, the party's ideological campaigns have continued unrelented. The attempt to reeducate the people in the South drove some of them to flee as boat people. Commenting on the "mindset of the top Vietnamese leaders," Douglas Pike said: "Looking back at the careers of these men, one dominant motif appears throughout: force. Their lives always have been bound up with the idea of force, used by them, used against them. It dominates their thinking, fills their rhetoric, conditions their behavior."<sup>18</sup> Thus, the VWP is taking class struggle very seriously.

As for policy-making, the Politburo has the final say not merely over broad outlines of certain issues but also over their specific details. Having known each other and worked together for over forty years, its members hold similar views. Pike likened them to "bugs in amber," for they usually act in the same manner.<sup>19</sup> Yet as society and the international environment change, they have begun a process of specialization and decentralization has begun in small steps, as is indicated in the latest reshuffling of the top party and state positions.

Nevertheless, the durability of collective leadership in the VWP has been a remarkable achievement. Apparently, a degree of dissent and factionalism is tolerated as long as it does not endanger the unity and stability of the party leadership. Perhaps the principle of democratic centralism and party discipline has been more institutionalized in Vietnam than in China and North Korea. Whether this will continue to be the case when a second generation of leaders assumes power is not clear.

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<sup>17</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 11, 1987, 38.

<sup>18</sup>Douglas Pike, "Political Institutionalization in Vietnam," in Scalapino, Seizaburo Sato, and Jusuf Wanandi, *Asian Political Institutionalization*, 47.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

It should be apparent from this picture that the VWP must adhere to the Leninist tradition of party supremacy while maintaining its own legacy of collective leadership as long as it tries to complete a socialist transformation of society. The remnants to the old society in the South and the prolonged guerrilla struggle in Cambodia make it difficult for the Vietnamese party to do away with such Leninist-collectivist traditions. Economic hardship, however, has prompted the party to initiate a few cautious moves toward loosening its grip over the state and society.

### *The KWP: Still Führerist*

Only in North Korea do we find a führerist party, under Kim Il Sung, reminiscent of the CCP under Mao Zedong. Here, one man and his son are dominating the party, the state, and society; they are planning to perpetuate doing so by a dynastic succession. A combination of Confucian authoritarianism and Leninist totalitarianism has produced a one man party in North Korea, for Kim is the final legitimizer of all political, economic, and social activities.

The long tenure of Kim Il Sung, the unfinished revolution in the South from Kim's perspective, the lack of structural reforms, and the cult of personality have all contributed to the rise of a highly personalized and totalitarian party in North Korea. Of these conditions, that Kim has been the Supreme Leader ever since 1948 is the most important. In 1988, he is the longest surviving head of the party, the state, and society in the world. In order to justify such a lengthy rule, the entire history of the party and the state has been recreated and rewritten. Although the top leader has remained unchanged, there has been frequent turnover in the leadership of the KWP other than Kim himself. Other principal figures have been up and down at the whim of the top leader. Therefore, they can hardly change the party's role independently of Kim's ideas.

In no other communist society do we still hear strident calls for class struggle and ideological campaigns couched in Marxist rhetoric. In his speech to the Eighth Supreme People's Assembly in December 1986, for example, Kim Il Sung himself dwelt on the victory of socialism, the need to transform the existing cooperative system of ownership into a system of ownership by the entire people, and the importance of ideological revolution.<sup>20</sup>

More important, the so-called *chuch'e* ideology, which is credited to Kim, has been elevated to the "unitary thought," which is alleged to be more creative even than Marxism-Leninism itself. As this exclusively nationalist slogan is applied to almost everything, it has become a vague guide for the KWP's behavior, at least in principle. To behave otherwise is to run the risk of being against Kim and *chuch'e*. In practice, however, whatever Kim says represents *chuch'e*, and the party and the people must comply with it. A

<sup>20</sup>*Nodong shinmun*, Dec. 30, 1986.

unique aspect of this idea is the emotionally charged contents and symbols that the party has carefully fabricated.

Although reaffirming ideological purity in stark contrast to the revisionist thrust prevailing in other communist countries, the KWP cannot ignore the urgency of developing the economy. This concern was well expressed in the Third Seven-Year Plan (1987–93), which was disclosed by the Supreme People's Assembly in April 1987, after two years of delay. This plan looked much more realistic because it slashed the target for steel production to only 10 million tons; it also placed special emphasis on increased trade to earn foreign exchange.<sup>21</sup> Since the announcement of a joint venture law in September 1984, there have been signs that the North Korean leadership also will try to carry out reforms in economic planning and management. Because of the default in their debts to Japan and the West, they had little choice but to turn to the Soviet Union for economic and military assistance. As a result, the Soviet Union accounted for 43 percent of North Korea's trade in 1985; it had accounted for only 24 percent in 1980.<sup>22</sup>

In coping with these economic difficulties, the KWP is opting for increasing discipline and efficiency in Soviet-style central planning, rather than encouraging the market mechanism as the CCP is doing. Li Gun Mo's replacing Kang Song San as premier, Hong Song Nam's replacing Yon Hyong Muk as first deputy premier, and Pak Nam Gi's replacing Hong as chairman of the National Planning Committee in December 1986 were designed to entrust to them as technocrats the task of revitalizing the economy. Li in particular was known to have supervised the recently completed Nampo Dam. These leaders may have been economic experts, but their loyalty to Kim was undoubtedly equally important in their promotions.

An obvious sign of leadership change is the designation of Kim Jong Il as Kim Il Sung's chosen successor. Clearly, this marks the party's concern with arranging a smooth transfer of power after Kim passes from the scene. Jong Il, at the age of forty-six, does represent a new generation, but his claim to power is based on his blood-line qualifications to inherit his father's thoughts and policy. However, in the long run, even Jong Il's succession can slowly modify the party's role in North Korea in response to the requirements of catching up with other socialist countries in economic development.

Now the KWP, as Kim has shaped it, penetrates every aspect of the state and society. "Great Leader Kim Il Sung" is general secretary of the party, president of the state, commander of the People's Army, and "Father" of society. In other words, he is the *fürher* of the North Korean system. In theory, such state organs as the Supreme People's Assembly and the Central People's Committee are comparable to the NPC and its Standing Committee in China. But in practice, the assembly meets infrequently. Only the Central People's

<sup>21</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 7, 1987, 115.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, June 18, 1987, 82.

Committee has met often, and most of its members concurrently serve as members of the Politburo.

Since the KWP's membership accounts for at least 14 percent of the adult population,<sup>23</sup> the party is ubiquitous in North Korea. One wonders whether a society in the sense that we understand it in the West can exist. To paraphrase Tucker, the party has "swollen" enormously, whereas the society in North Korea has been "spent," that is, suppressed by the party.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, we can still characterize the North Korean system as totalitarian, without reviving the cold war perspective.

Kim Il Sung is the source of not only power but also ideological campaigns. He is the very definer of the *chuch'e* ideology; his utterances serve as truth and policy. The party and the entire population are urged to learn them by heart. The cult of personality surrounding Kim and his words makes him almost a demigod, and it is the party's mission to propagate his messages and to mobilize the people accordingly.

Because Kim is the final maker of policy, the party has to justify all decisions in his name. Yet the party and state organizations below him have developed processes for making important decisions. As noted above, the Politburo and the Central People's Committee have held joint meetings for this purpose. If Jong Il is in charge of the party's routine affairs, the Secretariat's role in policy-making may have increased in recent years.

Under Kim's personalized rule, there is neither room for collective leadership nor the possibility of meaningful factionalism. Unlike Deng, who tries to build a consensus within the party, Kim can issue commands because he is said to be in direct contact with the masses. As a device to ensure his personal leadership, Kim has frequently reshuffled the Central Committee, replacing its members with new faces.<sup>25</sup> Like Mao's leadership, Kim's style has been affect oriented rather than task oriented. Through a fusion of Confucian tradition and Leninist ideology, Kim's leadership has created an Orwellian monolithic party in North Korea. It is doubtful that Kim Jong Il can continue this kind of leadership after Kim Il Sung dies.

### **Leninism without Marxism?**

The survey of the party's roles in the three Asian communist societies thus far indicates that all the parties are stubbornly clinging to Leninism while paying lip service to Marxism. How to keep power through Leninist dictatorship without invoking Marxist revolution is a common and acute problem now being faced.

<sup>23</sup>Scalapino, "Legitimacy and Institutionalization," 82.

<sup>24</sup>Robert C. Tucker, "Swollen State, Spent Society: Stalin's Legacy to Brezhnev's Russia," *Foreign Affairs*, 60, no. 2 (Winter 1981-82): 414-33.

<sup>25</sup>Dae-sook Suh, *Korean Communism, 1945-1980: A Reference Guide to the Political System* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), 310-40.

As a result of changes in the top leadership and of the requirements of modernization and reforms, the party's roles have shifted from accomplishing socialist revolution according to the dictates of Marxist ideology to preserving power and promoting modernization. In this process, the party's commanding position has been gradually eroded as the state and society have regained their vitality. The party assumes new roles by seeking to implement reforms successfully, but the more it does so, the more power it has to share with the state and society.

Yet as we have seen, there are variations in the degree to which the party shares power with other sectors. The CCP tends to be Leninist-corporatist in the sense that it is developing a relationship of co-optation with the state and society. The VWP presents a middle case, between the CCP and the KWP, by projecting a Leninist-collectivist trend. The KWP remains basically führerist.

If the communist party's leading role in society is to be justified only in terms of Leninism as a method of providing control and inducing stability, a series of important questions are raised about its future. As the task of the party shifts from that of conducting class struggle to that of carrying out modernization, the party is forced to allow the emergence of new classes through functional specialization, of a stronger state rather than one that is "withering away" as Lenin predicted, and of an increasingly lively society resulting from a closer interaction with market economies domestically and internationally.

Structurally, too, the transformation of Asian communist parties poses interesting questions. If all communist parties turn increasingly authoritarian, how will they differ from the non-communist authoritarian parties? If their primary role lies in defending their power, power for what? And can they ever become democratic and pluralistic?

Some of these questions have already been posed by Chinese students and intellectuals. A clearer understanding of these questions and the changing roles of the parties in economic reforms and social change must await further developments in China, the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and North Korea. What is certain at this moment is that the parties will continue to change and to lose a Marxist orientation. Whether Leninism can survive without Marxism is an interesting question for the future.

**Part Four**  
**Leadership**

## 7. Leadership in the Three Confucian-Leninist Cultures

LUCIAN W. PYE

The reinforcing combination of a Confucian traditional past and a contemporary commitment to Marxism-Leninism has made leadership a matter of inordinate importance in the politics and government of North Korea (DPRK), China (PRC), and Vietnam (DRV).<sup>1</sup> The three countries share memories of the grandeur of rule by hierarchies of mandarins that were topped by semidivine emperors.<sup>2</sup> Today the awesome majesty of imperial leadership has been replaced by the occult leadership of Leninist elitist parties. The bureaucrats may have been all-powerful in mundane matters, but their authority came from their relationship with the Son of Heaven and the doctrines of Confucianism.

Faith in, and practical reliance upon, personalized leadership in the three countries dominates both the idea of rule of law and any prospects for institutionalization. Although the original Bolshevik ideal was rule by selfless revolutionaries courageously acting as the vanguard of the proletariat, Stalin brought an end to that with his cult of personality—a tendency toward an exaggerated and self-glorifying leadership style—which the Asian communists have gladly emulated if not exceeded. First came the superman Chairman Mao Zedong and his Thoughts, and then there was Kim Il Sung, whose

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<sup>1</sup>Some of the themes and arguments about Chinese leadership appear also in my *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Chinese Studies, 1988).

<sup>2</sup>The Forbidden City in Peking is a lasting reminder of the dimensions of the concept of the emperor, the Son of Heaven, in Chinese history. The palace grounds and its series of buildings take an even more grandiose significance when it is remembered that aside from the monuments to the emperor, China had almost no competing architectural wonders to house other great people. China is devoid of the castles and great houses that are to be found plentifully throughout Europe and Japan, where feudalism allowed local centers of wealth and power to emerge and compete with royal splendor. The truly larger than life scale of the Chinese emperorship (and that of the mimicking Korean and Vietnamese emperors) defies the Western imagination, as I have discovered by asking American students how many concubines they would guess the Chinese emperors needed to demonstrate that they were superior men. Their answers have always been puny, even by those playfully giving what they thought were off-the-wall numbers, and none have come even close to the nine thousand concubines in the Ming court and the twelve thousand for the late Qing emperors—numbers that testify to the superhuman qualities the Chinese ascribed to their emperors.

personality cult has been second to none. The almost mythical Ho Chi Minh was replaced by a remarkably stable collective leadership, but Vietnam remains ruled by leaders and not by laws or impersonal institutions. The passing of Mao has brought China to an even more astonishing example of leadership-over-all. Although Deng Xiaoping has eschewed building a personality cult, he has shown disdain for regularized procedures and impersonal institutions by acting as China's unquestioned strongman without even the pretense of holding supreme office. Deng has proved the paramount importance of leadership in China by the audacity of his act of running the country on the basis of purely who he is, not what office he holds. Constituted authority in China has thus become Deng's personal leadership; lesser figures, including his opponents, are hobbled by the constraints of their titles and formal offices.

The Confucian tradition of rule by men and not by laws, when combined with the Leninist traditions of an elitist, conspiratorial party, has endowed all three countries with an extreme form of secret politics. Nobody outside the closed circle of top leaders knows how the systems work. The Chinese, North Koreans, and Vietnamese people live in the dark about what their leaders are up to and how they arrive at their announced policies. Outside observers can at best pick up hints on what may be in the offing and, usually long after the fact, clues on how decisions were made. In this situation, policy is usually seen almost as a function of personnel. It becomes natural to presume that shifts in policy are related to who is up and who is down in the secret power hierarchy. Governance can take on the strange quirks of social life as the leaders have their personal fallings in and fallings out. At times the process of ruling seems to take on forms designed to maximize the possibilities for personal relations to dominate. For example, in Mao's days it was not considered odd for the entire leadership to congregate for two months at a summer resort on the Yangtze, as they did in 1959 at Lushan, where they reflected on the disaster of the Great Leap and forced everyone to take sides in the clash between the chairman and Marshal Peng Dehuai; Deng Xiaoping was able to escape the issue because he had to leave early after reportedly breaking his leg playing Ping-Pong.<sup>3</sup> Today the practice is repeated, but the venue has been changed to the seaside resort of Beidaihe, a sentimental place for many American and English children who grew up in North China.

Beyond the influences of their Confucian traditions and their Marxist-Leninist parties, leadership is made important in the three countries by the needs of their peasant populations to personalize governmental authority. In all three countries, the masses have tended to visualize ultimate authority as being an individual leader with qualities of inordinate greatness. When the Chinese communists made their move for national power after the defeat of

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<sup>3</sup>Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), vol. 2, *The Great Leap Forward*, 229.

Japan, they had to shed the anonymity of being just the Eighth Route Army and various “border governments” and begin to call themselves the Mao-Zhu De forces, which soon became the even more personalized party of Mao Zedong. By the 1950s, the Thoughts of Mao Zedong were being transformed from mere doctrines into the sacred texts that became the canons of the Red Guard’s Little Red Book of the Cultural Revolution era. In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, as Uncle Ho, was presented as the all-caring and infinitely benevolent friend of the peasantry. His cult of the personality was not that of a miracle worker but that of a benevolent sponsor of collective decisions. Kim Il Sung’s spectacular drive toward megalomania was inspired by the combination of inner personality quirks and outer public relations needs, which included mobilizing the North Korean masses.

The exaggerated emphasis on leadership has inhibited the institutionalization of authority at the pinnacle of power in the three countries. The sanctification of leadership has produced a host of problems for all three countries, not the least being a tendency for policy to go off in harebrained directions because of the unstoppable whims of the all too mortal and far from divine leaders. The unalloyed reverence for leaders caused the Chinese masses to enthusiastically support one after another of Mao’s follies, from the Great Leap, which may have cost 20–30 million lives (certainly more than the Taiping Rebellion), to the Cultural Revolution, which ruined a generation of Chinese students and intellectuals.

In terms of political development and stability, the worship of leadership has meant that China, North Korea, and Vietnam have been plagued by two closely related problems, those of succession and legitimacy.

### **Permanent Succession Crises: Death Brings Change**

All Marxist-Leninist systems have trouble with leadership succession. None has clearly established terms of tenure for its top leaders. In contrast to the problem of democracies with transient officeholders, those who get to the top in communist systems expect permanency. This contradiction is not without its paradox: in democracies the selection of top leaders by election puts emphasis upon personality, but once in office, leaders are expected to be constrained by the rule of law; in communism supposedly it is impersonal factors, both of history and of revolutionary discipline, that determine the rulers, but once in power, their idiosyncrasies become sovereign, producing rule by personality. Once at the top, the expectation is that death alone terminates an essentially personalistic rule.

The result of such practices is an inexorable drift toward rule by old men. All three of our Asian countries have found it impossible to break the mold of gerontocracy. Communist politics favor the preservation of aged leaders, and this problem is particularly acute in the former Confucian culture where age is venerated and each generation is expected to be deferential to its pred-

ecessors. The words of old men cannot be easily ignored as successors are expected to await their time and dutifully accept the whims of the aged as imperatives for their own behavior.<sup>4</sup>

### **North Korea—Dynastic Succession in a Leninist System**

Kim Il Sung has been the outstanding exception in making explicit and public his succession designs. The only other exception to leaving everything up to the uncertainties of when the Grim Reaper will arrive was Mao's designation, by name no less, in the PRC Constitution of his "closest comrade in arms," the ill-fated Lin Biao. Kim has caused more than raised eyebrows, especially among the ranks of so-called proletarian revolutionaries, by reverting to the "feudal" tradition of dynastic succession and decreeing that he will be followed by his son, the unspectacular Kim Jong Il. Both Moscow and Beijing have, with great discipline, refrained from displaying public horror at such an un-Marxist-Leninist proposal.

In making his astonishing successor decision, Kim Il Sung may have been looking at the orderly use of dynastic practices in both Taiwan and India—and the rumored possibility that it may take place in Singapore. Or he may have been influenced by the unruly succession developments that followed the deaths of Stalin and Mao. Yung-hwan Jo has made an impressive case that Kim Il Sung's megalomania has made him exceptionally anxious to preserve for posterity his carefully created image of being the Great Leader, the "father-master" (*ubui suryang*) for all Koreans.<sup>5</sup> Therefore he must be terror-stricken at the thought that some ambitious successor, anxious to establish his own reputation, might do to him what Khrushchev did to Stalin or what Deng is doing to Mao's memory. Apparently dismissing the risks of any lingering Oedipal sentiments, Kim seems to have decided that his son is the best bet to

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<sup>4</sup>Americans, with their idealization of youthfulness and lack of reverence for those they think of as over-the-hill, should not be too quick in thinking it an exotic East Asian trait for younger officials to be paralyzed in the presence of manifestly senile seniors. The U.S. judiciary, including the Supreme Court, has frequently been at a loss as to what to do about tottering judges who refuse to acknowledge that they are no longer with it. A telling example was that of Supreme Court Associate Justice Stephan Field who had become an embarrassment to the other brethren by nodding off while on the bench, garbling his words, asking non sequitur questions, and generally acting gaga. Nobody could approach him to suggest retirement until finally it was remembered that when Judge Field was a vigorous new member of the Court there had been a similar problem with a senile colleague and he and another judge were asked to meet with the old judge and bring up the idea of retirement. It was happily agreed that two associate justices should remind Judge Field of what he had done on that occasion with the hope that he would take the hint and retire. When confronted and asked if he remembered the role he had once played, Judge Field retorted, "Yes, I do remember. A more despicable thing I never did. I'll never be able to live it down." This American case should help to make vivid how hard it has been for Mr. Deng to retire old comrades who enjoy their perquisites as much as their power.

<sup>5</sup>Yung-hwan Jo, "Succession Politics in North Korea," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 10 (Oct. 1986): 1092–1113.

preserve the memory of the Great Leader in the minds of future generations of Koreans. After all, one of Kim Jong Il's few public accomplishments was to present to the North Korean public in 1974 the Ten Commandments for Systematizing Kim's Unique Thought, a clearly filial act.

Moreover, Kim Il Sung is, no doubt, keenly sensitive about the large storehouse of secrets he has to keep from posterity. His role as both a revolutionary opposing the Japanese and a vanguard worker establishing the DPRK was more that of a pygmy than that of the giant he has pretended he was. He has striven hard to hide that he was raised a Christian in a Christian family.<sup>6</sup>

A dynastic succession might work. Since Kim Il Sung first suggested the idea at the Fifth Party Congress in 1970, he has worked unstintingly to build a power base for his uncharismatic son. In 1973, he established the Three Revolution Team to provide an ideological as well as an organizational basis for the advancement of the junior Kim. In the same year Kim Jong Il became the party secretary, replacing his uncle—Kim Il Sung's relatives are to be found throughout the power elite of the DPRK. The young Kim was also promoted to the three-man Presidium of the Politburo and made the third-ranking member of the Military Committee, and since the Sixth Party Congress in 1980, he has been called "co-leader."<sup>7</sup> It is suspected that he may have support from the security agencies and from some of the younger technocrats in the government. To top it off, North Korea's far from modest propaganda agencies have maintained campaigns in praise of the accomplishments of the son of the Great Leader in a variety of areas, including economic management and planning. Whereas outsiders may find the dynastic succession derisory, the North Korean public is being taught that they have in line an incomparable leader.

It is, of course, impossible to forecast with confidence whether Kim Il Sung's plans for his son will work when the test comes. It is impossible to tell how long a tutelage period young Kim will get; it certainly will not be the thirty-odd years that Chiang Ching-kuo had under Chiang Kai-shek, who obligingly did not die until he was eighty-eight. If the process works, North Korea will have escaped the succession turmoil that has characterized the passing of Stalin and Mao and has plagued the transference of power in South Korea.

In spite of all the preparations, the odds are that there will be some degree of instability. The potential for factional strife is certainly there, not only between the older revolutionary generation, who are young Kim's seniors, and the younger technocrats, but also among members of various bureaucracies in both the government and the party. The confusion need not

<sup>6</sup>Yong-ho Ch'oe, "The Christian Background in the Early Life of Kim Il-Song," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 10 (Oct. 1986): 1082-91.

<sup>7</sup>Yung-Hwan Jo, "Succession Politics in North Korea," 1097.

reach the extremes that it did in China after Mao (and may after Deng) to have profound significance for the stability of the region. This is because both the Soviet Union and China are poised to exploit any favorable openings in Pyongyang to expand their competitive influences and each will try to negate those of the other. When Kim Il Sung first indicated his dynastic plans, Moscow and Beijing tried to outdo each other in looking down on such an un-Leninist proposal, but as soon as they realized how serious Kim was, they became equally competitive in their endorsement of the junior Kim, the Chinese making the first public moves and the Soviets following along. Both are playing a waiting game, each hoping the other will make the mistake of offending Pyongyang and believing that it can gain an advantage should the passing of the Great Leader produce disorder in North Korea. Whatever may happen in Sino-Soviet relations in the meantime, some element of competitiveness for influence over North Korea will endure for fundamental geopolitical reasons.

This external factor makes the North Korean succession problem somewhat different from the others. Anything less than a smooth transition in Pyongyang could open the doors to an explosive international situation.

### **China—Planning for the Uncertainties of the Inevitable**

Both Deng's consolidation of power and his plans for succession have benefited from the turmoil of the succession struggle at the end of the Mao era. The Chinese people, and more important, those near the pinnacles of power, have no stomach for another round of bruising struggles for high stakes. Deng brilliantly played the succession game after Mao's death, but only after others had rid the country of the Gang of Four. He pleaded with Hua Guofeng to let him come back in a supporting leadership role, innocently promising to be a helpful member of Hua's team. Once back in Beijing, Deng set to work to push aside the naive and hapless Hua, who was stuck in the rut of mouthing silly slogans as ultimate truths, such as "Whatever Mao said and whatever Mao did we should say and do." Hua went through the motions of pretending not to want to be called the Wise Chairman Hua, a blatant way of suggesting that he was the legitimate heir to Mao, but he could not escape the suspicion that he was an appropriate target of the subsequent campaign against those in the party whose "thinking was ossified or semiofified." Deng did his maneuvering behind the protective shield of a Chinese press and official spokesmen who chorused the message that the Hua-Deng pair were in harmony and would guarantee China lasting stability. Any questioning whether the two leaders might be in a factional power struggle brought the same kind of scornful denials that Chinese officials today use in answering questions about any possible factional basis of the issues relating to economic or political reform.

In view of the skill with which Deng Xiaoping established himself as

China's supreme leader and ended the decade of succession struggles that began in Mao's failing years, it is surprising that he has had so many problems managing his own succession. In part, no doubt, he is limited by the realities of the flesh; at eighty-three his working day is brief and he is no longer a hands-on administrator. In recent years Deng has rarely missed an opportunity to tell visiting foreign dignitaries of his wishes to retire and his awareness of his own mortality. For prolonged periods he remains out of sight and it is reported that he spends much time in the winter in warmer parts of the country. It is even reported that he has cut down on his bridge playing to save his energy. Indeed, the old Deng has adopted a rule and reign style much like that Mao Zedong used throughout his career. A surprising analogy is that he now has a laid-back managerial style not very different from that of President Ronald Reagan; although nobody has ever suggested that Deng is a great communicator, he has had much the same "Teflon" qualities as the American president. When things go wrong in China, it is never Deng's fault—especially among his American admirers—but rather the fault of the submerged opposition or misguided lower officials. When things go right, he is given unqualified credit.

However, as with President Reagan in his eighth year in office, the Teflon is wearing thin since Deng's succession arrangements hit a bumpy road in early 1987. The troubles began when Hu Yaobang, Deng's close associate, was forced to "retire" and the sudden emergence of an "anti-bourgeois liberalization" campaign suggested that his opponents were gaining in strength. If Deng had succession difficulties, it is not for lack of planning; some of his problems may come from trying too hard. At first Deng held back from taking the formal titles appropriate to a supreme leader in order to contrast his rule with that of Chairman Mao and his cult of personality. In time, however, his seemingly hypocritical modesty was dictated by his desire to push younger men to the front and thereby prepare for a generational transition of leadership. His ingeniously contrived schemes have in part worked out as designed.

First, he designated a pair of heirs, Hu Yaobang as secretary-general and Zhao Ziyang as prime minister. For all too many people the pair brought back memories of the Hua-Deng duo, which naturally led to speculation about which one would ultimately win in the inevitable power struggle. Deng then proceeded with an elaborate plan to have three echelons of leaders: the first consisted of his own generation of veterans, the second was made up of the midcareer but somewhat aged cohorts of Hu and Zhao, and a third, numbering nearly one hundred thousand, were designated by name to be future provincial and lower officials. The plans might have seemed orderly and rational in an administrative sense, but they violated the first rule of patronage politics, which is to hold off announcing appointments until the last possible moment because for every lucky appointee there will be a host of disappointed candidates who in their frustrations are likely to become alienated and therefore political enemies.

To push his program along, Deng also initiated an elaborate effort to encourage elderly officials to release their iron (that is iron rice bowl) grip on their positions and move on to retirement. When the doddering senior officials dragged their feet in moving out, Deng tried to make retirement more attractive by saying that they could keep their perks and their full salaries and that their children would be given choice jobs. Moreover, they could be elevated to a newly established Central Advisory Commission, which would allow them to communicate directly with the Politburo. The cost of government would obviously have to shoot up. More serious, however, the plan backfired when Deng discovered that it was easier to talk his allies into retirement than his enemies. Senior figures who might have added authority to his reform policies began to fade away. Those who did not fully trust Deng, no matter how feeble they were, clung to their posts. Consequently, Deng's own generation began to tilt against him. In view of the authority, not just deference, that age commands in China, this has proved to be a not insignificant tilting. When Deng's plans began to run into difficulties, with the forced resignation of Hu Yaobang, fourteen of the twenty-two members and alternates on the Politburo were seventy and over. Deng and four others (all his opponents) were in their eighties. Actuarial considerations do favor in time the "reformers." Deng can be thankful that before his troubles with Hu Yaobang, his long-standing critics Marshals Ye Jianying and Liu Bocheng had died in October, and General Huang Kecheng in December, of 1986.

This is not the place for a detailed review of the anti-bourgeois liberalization "struggle." Since Premier Zhao Ziyang promised China would no longer have campaigns, the recent drive was euphemistically called a "struggle." But it is noteworthy that it all began with the revival by the Dengists, in May 1986, of the Maoist slogan "Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend." That it was the thirtieth anniversary of the original "double hundred" campaign should probably have been enough warning to Chinese intellectuals that they might be, if they were not careful, moving onto thin ice. For the Hundred Flowers was, of course, followed by the Antirightist campaign, the proposal for which was based on the "investigative report" done by none other than Deng Xiaoping. One of the advantages of pinyin for the Chinese leadership is that it makes it easier for foreigners to forget that Deng Xiaoping and Teng Hsiao-p'ing are one and the same person.

In any case, the combination of the student protests for democracy, which started on December 5, 1986, and swept the campuses of at least 117 universities, colleges, and middle schools in seventeen cities, and the rising shrillness in the criticisms of senior Chinese writers damaged Deng's initial succession plans. Because of the necessity of bending to the opposition, it was decided that Hu Yaobang would have to be removed as general secretary of the party. One of the two legs of Deng's plan for an orderly transfer of leadership was thus removed. The subsequent appointment of Zhao Ziyang as general secretary and Li Peng as head of the State Council has not assured an

orderly succession. Hu had years of close association with Deng and extensive contacts throughout the party. Zhao is essentially a technocrat, a man who is more at home with policy issues than in building his own power base. That is to say, Hu Yaobang had a certain power base of his own, and thus his removal under the challenge of the opposition was significant. In contrast, neither Zhao Ziyang nor Li Peng as yet has a strong network of supporters in the party; Zhao's principal advantage is that he has been clever at policy-making, and therefore has not been a threat to the opposition in the succession struggle. Indeed, it is not too fanciful to imagine that the so-called conservatives may come to power and keep Zhao on as a technocratic figurehead.<sup>8</sup>

The removal of Hu Yaobang suggested for a time that the opposition might have had a slight advantage in the succession contest, except that Deng went out of his way to claim credit for Hu's ousting. In Communist Party Document 3 it is reported that Deng repeatedly warned Hu, long before the student demonstrations, about his six major mistakes: "encouraging" the promotion of "bourgeois liberalization," struggling against only leftist, and not rightist, ideas, pushing inflationary growth rates, discounting the rule of law, "say[ing] things on many occasions which he should not have said" to foreign leaders, and not respecting decisions of the National People's Congress.<sup>9</sup> Whether Deng was using Hu as a scapegoat or was genuinely critical of him for being too liberal is impossible to tell at this time.

The climax of Deng's succession arrangements came with the Thirteenth Party Congress in October 1987, which was widely acknowledged as a great victory for Deng. His main accomplishments were to see Zhao Ziyang made the new secretary-general of the party, a new standing committee established that averaged only sixty-three years of age, and the retirement of most of the Old Guard. This was no mean achievement, in view of the troubles Deng seemed to have been in earlier in the year. His successes were, however, not without their qualifications.

First, the "retirements" were not complete: Deng himself held on to the chairmanship of the Military Affairs Commission; Chen Yun, who had repeatedly cautioned Deng to go slower, was made the head of the Central Advisory Commission, the very body Deng had established to allow "retired" cadres to still influence policy; Peng Zhen, who has constantly clashed with Deng, was president of the National People's Congress and head of its standing committee; and Li Xiannian, leader of the Old Guard, remains as China's president. Only the troubling ideologist Deng Liqun moved totally offstage.

<sup>8</sup>Zhao Ziyang, for purely technical economic reasons, has indicated that China must go slower in the critical realm of price reforms, push harder against inflation, and be more selective in capital investments. For these and other reasons, Zhao's policies would probably have moved in the general direction demanded by the opposition, even if there had been no opposition.

<sup>9</sup>For details on the secret documents dealing with Hu Yaobang's ousting, see Daniel Southerland, *Washington Post*, Feb. 27, 1987.

Second, the new standing committee of the Politburo seems to be almost a clone of the one Deng had so much trouble managing. Zhao Ziyang does have in Hu Qili his equal in enthusiasm for racing ahead with the reforms, but the other three members are more questionable. Prime Minister Li Peng, the Soviet-trained engineer, is basically a cautious man who believes in the advantages of administrative controls when the going gets difficult. Yao Yilin has never been an enemy of central planning, and he has spoken out against going too fast with the reforms. Qiao Shi is probably the most orthodox of the five, and for many years he was a close associate of Peng Zhen, who has usually been thought of as Deng's most difficult opponent. The congress has appointed him to head the Discipline Inspection Commission of the party, the organization that keeps party members in line, and in view of his associations with the secret police, he can probably be counted on to check any undue tendencies toward "bourgeois liberalization."

It is no wonder that Zhao Ziyang said after the congress that he wished that he was still in the post of prime minister rather than having to cope with the party and issues of ideology. Yet, paradoxically, the most useful thing that may have come out of the congress for the reformers is in the realm of ideology—something missed by the Western press. By accepting some of Zhao's formulations, the congress did legitimize greater reliance upon the market. This was done, first, by officially declaring that China is at a "primitive" or "primary" stage of socialism during which it is correct to have "commodity exchanges" (i.e., the market is all right), and second, by saying that ownership and management can be separated, thereby allowing the leasing of land and the selling of shares of what in theory are still state-owned properties.

The linkage between policy and leadership personnel is not as tight in Chinese politics as many American observers tend to suppose it is. This is in part because in American political culture quite a fetish is made of consistency—American politicians have a compelling need not to appear inconsistent or changeable in their commitments; in China it is taken as normal for leaders to change their views as circumstances change. Thus American analysts tend to assume that should Deng falter in his succession arrangements, the result would be an end to the reforms and China's "opening to the outside world."<sup>10</sup> Deng's opposition does favor a prime role for central

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<sup>10</sup>Secretary of State George Shultz's Mar. 1982 visit to China became an anxious search for reassurance that China was not going to reverse policies in the face of the anti-bourgeois liberalization campaign. Chinese officials, of course, provided the desired assurances, which may, however, not be very reassuring because of another, and somewhat paradoxical, quirk in contrasting American and Chinese political cultures. American officials, in spite of their presumed commitment to democracy and open political processes, tend to believe what they hear in private from foreign officials more than their public statements, which they generally discount as propaganda; in contrast, the Chinese, with their closed political system, routinely tell visitors what they want to hear in order to smooth over face-to-face meetings while adhering to

planning, but then so does Deng. It is only among wishful thinking Americans that there is a vision of China abandoning communism for capitalism and liberal democracy. The desire to have Western technology without Western values comes as close to being a consensus as is possible among the Chinese elite. There is much confusion within the party leadership, for the pace of change, particularly in the economy, is racing ahead of the abilities of the individual leaders to calculate the consequences of developments for their personal fortunes. Networks of personal loyalties are being either strained or reinforced by an evolving situation that is leading to developments that lie beyond the ability of anyone to foresee with confidence. Reformers can easily become skeptics, and vice versa.

Members of Deng's leadership faction are anxious to suggest that disaster would occur if the opposition were to come to power, and for the same reasons as Democrats and Republicans portray doom if the other party were to come to power—it would push them off center stage. At the same time, the Dengists seem concerned to depict their leader as representing centrist views that encompass those of the more orthodox opposition. Thus, they have leaked to Western and Japanese journalists key documents that quote Deng as praising the suppression by Polish leaders of Solidarity and the Catholic church: "They adopted martial law and controlled the situation. That shows clearly that if we don't use dictatorial methods, it won't do. We must not only talk about dictatorial methods but also practice them."<sup>11</sup>

Changes in leadership, to be sure, might produce profound changes in policy. Who would have predicted that Deng Xiaoping would have initiated the dramatic changes that he did with his reforms which, of course, are not reforms but revolutionary changes from Maoism. Yet, in Chinese politics it is also possible that great changes can come under the same leadership. The record of Mao's rule is proof that in China politics can zig and zag without changing the supreme leader.

This is so because, as we have noted, leadership is important in Chinese

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policies that conform more to their established principles. This reversal of what might have been the expected predisposition helps to explain why American officialdom was slow to recognize China's avoidance of a tacit alliance with Washington and willing to discount Chinese opposition to nearly every U.S. policy outside Asia.

Such cultural contradictions are not trivial matters. Note, for example, the extraordinary intensity of the struggles in American politics to extract an "apology" from a president, and for him to avoid at all costs seeming to "apologize." To get an apology is the equivalent of forcing a president to capitulate, to say uncle. The skill of highly paid commentators and journalists is determined by their ability to judge whether the leader did or did not "apologize" in his public statement. In contrast, at the other extreme there is Japanese political culture, in which politicians cannot open their mouths without first apologizing and saying they are sorry. The difference over the significance of apologizing might seem quaint if it were not that the politically knowledgeable in both countries treat it as almost a life-and-death matter.

<sup>11</sup>Daniel Southerland, *Washington Post* correspondent from Peking, *Boston Globe*, Feb. 26, 1987, 22.

political culture and the wishes of authority figures are not easily opposed. It is therefore extremely difficult to forecast not just the personnel outcomes of the current succession struggle in China but also the policies that will characterize the post-Deng era. Those who are today seen as his opponents might end up carrying on his policies; those who seek today to gain the legitimacy of being his political heirs might, when in power, abandon his policies.

### **Vietnam—the Policy Rigidities of Collective Leadership**

In Vietnam, the great transition took place when Ho Chi Minh was succeeded by a collective leadership. He had set the stage for such a succession by having long encouraged the practice of a form of collective leadership. Although not a congenial King Arthur's Round Table, the post-Ho collective leadership in Hanoi defied the law of communist party politics that holds that eventually a supreme leader must emerge from behind the screen of praise for collective leadership. The combination of no single candidate being clearly worthy of stepping into Ho's shoes and the imperative of elite harmony while pursuing continuous warfare made collective rule a necessity.

As Vietnam turned into a warfare state, first with the protracted war in the South and then with the invasion of Cambodia, the leadership became not just stable in its personnel but rigid in its politics. Whereas its wartime policies made Hanoi the darling of the radical world, its peacetime policies have given socialism a bad name. Not only has the standard of living in Vietnam dropped below what it was in the 1920s and 1930s but also its intellectual life has stagnated and its educational institutions are not able to produce new generations to match the caliber of the prewar generations, who were the elite of Southeast Asia, many of whom performed professionally as equals in France.

The Vietnamese leadership seemed to achieve its harmonious stability out of its sadomasochistic consensus that no suffering was too great to ask of the Vietnamese people, as long as the leaders themselves were spared. The security of the leadership was ensured by an agreement that there should be no infighting and that a mammoth bureaucracy should exist to provide each leader with his own empire. This arrangement might have lasted indefinitely had it not been for the inexorable process of human aging, which by 1985 had produced a 79-year-old president of the Council of State, an 80-year-old prime minister, and triple-digit inflation.

Consequently, at the Sixth Party Congress on December 15, 1986, it was decided that the three top party leaders should step down from the Politburo, but Truong Chinh would remain as president of the Council of State and Pham Van Dong as prime minister; the third, Le Duc Tho, would have no state responsibilities. The exact extent to which the Three Historic Leaders, as they were commonly called in Vietnam, went into retirement is unclear

because after the January 6, 1987, Politburo meeting Radio Hanoi announced that the three would “have the duty to contribute their opinions” to the Politburo and the Central Committee on “strategic issues” on the economy, national defense, security, and foreign affairs. Moreover, the “comrade advisors” were told to raise issues “deemed to be important” with the Politburo and they were “empowered by the Politburo to resolve certain specific issues.”<sup>12</sup> It would seem that they were expected to perform much as they did before “retirement.”

It would be hard to make more explicit the awe for old age in a former Confucian culture, and the consequent lack of a clear divide between active service and retirement.

The Vietnamese leadership problems are thus not dissimilar to those of the Chinese. It is not surprising that cracks seem to be developing in the Hanoi leadership group. The manifest chaos of the economy is slowly awakening them to the need for a modicum of change and reform. The strongest pressure for change probably comes from the Soviet Union, which does not want to be left holding up a Vietnamese economy that is a basket case. On February 16, 1987, there was a major reshuffling of leaders, some reorganization of the government, and an announcement of “reform” policies that echo somewhat Deng’s reforms, including measures to encourage private enterprises in the North that would follow the practices of the better-off South. Although seven old ministries were combined into three new ones, there are still enough ministerial appointments left to take care of six new vice-premiers, twelve new ministers, and three new commission chairman.<sup>13</sup>

Although it is too early to be certain, it does appear that the Vietnamese elite may be gradually dividing along factional lines based largely on generational differences and, to a lesser degree, according to their acceptance of “reforms.” The new party head, Nguyen Van Linh, is thought to be a reformer, in part because of his long experience in southern Vietnam where he knew a much more vibrant economy than the moribund one that now exists in a Vietnam unified under communism. The aura of mystery that surrounds Nguyen Van Linh thickened in the summer of 1987 when the Communist Party daily *Nhan Dan* began running a muckraking weekly column that exposed corruption, attacked bureaucratic follies, named names, and was signed “Comrade NVL.”<sup>14</sup> That the mystery writer, for all his apparent boldness, never attacked the senior leadership might suggest that he was indeed Nguyen Van Linh—but then again it might not. The new interior minister, Mai Chi Tho, is also suspected of being a reformer, in spite of being the younger brother of Le Duc Tho. This is because he, too, worked in the Saigon region during the war years and subsequently served as party, and then

<sup>12</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, Jan. 22, 1987, 26.

<sup>13</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, Mar. 5, 1987, 10.

<sup>14</sup>*Christian Science Monitor*, Aug. 18, 1987, 1.

government, head of Ho Chi Minh City. From that experience he may have some awareness of the unworkability of Hanoi's long-standing economic policies.

The prospects for significant reform are, however, not particularly bright in view of the mass of bureaucratic cadres who would have to give up their old ways, and the importance of the elderly Old Guard that still opposes any "counterrevolutionary" changes. The Three Historic Leaders have been for Premier Linh what Chen Yun and Peng Zhen are for Deng, and in each country there is a host of cadres that fancy themselves "revolutionaries" but are frequently called conservatives by outsiders—that is, by outsiders who are not conservatives. (Dyed-in-the-wool American conservatives must shudder at the thought that remnants of Mao's radicalism are now being called conservatives by Western liberals, especially in what American conservatives, no doubt, see as the liberal press.) There is thus an ironic similarity in the leadership situations in Beijing and Hanoi, in two countries that abominate each other, and each of which fancies that it is totally different from the other. In one area, however, there is likely to be a noticeable divergence between the two countries—in the arts and intellectual creativity. The Vietnamese have long emulated the arrogance of the French in claiming artistic and intellectual superiority over their Southeast Asian neighbors. The Hanoi authorities have consequently been more tolerant than the Chinese in allowing freedom for playwrights and authors. The Chinese obsession, of course, is with economic development and with opposing "bourgeois liberalization" and cultural freedom.

### **Legitimacy Crises**

An interesting question is why there are such sharp generational differences in the ranks of leadership in China and Vietnam. The Leninist party tradition has been to train and mold all members to accord with the same standards of thought and behavior. In such a framework, all who reach the lofty heights of Politburo membership should have essentially identical outlooks. For a long time this was so in the Soviet Union. Suddenly, in the 1980s, however, generational differences have surfaced not only in China and Vietnam but also in Russia. Moreover, it is the old men who are the true believers in revolution and the younger leaders who are inclined toward heterodox ways.

The explanation seems to be that communism, as a system for managing society, was seen as exciting by men whose thinking was shaped by the nineteenth century and to a degree the first decade of the twentieth. Younger leaders could not help seeing that the system they are inheriting is manifestly inferior to the robust capitalist systems surrounding them. Faith in a once visionary ideology had become ossified, but those who have reached the top cannot abandon it. They can see that central planning is a design for inefficiency, and they are troubled that the only lingering sources of vitality in communism are the secret police and the military war machines.

It is to the credit of the Chinese leadership that they were the first to realize the dead end to which communism was taking them. (Khrushchev may have had some earlier premonitions of troubles, even while he was angrily declaring that he was going to “bury” the capitalist world, but he certainly did not see the basic problems as clearly as Deng has.) It is not that they were necessarily wiser than the others; it may have been only that revolutionary communism under Mao had brought the Chinese to a worse state of disaster than the others. In any case, Gorbachev has had to follow on the heels of Deng in calling for “reforms.” His efforts to shake up the motherland of socialism have stirred a modest, but comparable, response in Vietnam. Ironically, the feudal, dynastic succession process in North Korea has seemingly checked any such inclinations for change beyond allowing the timid emergence of some technocrats.

The imperative of change has raised the specter of a legitimacy crisis for communism. In both Moscow and Beijing, top leaders have stated that the future of communism hangs on the success of the current “reforms.” It is not for us in this analysis to judge how accurate their prognosis may be. What is relevant is how the leaders in the three Asian countries are likely to respond to the problem of legitimacy as they perceive it.

It is important to keep in mind that legitimacy is an issue for the leadership, and for those who perceive themselves as aspiring leaders—such as the Chinese college students who expect to be a part of the elite. Legitimacy is not a troublesome problem for the bulk of the populations of the three countries. Except for those in South Vietnam who see no future for themselves and are potential boat people, the general mood of the masses in the three countries is to accept the current political authorities passively and uncritically. Indeed, in contrast to most cultures in which people suspect that their authorities will speak nonsense if they can get away with it, in China, North Korea, and Vietnam the masses seem willing to applaud whatever authority figures say. No doubt today the Chinese are less gullible than they were when chanting Mao’s quotations, but they have a long way to go before becoming a force capable of making their leaders toe the line in matching words and deeds.

It is the leaders who need to justify their rule to themselves and to those who are beginning to doubt communism. The issues of legitimacy in the three countries are somewhat different, but for all of them the problem challenges the skills of leaders who must also cope with the problems of succession. Indeed, the problem of legitimacy in North Korea is precisely the issue of father-to-son, which will become more acute when senior Kim’s plan is put to the test. Opponents, both domestic and foreign, will probably question the legitimacy of such a procedure.

The problem of leadership legitimacy is more diffuse in China and cannot be defined so concretely. Basically, it arises from a Confucian tradition that says that rulers must be moral examples and government should have ethical foundations. That tradition found its reincarnation in modern times in the

Marxist-Leninist principle that ideology should be the foundation of a revolutionary regime. The crisis in China today is confusion over what official ideology is in practice and not just in pro forma rhetoric.

The erosion of ideology in China since the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution has been profound. Uncertainty among the elite as to what they should believe ideologically has contributed to making them hypersensitive about "bourgeois liberalism," something they agree is illegitimate. In no small measure, Hu Yaobang's difficulties stemmed from being assigned the thankless task of working out what should be China's ideology. His problem of articulating views that would guarantee a consensus made him vulnerable to attack. Thus, his competitor Zhao Ziyang could tell the visiting Hungarian Politburo member Ferenc Havasi that Hu was ideologically soft on "bourgeois liberalization" and was showing "weakness in the face of bourgeois tendencies."<sup>15</sup>

Beijing's glib formula that its goal is to establish "socialism with Chinese characteristics" is largely meaningless as long as officials cannot satisfactorily define either "socialism" or "Chinese characteristics." By the time any ideological spokesman gets through reciting such formulas as "Central planning is primary, market forces secondary," the idea of socialism has been stripped of the allure necessary for the mystique of legitimacy. As for the notion of "Chinese characteristics," it is in a total muddle after forty years of incessant vilification of nearly every feature of traditional Chinese culture as an evil feudal remnant. Even before the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese were destroying historic monuments and debasing their artistic and cultural traditions as vile reminders of their feudal past. Fortunately, even the manic energies of the Red Guards were not up to the task of obliterating three thousand years of Chinese artistic achievements.<sup>16</sup>

The formula of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" is an awkward attempt to articulate Chinese nationalism in a situation in which the essential value to be protected at all costs is a manifestly foreign import, Marxism-Leninism. The irony, of course, is that this foreign import must be fiercely defended against other foreign imports that are called "bourgeois liberalizations," a category that would be unknown to Chinese culture if it were not for Marxism-Leninism. It is true, of course, that some Chinese intellectuals from the late nineteenth century opposed Western liberal values and the spirit of pluralism basic to bourgeois values.

Two and three decades ago, it used to be said that the Asian communists' rise to power was fueled by their identification with nationalism. According to this view, North Korea had a more legitimate claim to Korean nationalism because it was said that South Korea was dependent upon the United States. (Ignored, of course, was the North's dependence upon both the USSR and China.) Mao supposedly won the civil war against Chiang Kai-shek because

<sup>15</sup>Robert Delfs, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Jan. 29, 1987, 10.

the communists had captured the spirit of Chinese nationalism. (Ignored were the disciplinary effects of Marxism-Leninism in producing the organizational weapon.) North Vietnam was more in the throes of Vietnamese nationalism than the South because it sought, by protracted warfare, to unify the country. Whatever nationalism may have contributed to the successes of Asian communism in the past, it is clear that today nationalism is undermining the Leninist states. This is particularly so in China as it seeks both modernization and an independent foreign policy. North Korea and, even more, Vietnam are far too dependent upon the Soviet Union to be able to decrease the continuing importance of Marxism-Leninism in giving legitimacy to their rulers, yet in time they too will probably confront the same problems that the Chinese now have.

The erosion of Marxist ideology is also producing in China a paradoxical challenge to Chinese nationalism, particularly among those who are aware that their country has been a failure compared to its neighbors. For these Chinese, the slogan "socialism with Chinese characteristics" evokes the idea of a second-rate version of socialism, something to be ashamed of rather than an object of pride. They find themselves in much the same situation as those Burmese who see their officially proclaimed "Burmese road to socialism" to be a joke, which if taken seriously would make them the laughingstock of the world. Socialism with Chinese characteristics was, under Mao, a rather unimpressive form of socialism, on the basis of its record to date—especially because almost all recent positive developments depend upon deviations from socialism.

Some Western observers believe that the reformers' goal is to make China's modernization policies become the basis of legitimacy. This would be an extremely dangerous path to follow because the legitimacy of a political system should never be left to the vagaries of specific policy successes. The power of the mystique of legitimacy is precisely that it can ensure system stability in the face of policy failures. Deng himself realizes this important political truth, and therefore he has not abandoned ideological principles. He has soft-pedaled them because the middle-aged and older generations are still recovering from the horrors of the Cultural Revolution and welcome a respite from ideology.

The extraordinary phenomenon of the student movement in the late fall

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<sup>16</sup>After the desecration of tearing down the magnificent city walls of Peking, the party made a survey and discovered that the city still had nearly five thousand historical wonders; the decision was promptly made to eliminate all, except for seventy-eight (Tiziano Terzani, *Behind the Forbidden Door: Travels in Unknown China* [New York: Henry Holt, 1986]). Relentlessly the Chinese sought to make Peking into another Moscow, a display place of drab, smoking heavy industries. They transformed Peking into Beijing, a Third World city lacking the world class to have an anglicized name such as Florence, Rome, Paris, Munich, and even Moscow. Now, of course, the Chinese have discovered that they cannot impress foreign visitors with their run-down factories, and that if they are to attract the much-wanted tourist dollars, they must play up yesterday's despised "feudal legacies."

of 1986 has to be understood, in part, as that of a generation untouched by the Cultural Revolution, seeking to give voice to its demands for a version of legitimacy that promises more than just economic development and the material rewards of being part of the elite.<sup>17</sup> The astonishing thing was that the privileged students in China should have been moved to dissent and to demand pluralistic, liberal democracy. Their behavior, even if it did not last long, offers hope that a new generation of Chinese may arise who will abandon their forefathers' propensity to accept uncritically any crackpot views as long as they are the solemn pronouncements of authority. Indeed, if China's youth can become this enlightened with little help from their elders, there is hope for the future. They will, however, have to fight stern, and even cruel, opposition from their elders and the party. Communist Party Document 1, of January 2, 1987, quotes Deng Xiaoping in attacking the student demonstrations as saying: "When necessary we must deal severely with those who defy orders. . . . We can afford to shed some blood. . . . The opposition to bourgeois liberalization must be pursued for 20 years. We have arrested Wei Jingshen and we will not release him. We do not need to pay attention to the faces of foreigners for doing this. By doing this we will not tarnish our image abroad."<sup>18</sup> For as Deng went on to observe, foreigners are only interested in a China that is open for making economic profits.

The desire to be hopeful about China's future is quite proper, but realism should remind us, as Deng's words do, that the tradition of Confucian-Marxism-Leninism of idealizing leadership is not going to disappear easily from the three Asian cultures. The images of authority are still highly personalized for most of the people. Moreover, those at the top prefer it that way, particularly because it allows them to guide national destinies with little accountability. Change may come with future generations, but it can be slow in societies where people, unaccountable to the American mind, look forward to becoming old and expect their personal authority to wax with age. The influence of elders cannot be discounted in cultures where sixty-five year olds are thought of as barely ready for supreme authority.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>See Albert H. Lee, "Students in the Shadow of the Cultural Revolution," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 16, 1987, 14.

<sup>18</sup>*New York Times*, Mar. 8, 1987, 12.

<sup>19</sup>The universal instinct of the old to go back to what they believe were tried-and-true ways, and to forget their limitations, is now being repeated in China as the wizened propagandists in Beijing have revived the "Learn from Lei Feng" nonsense. This derisory warrior ranks as one of the greatest fools in the annals of idiocy. His trivial feats of selflessness were uncovered when his "diary" was "discovered" after he was tragically killed when a telephone pole toppled on his head. The Chinese officials were able, however, to report his innumerable anonymous deeds, usually with accompanying glossy print photographs. Examples of his selfless devotion to the people include washing his comrades' underwear, helping children with their homework, and traveling with a broom so that whenever the train stopped he could leap out and sweep off the platform and indeed the whole station if the stop was long enough. The idea that such hokum might attract China's youth back to the straight and narrow of Mao Zedong Thought suggests how desperate some elements in China's leadership are in their search to strengthen their claims of leadership.

Such hesitation in passing on the baton is perhaps understandable in societies that, as we noted at the beginning, place extreme importance on personal leadership. In their images of authority, it is the bigger-than-life leader who monopolizes the mystique that other societies associate with more impersonal laws and institutions. In their effort to strengthen their claims to legitimacy, the leaders in the three countries have automatically made appeals to the Confucian ideal that the ultimate basis of ruling should be demonstrated ethical superiority. Consequently, they have a need to depict themselves as exemplary figures while castigating their opposition as being morally corrupt. In China, the struggle against "bourgeois liberalism" has had an almost irresistible appeal for leaders who can see in it the double advantage of making themselves appear virtuous and their enemies vile. In all three countries this tradition of presuming that national leaders are almost by definition ethically superior people has made it easy for "proletarian revolutionaries" to have luxurious living conditions—as their predecessor emperors had in their forbidden cities.

## 8. A Comparative Study of the Politics of Leadership Succession in Asian Communist Countries: China, Vietnam, and North Korea

KOOK-CHIN KIM

Communist leaders, once in power, are difficult to remove, and many of them, such as Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam and Mao Zedong in China, hold lifetime positions. Kim Il Sung in North Korea, apparently in good physical health, is also likely to hang on to lifetime rule notwithstanding his efforts to fix his succession and the structure of governance before his death. While the senior Kim intends to pass the reins of power to his son, Kim Jong Il, the current critical challenges to North Korea, internal and external, emanating from its being at the crossroads of a major transition, necessitate the “Great Leader’s” continued primacy.

In China while Mao was alive, leadership change resulted from power struggles but since his death, more often than not, it has resulted from generational turnovers and considerations of experience and ability,<sup>1</sup> as is explicit in the reform politics led by the paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping. But Hu Yaobang’s forced resignation from his position as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) Central Committee in January 1987 casts doubt on Deng’s efforts to ensure a smooth and partly institutionalized process of power succession.

In Vietnam, although Ho had not designated his successor, it was under his aegis that Le Duan rose to preeminence, becoming in fact if not in title the key party leader. In the last few years of his life, although emphasizing collective leadership, Le Duan gradually consolidated his power base by relying heavily on the party apparatus. Thai Quang Trung has asserted that behind the facade of unity, the Vietnamese communist leadership has for years been torn by factionalism, contained within the framework of collective leadership.<sup>2</sup> His analysis shows that Ho’s style of collective leadership contributed to the

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<sup>1</sup>Byung-Joon Ahn, “Changing Leadership in China,” in *Political Leadership in a Changing Society*, Proceedings of the 2d APPSA Conference, Seoul, Oct. 16–18, 1986 (Seoul: Asia-Pacific Political Science Association, 1986), 39–40.

<sup>2</sup>Thai Quang Trung, *Collective Leadership and Factionalism: An Essay on Ho Chi Minh’s Legacy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985).

institutionalization of factionalism among the Vietnamese leaders, along an ideological dichotomy of hard-liners versus moderates or a pro-China versus pro-Soviet cleavage.

The passing of the first-generation revolutionary leaders, symbolized by the death of Le Duan, was confirmed at the Sixth National Party Congress in December 1986. Economic pragmatist Nguyen Van Linh took the leadership, and simultaneously, the three top political leaders, Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, and Le Duc Tho, resigned after months of self-criticism over failings in the regime. This change in Vietnam, which brought about the most significant leadership shift without apparent power struggle since the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) in 1930, may suggest to us a unique pattern of leadership succession in communist systems. It remains to be seen whether or not Hanoi's new leader, Mr. Linh, who is known not to be steeped in the doctrinaire Stalinism of his predecessors and who has a proven record of willingness to experiment with limited capitalist-style incentives, may successfully overhaul Vietnam's troubled economy.

As briefly mentioned above, we have witnessed Deng's reform politics since Mao's death in China, although the questions of Deng's succession remains important, and we may witness Linh's experimental policies continuing along pragmatic lines in Vietnam after the disappearance of the first-generation revolutionary leaders there. However, it remains uncertain in what direction North Korea will change after the passing of Kim Il Sung, who is still the unchallengable leader in North Korea.

A comparative study of the politics of leadership succession or change in the three communist systems in Asia is likely to shed light not only on their internal political processes but also on crucial comparative issues and problems among them. This paper addresses itself to the following research questions:

1. Are there discernible patterns of leadership succession or change in the three developing Leninist societies in Asia?
2. What are the crucial issues or determinants that affect the politics surrounding leadership succession or change in these communist systems?
3. Is the style of leadership task oriented or ideology oriented?

## **China**

To come to grips with the politics of leadership succession or change in China, first of all, it seems imperative to go back to Chinese politics under Mao's leadership. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, the chief impetus and proponent of political change in China, particularly leadership change, was Mao Zedong himself. In view of his dominant role in the Chinese political system, his charismatic leadership, and the development of his Thoughts as a predominant value system directing Chinese political life, it was inevitable that he would have had a tremendous

influence on the nature of post-Mao leadership. Deng Xiaoping and his reformists have directed their efforts to change the formerly capricious, often violent, Chinese political process toward a more institutionalized one. Obviously, the task of ensuring an orderly, routinized process of leadership succession or change has been included as one of the core programs in the reform policies initiated by Deng.

The reasons for concern over the institutionalization of leadership succession or change are not difficult to discern. A brief recapitulation of key points in recent Chinese history will suffice.

According to Byung-Joon Ahn, a "grand coalition" was formed during the 1940s as a result of the convergence of two revolutionary experiences, one in the "red area" or "liberated area" under Mao's leadership and the other in the "white area" under Liu Shaoqi's leadership.<sup>3</sup> However, the consensus among the Chinese leaders under this coalition eroded during the 1950s because many of the top Chinese leaders opposed Mao on his main policy direction, to accomplish agricultural collectivization prior to achieving a minimum level of industrialization. Those leaders who had challenged Mao's leadership and policy direction were for the most part purged during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s.

Until the Eighth Party Congress in 1956, held shortly after the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet party, Mao and opposing leaders represented by Liu had managed to get along with each other. But in the period after 1956, Mao initiated a series of radical campaigns, such as the Hundred Flowers campaign and the Antirightist campaign in 1957, the Great Leap Forward in 1958, and the Socialist Education movement in 1962, placing great emphasis on class struggle, mass mobilization, and egalitarian policies. Liu and other leaders believed that class struggle was basically over in China and, thus, China should exert its endeavors to facilitate economic development above anything else; they emphasized stability, routine procedures, and material incentives to meet the task of pursuing modernization.

The moderates under Liu's leadership, therefore, tried to resist or moderate Mao's demands for radical mass mobilization tactics. But the greater their efforts, the more antagonistic relations became between them and Mao and his radical disciples. The resulting conflicts eventually led to the Cultural Revolution in 1965, which Mao launched basically as an extraordinary means to remove Liu and other moderates opposing his radical policies.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao caused most party leaders, including Liu and Deng, to lose their jobs and to undergo humiliating experiences. In their place, the radicals and the military who had supported Mao emerged as the new leaders in the hierarchy. What was especially noticeable was the rise of the so-called Gang of Four, namely, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyan, and Wang Hongwen. One statistical illustration may help to show

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<sup>3</sup>Byung-Joon Ahn, "Changing Leadership in China," 30–31.

both the extent and the depth of the effect of the Cultural Revolution on leadership change in China during that period. Over 80 percent of the Central Committee members were replaced by new leaders elected in the Ninth Central Committee in 1969; of these about 45 percent were soldiers; only some 19 percent of the Eighth Central Committee members were reelected.<sup>4</sup>

Of particular note was the naked power struggle between Lin Biao, who was designated as Mao's heir, and Zhou Enlai, who survived the throes of the Cultural Revolution as a highly experienced prime minister. After Lin's abortive coup attempt, Zhou reinstated Deng as his successor in 1972. Despite the anti-Confucius campaign against Zhou and Deng waged by the Gang of Four, Deng continued to implement his modernization program with Zhou's firm support. But after the demise of Zhou in January 1976, Deng's position was no longer safe because of open attacks by the Gang of Four. Mao appointed Hua Guofeng as the new prime minister instead of Deng. The so-called Tienanmen incident shortened Deng's first comeback by providing the Gang of Four with the opportunity for another assault to provoke his fall.

The passing of Mao in September 1976 in effect opened a new era in the history of Chinese politics. Deng came back again to a leadership position, for the second time, in 1977. With him, other old leaders returned to their original positions. During the period from 1976 through 1982 when the Twelfth Party Congress was convened, the radicals and the military who had risen during the Cultural Revolution were ousted.

Paradoxically, a spin-off of the Cultural Revolution was the acceleration of what might otherwise have been retarded—the reform politics set in motion by Deng and other leaders who had long suffered from the turbulent trauma of the late Mao era. “In comparative perspective, these people were more concerned with modernization, *i.e.*, the development of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense.”<sup>5</sup> The pursuit of the so-called Four Modernizations was thus selected as the primary task of the party at the Eleventh Party Congress in 1977, as opposed to the class struggle emphasized during Mao's period.

There is no need to delineate the details of how Deng managed to set in motion his reform politics. It will suffice to mention the most salient features.

First, Deng allowed Hua's leadership to continue in order to provide a smooth transitional phase for a gradual reorganization of the party, government, and the military under his direction until June 1981, when Hu Yaobang replaced Hua as the party chairman; Deng reorganized the structure and personnel at each layer of the hierarchy, starting from the top and progressing downward. He used gradual measures deliberately in an effort to prevent a

<sup>4</sup>Parris H. Chang, “The Evolution of the Chinese Communist Party since 1949,” in Yu-ming Shaw, ed., *Power and Policy in the PRC* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), 53–54.

<sup>5</sup>Byung-Joon Ahn, “Changing Leadership in China,” 33.

repetition of the turmoil that had occurred during the Cultural Revolution.

Second, under the new doctrine of “seeking truth from facts,” Deng in effect carried out a de-Maoization, in its course, restoring Liu’s honor at the Central Committee Plenum in February 1980. As a result, all surviving veteran cadres reappeared in their old capacities.

Third, Deng made Zhao Ziyang prime minister in September 1980, on the basis of the success of agricultural reform in Sichuan that Zhao had led since 1979. As mentioned above, Hu became the party chairman; Deng kept the vice-chairmanship. Thus, Deng could form a collective leadership with his trusted followers in top posts.

Last, as part of the effort to ensure an orderly and smooth leadership succession after his death, Deng tried to implement a program of cultivating “Third-Echelon cadres.” According to Chinese political calculation, Deng’s generation belongs to the First Echelon, whereas such persons as Hu and Zhao belong to the Second Echelon; in the Third Echelon are included, for instance, persons such as Hu Qili of the party Secretariat, and Li Peng and Tian Jiyun of the State Council. The cultivation of a Third Echelon through generational change and training has two purposes at least: on the one hand, it is a program calculated to ensure that there will be a peaceful transfer of power from the current leadership to a new group; on the other hand, it is intended to supply personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge for the modernization drive.<sup>6</sup> Despite problems such as corruption and nepotism that have been found more often in the Third Echelon, as Ahn observed, in view of the necessity of the continued Four Modernizations programs and the growing demands for technocrats, managers, engineers, and scientists, “the role of third-echelon cadres is likely to increase in various sectors of Chinese life.”<sup>7</sup>

From this cursory review of reform politics in recent years in China, we see Deng’s major efforts to institutionalize leadership succession or change. In comparative perspective, as Ahn rightly put it:

The great purge during the Cultural Revolution represented the first pattern of power struggle; the return of veteran cadres and the cultivation of the second-echelon cadres after Mao’s death have reflected the generational turnover of the cadres working in different sectors; the current emphasis placed on raising the third-echelon cadres derives from the need to meet the requirements of modernization.<sup>8</sup>

In this light, we may see a broad pattern of leadership succession that is taking place in a more routine process. And, in view of the apparently irreversible trend of modernization and the ensuing reform politics now set in motion in Chinese society after a generation of charismatic leaders has left

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 39–40.

the scene, we may assume that a task-oriented leadership rather than an ideology-oriented leadership is likely to continue as the dominant feature of Chinese leadership in the years to come.

Yet as noted in the introduction of this chapter, Hu's forced resignation as the CCP general secretary in January 1987 casts some doubt on this optimistic observation of leadership succession in a still evolving socialist system such as China. In this regard, Yü Yü-lin's comments on power succession in China merit attention: First, before Deng's death, the succession will be observed only in form and Deng would continue to play the role of the paramount leader. The succession cannot but be accompanied by a degree of political struggle, especially in the post-Deng period. Second, in view of the gerontocracy in Chinese politics, those leaders belonging to the First Echelon will be likely to continue to influence Chinese politics to a large extent. Third, the CCP's general secretary, to be elected at the Thirteenth National Congress, will be a Second Echelon cadre. There will be a slight possibility for Third Echelon cadres to rise to high positions.<sup>9</sup>

In broader terms, what do the patterns of leadership change suggest with respect to the future? The current Chinese leaders appear to have formed a consensus to pursue reforms, although they differ greatly on the pace, extent, and scope of reforms. Each change brings new issues and problems, and even the so-called reformers show doubts about the current course from time to time, and, hence, undertake some retreat. However, the reforms will in all probability be pursued. The era of the Cultural Revolution will not be repeated. The reforms have been too sweeping, especially in agriculture, to be reversed. Consequently, China will muddle through, possibly with greater instability than in the past five years, but not under conditions of chaos.

## Vietnam

Unlike China, the major determinants of Vietnamese politics in general, and of leadership succession or change in particular, seem to have been external issues (such as the anticolonial war against France, the anti-imperialist war against the United States, and the oscillation of its posture toward both giant communist states, China and the Soviet Union). Internal issues have played a secondary role.

Perhaps with this point in mind, P. J. Honey made an astute observation on a basic constraint of Vietnamese politics and leadership: "As in all Communist states, the formulation of policy is the responsibility of a few leaders, but these men, whatever their political inclinations, are restricted in their choice of policy by the circumstances in which they find themselves."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Yü Yü-lin, "Ho Yao Pang's Resignation and Power Succession in Mainland China," *Issues and Studies* 23, no. 3 (Mar. 1987): 6.

<sup>10</sup>P. J. Honey, "The Position of the DRV Leadership and the Succession," in P. J. Honey, ed., *North Vietnam Today* (New York: Praeger, 1962), 47.

Then, how may we account for the rise of the new leadership of Nguyen Van Linh, known as an economic pragmatist, at the Sixth Party Congress in December 1986? In order to address ourselves to this question and the questions of related matters of leadership continuity and party unity, which contributed in major degree to the success of the Vietnamese revolution,<sup>11</sup> we have to review the historical background.

As with Mao Zedong in China, a good point of departure is to discuss Ho Chi Minh and his legacy to Vietnamese politics, particularly with respect to leadership succession. Ho was neither an innovator like Mao nor a ruthless dictator like Stalin or Kim Il Sung. But as Thai Quang Trung has observed, "The legend of Ho Chi Minh has been so pervasive and enduring that for many Westerners it is inconceivable to imagine that his authority could have been contested by any of his disciples."<sup>12</sup> Ho, the father of Vietnamese communism, did not have a successor. It was in effect impossible to replace him because his legend was too immense to be inherited by one man. Perhaps, this problem had been perceived when the Third Party Congress in 1960 instituted "collective leadership." After the Third Party Congress, Ho virtually gave up leadership of the party, unloading most of his duties on Le Duan, his right-hand man.<sup>13</sup>

From 1965 onward, owing to his declining health, Ho made frequent visits to China for medical treatment. According to Le Van Huong, because of Ho's ill health, the Politburo made arrangements in 1968 so that "he only presided over the most important state matters, while other matters would be discussed by the politburo and then be reported to Uncle Ho."<sup>14</sup>

Thus, long before his demise in 1969, Ho had gradually withdrawn from the inner working of Hanoi's political system, thereby virtually becoming in effect a symbolic figurehead, towering more and more above power politics. Therefore, Ho's death did not really introduce any new element into the decision-making process in Hanoi.

Many Western scholars have observed that the unity and continuity of the Vietnamese leadership provide the basis for Vietnamese political processes. For instance, Kelly and Mackerras made the following comments:

A key feature of Vietnamese Marxism-Leninism which contributed to the success of the revolution is the unity of the Party and the continuity of its leadership. Large-scale purges are conspicuously absent in the history of Vietnamese Party, and although conflicts have occurred, they have never degenerated into factional struggles involving the defeat and humiliation of individuals. The Politburo apparently operates on consensus in decision-

<sup>11</sup>Sean Kelly and Colin Mackerras, "The Application of Marxism-Leninism to Vietnam," in Colin Mackerras and Nick Knight, eds., *Marxism in Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 202–31.

<sup>12</sup>Thai Quang Trung, *Collective Leadership and Factionalism*, 1.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>14</sup>Le Van Huong, "The Last Years of Uncle Ho," *Nhan Dan*, 19 May, 1973.

making. . . . Furthermore, this emphasis on unity has resulted in unparalleled continuity in the Party's leadership; with the exception of natural attrition due to death or old age, the membership of the Politburo has remained the same for forty years.<sup>15</sup>

Contrary to this unity thesis of the Vietnamese leadership, Trung has contended that "it would be erroneous to assert that, because the VCP [Vietnam Communist Party] leadership has been united in its basic goals of liberating South Vietnam and dominating Indochina, there have only been disagreements over just how best to go about achieving these goals."<sup>16</sup> Further, Trung argued that from the outset, long before the Sino-Soviet alliance, Ho's calling for the Bolshevik model and Truong Chinh's reliance on Mao's model of the People's War had contributed to the forging of two perspectives on revolution in the Vietnamese communist movement more contradictory than complementary.<sup>17</sup> These diverging revolutionary perspectives of Ho and Chinh contributed to the development of ideological cleavages within the Vietnamese leadership. But the factional conflicts that ensued were not between Ho and Chinh but between Le Duan, Ho's right-hand man, and Chinh. Before his death in September 1969, Ho was witnessing continuing dispute within the Vietnamese communist leadership, between contending factions led by Le Duan and Truong Chinh, and the Sino-Soviet conflict that was at its apex owing to the border clash in March of the same year. Thus, Ho placed great emphasis on two crucial points, that is, the issues of unity of the party and unity within the world communist movement.

The development of the Vietnamese collective leadership cannot be presented in detail here; let it suffice to point out several salient features. First, beyond the facade of unity, as has been indicated, factionalism was the main feature of the Vietnamese communist movement and its leadership. When collective leadership was formally instituted in Vietnam at the Third Congress in 1960, Ho wanted to make sure that the unity of the party would be maintained. But factionalism became a dominant feature of the party as Ho parceled out power among his closest associates, namely, Le Duan to lead the party, Truong Chinh to supervise the National Assembly, and Pham Van Dong to manage the administration.

Second, Ho Chi Minh was far from being a dictator. Unlike Mao Zedong in China or Kim Il Sung in North Korea, Ho played the role of arbiter between Le Duan's pro-Moscow faction (majority) and Truong Chinh's pro-Beijing faction (minority) to keep both party unity and an equidistance between the Soviet Union and China. Thus, in Ho's lifetime there were no purges—a striking contrast to Mao's China.

<sup>15</sup>Kelly and Mackerras, "Application of Marxism-Leninism," 202.

<sup>16</sup>Thai Quang Trung, *Collective Leadership and Factionalism*, 9.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.

Third, collective leadership in Vietnam rapidly evolved into a permanent political struggle between the above two factions, although the pressures of the war held the contending factions together. In this context, one cannot see any attempt among the Vietnamese leaders to institutionalize leadership succession or change such as that seen in Deng's reform politics. Instead, we witness the degeneration of the collective leadership, as discussed in Trung's cogent analysis.<sup>18</sup>

Fourth, Ho's dictum on maintaining party unity and an equidistance between China and the Soviet Union began to erode after the accomplishment of the unification of Vietnam. At the Fourth Party Congress in December 1976, Le Duan barred one-third of the members of the previous Central Committee of the VCP from reelection and put up his own followers instead. Using this new majority in the Central Committee, he began to adopt measures that antagonized China.

At its Fourth Plenum in July 1978, the Central Committee endorsed the view that China was now the main immediate enemy and that Hanoi must prepare to start an offensive against Cambodia. In February 1980, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the party, the Politburo inner circle led by the so-called Le Duan–Le Duc Tho coalition decided to remove several top leaders, including General Vo Nguyen Giap, Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, and Politburo member Tran Quoc Hoan. The removal of these top leaders for dubious reasons relating to the so-called Chinese connection was an unprecedented purge at the top, “a peaceful coup led by the Le-Duan–Le Duc Tho coalition, at the expense of the pro-Chinese wing and the moderate elements.”<sup>19</sup> During this turbulent political process, not only Ho's dictum on unity and equidistance but also the infallibility of the VCP leadership broke apart.

Against this backdrop of conflicting domestic politics and mounting tensions resulting from Vietnam's military involvement in Cambodia, dissatisfaction with the leadership was already widespread within the party months before the Fifth Party Congress was convened in March 1982. Nguyen Khac Vien, Hanoi's top propagandist, issued open criticisms on the way Vietnam's leadership had been ruling the country since 1975. Also, at the Fifth Party Congress both Le Duan and Le Duc Tho acknowledged failures in the development of socialism during the first stage after the unification.

But contrary to official claims, the Le Duan–Le Duc Tho coalition consolidated its power through the unexpected sweep of leadership change after the Fifth Party Congress. They eliminated six Politburo members, including Giap and Trinh Hoan, who had already lost their cabinet seats during the political overhaul in February 1980; forty-six Central Committee

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 78–95. Herein, Trung extensively dealt with the degeneration of collective leadership characterized by the ruthless dictatorship of the Le Duan–Le Duc Tho coalition.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 81–82.

members were also removed. Truong Chinh, well known as the leader of the pro-Beijing faction, may have retained his position either because of his co-optation by the Le Duan–Le Duc Tho coalition or because of the necessity of keeping him due to his worldwide reputation. One irony was that Nguyen Van Linh, who belonged to Truong Chinh's group and later became Hanoi's chief, was eliminated from the Politburo during this period.

In the process of the degeneration of the collective leadership under the Le Duan–Le Duc Tho coalition, the regime in Hanoi became a nepotistic-dictatorial system. In Trung's terms, "family centralism," a clear sign of degeneracy as in Albania or North Korea, progressively replaced "democratic centralism in the party life."<sup>20</sup>

The Vietnamese political system was characterized by a two-family dictatorship, for the party and state affairs were controlled by two clans, that is, the Le Duan family and Le Duc Tho and his brothers. Thus, in comparative perspective, the political regime of Vietnam, particularly during the period from the Fourth Party Congress in 1976 through July 1986, when Le Duan died, had certain similarities with the North Korean political regime led by Kim Il Sung. In terms of generational change, several Vietnamese leaders belonging to the second generation were elected to the Politburo in 1976, and newcomers of the third generation were elected in 1982. But for Vietnam, this new generational input in the leadership structure was far from that in China in terms of pace and scope, let alone in having any systematic plan to implement it.

Last, it may be in order to account for the rise of the new leadership represented by Nguyen Van Linh in the Sixth Party Congress in December 1986. Several reasons can be suggested for the unexpected change, which meant in effect the end of the gerontocracy so prominently featured in Vietnam's collective leadership for the previous period. First of all, the prolonging of the gerontocracy was virtually impossible because of the demise of Le Duan in July 1986, the immediate succession to the party chairmanship by Truong Chinh, the continued conflicts between Le Duc Tho and Truong Chinh, and the declining health of the top leaders. Second, there was mounting pressure from the Vietnamese people, a majority of whom still live in conditions of abject poverty. Last but not less important, the Soviet Union was continually pressuring the Vietnamese leaders into economic reforms because of the waste of Soviet economic and military aid. Vietnam's rigid position on the Cambodian conflict has resulted in diplomatic isolation from international society—thus, diverse pressures on Vietnam's leaders to seek a "breakthrough" to solve the Cambodian problem and to continue to pursue reform policies with greater vigor.

In short, in Vietnam everything seems uncertain and in flux at present. Although a great deal of leadership succession or change has taken place,

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<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

there is no discernible institutionalization. In style of leadership, the VCP's general secretary, Linh, and the newly elected president, Vo Chi Cong, are task-oriented leaders; the newly appointed premier, Pham Hung, is a hard-liner in the mold of the late Le Duan's men. Therefore, the changes are a mixed blessing for the Vietnamese at best.

### North Korea

As Dae-Sook Suh succinctly put it, "The most significant factor in North Korean politics is Kim Il-sung's domination of all aspects of North Korean political life."<sup>21</sup> Unlike Mao Zedong in China or Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, Kim has ruled North Korea for nearly four decades.

It is useful to delineate some salient features of DPRK politics, particularly leadership succession, policy orientation, and style of leadership. In comparative perspective, unlike the Chinese and the Vietnamese, North Koreans have not yet experienced change in the top leadership. In striking contrast to Ho in Vietnam, Kim established himself as the absolute ruler of the North by purging most of his rivals, namely, the domestic, Yanan, and Soviet-Korean factions, by the end of the 1950s.<sup>22</sup> Kim may have been more thorough and ruthless than Mao in eliminating his rivals. He was earlier preoccupied with survival in the throes of factional struggles and resentment over policy differences.

According to Suh, what has been distinct from other communist systems in North Korean politics was the shift of the power center from the party to the state with the birth of a new constitution in 1972. In this shift, Kim seems to have had a threefold aim: (1) to help strengthen the power base of his son, Kim Jong Il, by delegating the operation of the party to junior Kim; (2) to change the party-ruled state into an independent member of the nonaligned nations in an effort to enhance North Korea's status on the world stage; (3) to transform the socialist state into a "personal, family controlled state."<sup>23</sup>

However, Chong-Sik Lee made different observations on the relationship between the party and the state in North Korea's new constitution in 1972, based on Article 4, which states, "The DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] is guided in its activity by the *chuch'e* [self-identity] idea of the Workers' Party of Korea, which is a creative application of Marxism-Leninism to our country's reality." Lee argued that the "DPRK and the WPK [Workers' Party of Korea] are not only inseparable, but . . . a hierarchical relationship exists, the party being superior to the state."<sup>24</sup> However, because Kim Il Sung

<sup>21</sup>Dae-Sook Suh, "Kim Il-sung—his Personality and Politics," in Robert A. Scalapino and Jun-yop Kim, eds., *North Korea Today: Strategic and Domestic Issues* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 43.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>24</sup>Chong-Sik Lee, "The 1972 Constitution and Top Communist Leaders," Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee, eds., *Political Leadership in Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 164.

is general secretary of the WPK, president of the state, commander of the People's Army, and "Benevolent Father" of North Korean society, it is obvious that Kim took complete control of North Korea, of the party, the state, and society, whatever the different interpretations of the new constitution in 1972.

Thus, in Young Whan Kihl's terms, "the land of Kim Il Sung" had been accomplished in the 1970s, with a political system characterized by extreme "command" politics under the Supreme Leader, Kim; it was also characterized by a blind "following" carefully controlled and manipulated by the party apparatus.<sup>25</sup> The personality cult was the predominant feature of North Korean society spread over generations of the Kim family and effectuated on an unprecedented scale.

From the "personal state" built up in this fashion during the 1970s, Kim Il Sung began his effort to institutionalize the so-called father-son hereditary succession in the 1980s. To wit, at the Sixth Party Congress in 1980, this father-son succession was formally legitimized. On June 1, 1986, North Korea reconfirmed the status of Kim Jong Il as heir to his father, Kim Il Sung, thereby creating in principle the "communist dynasty."<sup>26</sup>

As discussed previously, this institutionalization of hereditary succession in North Korea was not seen in the other Asian communist states. In contrast, interesting recent cases of such succession have been seen in other, noncommunist Asian societies, for instance, Chiang Ching-kuo in Taiwan and Rajiv Gandhi in India.

The father-son hereditary succession scheme in North Korea has been sufficiently dealt with in the existing literature.<sup>27</sup> It is sometimes argued that the success or failure of the hereditary succession from Kim Il Sung to his son depends on the longevity of Kim Il Sung himself. The longer he lives, it is hypothesized, the greater the chances for success of his son Kim Jong Il as the next leader. But this proposition rests on tenuous ground because Kim Jong Il will eventually have to be tested as an independent leader in the vortex of North Korean politics. Leadership succession in the post-Kim Il Sung period is still a moot question.

Yung-Hwan Jo has drawn important distinctions between the North Korean hereditary succession scheme and leadership succession in other communist countries.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to the three layers of leadership in China (the so-called Three Echelon cadres), North Korea has two layers because of the bypassing of the generation between senior Kim and junior Kim, an age

<sup>25</sup>Young Whan Kihl, *Politics and Policies in Divided Korea: Regimes in Contest* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), 70–71.

<sup>26</sup>Yung-Hwan Jo, "Succession Politics in North Korea," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 10 (Oct. 1986): 1092.

<sup>27</sup>See, e.g., *ibid.*; Byung Chul Koh, "Political Succession in North Korea," *Korea and World Affairs* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1984); Chong-Sik Lee, "Evolution of the Korean Workers' Party and the Rise of Kim Chong-il," *Asian Survey* 22, no. 5 (May 1982).

<sup>28</sup>Yung-Hwan Jo, "Succession Politics in Divided Korea," 1116–17.

gap of thirty years, complicating the transition in North Korea. Also, Jo's view is that "the three succession layers in China provide a wider range of political types at the summit than the two layers in North Korea that involve the father-son succession."<sup>29</sup>

One critical issue in the North Korean hereditary succession may be how to keep a balanced relationship between the techno-bureaucrats, the military, and the party. Otherwise, although not as intensely as during the Cultural Revolution in China, North Korea may confront difficulties, especially in policy disputes between "reds" and "experts" or over more fundamental questions such as "closed society" versus "open door" policies.

China and the Soviet Union changed attitudes to Kim Il Sung's hereditary succession plan from initial criticism to acquiescence considerably later. The attitudinal changes of these giant neighbors of North Korea are due to their continuing strategic competition. In this regard, North Korea is in a much more advantageous position than Vietnam.

In short, the future of North Korea seems the most uncertain of the three Asian communist countries. Analyses of the future of North Korea after Kim Il Sung cannot go beyond conjecture because he is the crucial determinant of North Korean political life.

## Conclusion

A. G. Meyer has classified authority in communist political systems in three categories, namely, "authority at the time of the revolution," "communist authority in the period of system-building," and "authority in developed communist systems."<sup>30</sup> He has used the terms "authority" and "leadership" interchangeably.

We may apply Meyer's three categories of leadership or authority as a yardstick to compare the three Asian communist countries. Chinese leadership fits into the second category, that is, leadership in the period of system building, in view of the consensus among the top leadership on putting the national priority on the continued modernization drive. The Chinese people appear mostly supportive of the modernization policies pursued by their leaders. Moreover, the traumatic experiences of the Cultural Revolution appear functional in that they reinforce confidence in the current policy direction of the leadership. Thus, a task-oriented, rather than an ideology-oriented, leadership seems to be taking place in China.

Vietnamese leadership may be placed between Meyer's first and second

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 1117; for detailed discussion on various problems relating to the father-son hereditary succession in North Korea, see Jae Kyu Park, "North Korea under Kim Jong Il: The Problems and Prospects" (Paper delivered at the 26th Annual Convention sponsored by the International Studies Association, Washington, D. C., Mar. 5-9, 1985).

<sup>30</sup>A. G. Meyer, "Authority in Communist Political Systems," in Levis J. Edinger, ed., *Political Leadership in Industrialized Societies: Studies of Comparative Analysis* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967), 84-107.

categories, that is, between leadership at the revolution and leadership during system building, yet tilting toward the latter. The current Vietnamese leadership, represented by Nguyen Van Linh, can be conceived of as leadership for system building. It remains to be seen, however, whether Linh's group can continue to pursue reform policies by consolidating their power base and removing obstacles resulting from the hard-core ideologues' insistence on keeping Vietnam's regional hegemonic policies. But because of continuing pressure from the Soviet Union in support of Vietnamese reforms, Linh and his reformists will probably be able to continue their policies. The Vietnamese leadership may be viewed as a mix of task-oriented and ideology-oriented leadership, as seen in the current top troika—General Secretary Linh and President Cong, pragmatists, on the one hand, and Prime Minister Hung, an ideologue, on the other.

How can one define North Korean leadership? Perhaps it is near to Meyer's first category, namely, leadership at the time of revolution. Kim Il Sung has designated his eldest son, Jong Il, his heir so that the son can continue the unfinished task of "socialist revolution and construction" beyond the lifetime of the father.<sup>31</sup> Because the North Korean leaders have kept intact their basic strategy, that is, "to liberate the South," North Korean society should be viewed as a revolutionary system. Its leaders belong to an ideology-oriented leadership, placing emphasis on applying the so-called *chuch'e* ideology to every aspect of North Korean political life.

In view of the increasing interdependence of nations in recent years, it is unlikely that any nation, communist or noncommunist, can achieve continued economic development under an autarkic system. In this regard, of the leaders in the three Asian communist countries, those in China are likely to be least challenged, and those in North Korea most challenged, in the years to come.

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<sup>31</sup>Young Whan Kihl, *Politics and Policies*, 91.

## **Part Five**

# **The Military and Its Political Role**

## 9. The Party, the Gun, and the Great Leader: Civil-Military Relations in North Korea

HARLAN W. JENCKS

Much has been written on civil-military relations in the Third World and in China.<sup>1</sup> Much less has been written on the subject regarding Vietnam or North Korea.<sup>2</sup> Though a comparative study of civil-military relations in China, Vietnam, and North Korea deserves a book-length historical study, this chapter emphasizes North Korea and the present.

### Methodology

No adequate civil-military relations model yet exists for Third World states, nor for Leninist states. The study of civil-military relations focuses upon the officer corps and upon supposedly universal characteristics of military forces. In his landmark book on Soviet civil-military relations, Roman Kolkowicz argues that any army has five “natural” traits that are antithetical to those of a revolutionary party: (1) elitism; (2) desire for professional autonomy; (3) nationalism, contrasting with party “proletarian international-

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<sup>1</sup>E.g., Ellis Joffe, “Civil-Military Relations,” in *Chinese Defence Policy*, ed. Gerald Segal and William T. Tow (London: Macmillan, 1984); Alistair Johnson, “Changing Party-Army Relations in China, 1979–1984,” *Asian Survey* 24 (Oct. 1984), 1012–39; Michael Ng-Quinn, “The Chinese Military: Political Demands and Control,” *Armed Forces and Society* 12, no. 2 (Winter 1986): 253–86; Morris Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); and Claude E. Welch, Jr., “Civil-Military Relations in the Third World,” *Armed Forces and Society* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1985): 183–97.

<sup>2</sup>See Douglas Pike, “The People’s Army of Vietnam,” and Gregory F. T. Winn, “North Korea: A Garrison State,” in *The Armed Forces in Contemporary Asian Societies*, ed. Edward A. Olsen and Stephan Jurika (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), 123–37 and 104–20, resp.; Pike’s *PAVN* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1986); Lee Suk-ho, “Party-Military Relations in North Korea” (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1983); and C. I. Eugene Kim, “Civil-Military Relations in the Two Koreas,” *Armed Forces and Society* 11, no. 1 (Fall 1984): 9–31.

ism”; (4) preference for corporate distinction; and (5) “heroic symbolism.”<sup>3</sup> Three of these five supposedly universal traits do not apply to the Korean Workers’ Party (KWP). The KWP has never been particularly egalitarian. Its nationalism is every bit as strong as the army’s, and proletarian internationalism is strikingly missing in KWP propaganda. The party seems to value heroic symbolism as much as the army does.

An important characteristic of the three Asian communist systems is their interpenetration of military and civilian elites. I have noted elsewhere that “much of the debate about [Chinese] civil-military relations boils down to debate over who is or is not ‘military.’”<sup>4</sup> Korea points up the problems of attempting to apply European-based models of military professionalism to developing or Leninist states.

I still find Huntington’s basic model useful, if not very detailed.<sup>5</sup> Military professionalism, according to Huntington, is characterized by the professional expertise, responsibility, and corporateness of the officer corps. *Expertise* means skill and knowledge in the management of organized violence. It implies concomitant deference to experts in other fields, including national policy-making. Expertise is relatively easy to identify and measure, even in North Korea, where officer corps expertise appears to be highly developed. According to Huntington, military *responsibility* is unique in that the only legitimate client of the military profession is the state. In Leninist states, this begs a crucial question: Is the officer corps responsible to the state or to the party? Professional *corporateness* is the most politically significant of Huntington’s three characteristics, and the hardest to assess. To what extent does the officer corps identify itself as a distinct institution and operate autonomously from nonmilitary groups? To what extent does the officer corps identify its fate with the fate of the regime, and to what extent can it contemplate corporate existence apart from the regime? In particular, to what extent does it differentiate itself from the party?

Amos Perlmutter identifies a model of “revolutionary professional soldier” who is neither corporate nor anticivilian in his orientation.<sup>6</sup> He is the leader of armed forces that, under the guidance of a revolutionary party, seized state power. His symbiotic relationship with the revolutionary party precludes any effort to preempt or replace the civilian party leadership. The professional revolutionary soldier’s orientation is to maintain the revolution

<sup>3</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 46, citing Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>4</sup>Harlan W. Jencks, “Watching China’s Military: A Personal View,” *Problems of Communism* 35, no. 3 (May–June 1986): 77.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), chap. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Amos Perlmutter, “The Revolutionary Professional Soldier,” in *The Political Influence of the Military*, ed. Amos Perlmutter and Valerie Plave Bennet (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1980), 483.

and protect the independence of the revolutionary state. In return, he is accorded a high order of social esteem. Although there may be differences over security strategy, doctrine, or organization, the basic interdependence of party and army makes for a relatively stable form of civil-military relations.

Perlmutter's "revolutionary professional" model was developed with China and Israel particularly in mind, and applies fairly well to Vietnam. If the official (post-1960) myth of its Manchurian anti-Japanese guerrilla experience were true, the Korean People's Army (KPA) officer corps might also be "revolutionary professional soldiers." However, no amount of *ex post facto* propaganda can create the experience of seizing power by revolutionary warfare. The KPA and the North Korean state were created by force of Soviet arms, and KPA leaders know it. It would therefore be logical to look to Eastern Europe and Mongolia for civil-military relations models. Yet, the Eastern European "developmental model" posited by Herspring and Volgyes does not apply in North Korea either. Their model suggests that party-military relations change over time as the party succeeds in inculcating the officer corps with the party's value system. The more successful it is in this task, the less the need for explicit party controls. "During the early stages of power—particularly in Eastern Europe where the values of the military as well as of the population as a whole sharply differed from those of the new Party leadership," party representatives (commissars, et al.) supervised or controlled the actions of military personnel, "most of whom were presumed to be at least potentially hostile." As the army internalizes the party's value system, however, commissars shift "away from explicit control functions toward supportive types of activity (e.g., military discipline, morale problems, combat readiness, and the like)."<sup>7</sup>

For evaluating civil-military relations in Third World countries, Albright has suggested a series of factors: (1) Historical attitudes concerning the role of the military in political life, (2) the circumstances under which the government came to power, (3) relations with other states, (4) the extent of functional specialization among the ruling elite, (5) the degree of factional strife within the governing elite, (6) the amount of bureaucratization of politics, (7) the country's military doctrine, (8) the extent of domestic order, (9) the institutional structure of society, and (10) the degree of corporate interests of the military.<sup>8</sup>

Lee Suk-ho suggests that in considering Leninist regimes, all Albright's factors can be placed into two categories. The first includes direct connections between the party and the military, such as the party apparatus within the military chain of command, the role and influence of political officers

<sup>7</sup>Dale R. Herspring, "Introduction," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 209–10; and Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978), *passim*.

<sup>8</sup>David E. Albright, "A Comparative Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," *World Politics* 32, no. 4 (July 1980): 553–76.

within the army, political indoctrination, and military participation in the civilian sector. The second includes influences on shifts in party-military relations, such as historical and cultural attitudes, the experience of the communist leaders (before and after seizure of power), and major events in internal and external politics.<sup>9</sup> Lee writes that at least two generalizations can be made about party-army relations in all communist countries. First, the party and the army are not necessarily clearly defined, nor do they necessarily have conflicting interests; rather, their interests tend to converge toward symbiotic party-army relations. Second, civil-military relations patterns in communist states can change, and increased party control over the army need not mean more civil-military conflict. In North Korea, increased party control after 1960 seems to have correlated with less civil-military conflict rather than more—just the opposite of what Kolkowicz would have predicted.

Though internal political and security considerations are almost universally of primary concern, external relations are also important in shaping civil-military relations. The alternation of alliances, enmity, and armed conflicts between and among China, Vietnam, Korea, and the Soviet Union have influenced civil-military relations within them all.

Henry Bienen has suggested, in the context of African politics, the addition of dominant personalities and idiosyncratic factors.<sup>10</sup> This certainly applies to North Korea, where Kim Il Sung dominates civil-military relations, as he dominates everything else. The dominant presence of Mao Zedong in China also comes to mind.<sup>11</sup> The Great Leader Kim Il Sung is so central to civil-military relations in North Korea that it is tempting simply to dismiss all other factors. The point of this study, however, is to adduce other factors in order to answer what is perhaps the single most important question: What will happen to civil-military relations in Korea once Kim is gone?

### **The Militarization of Society**

Vietnam and North Korea, along with Israel, are probably the most militarized societies in the world. China, at least statistically speaking, is relatively nonmilitarized. In 1985, North Korea had a very high 4.26 percent of its total population in active military service, and an incredible 28.5 percent of its total population with some degree of service obligation in military or paramilitary forces. Vietnam, which Douglas Pike has described as a “modern Sparta,” had “only” 9.7 percent of its population subject to some sort of military obligation (see table 1).

Vietnam and North Korea both have military establishments that grow constantly. The People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) grew from 100,000 in 1946,

<sup>9</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 61.

<sup>10</sup>Henry Bienen, “Armed Forces in National Modernization—Continuing the Debate,” *Comparative Politics* 16, no. 1 (Oct. 1963): 1–6.

<sup>11</sup>Note the excellent discussion in Eugene Kim (see n. 2), 10–11.

**Table 1**  
**Military Manpower and Expenditures**  
**in China, Vietnam, and North Korea**  
**(1985)**

	National Population (Millions)	Active Military (Including Security Forces) (Millions)	(% of Population)	Total Military (Including Active, Reserve, Security, and Paramilitary) (Millions)	(% of Population)	GDP (US\$ Billion)	Defense Expenditures (US\$ Billion)	Defense Expenditures (as % of GDP)
China	1,050.0	3,000	0.29	25,000	2.4	553.00	6.52	1.18
Vietnam	59.0	1,000	1.69	5,715	9.7	18.10*	1.30*	7.18
North Korea	20.6	0.878	4.26	5,880	28.5	14.72	3.42	23.30

SOURCES: *The Military Balance, 1986-1987*; Paek (see n. 14), *passim*; *Asia 1987 Yearbook*; U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1986*.

\*1984 estimate from ACDA. Vietnamese military expenditure shown does not include Soviet and Warsaw Pact aid.

to approximately 200,000 in 1955 (just after the end of the anti-French war), to 400,000 in 1965, to 650,000 in 1975 (at the end of the anti-American war of unification), to about 1,000,000 by 1985.<sup>12</sup> Although Vietnam's military budget is unknown, Thayer estimates 1983 military expenditures at about 50 percent of the total state budget, in addition to the approximately US\$2 billion a year in military aid provided by the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact states.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, the North Korean army has grown continuously in war and in peace, from 60,000 in 1948 to 150,000–200,000 by 1950. It was 470,000 in 1973, 700,000 in 1980, and 878,000 in 1985. This was faster than population growth; Korean soldiers constituted 3.1 percent of the population in 1973, and 4.2 percent in 1985, when the KPA was the world's eighth-largest standing army.<sup>14</sup>

Although the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and People's Armed Forces Police together constitute the world's second-largest military force (after the USSR), in 1985 they were only about 0.29 percent of China's enormous population. Counting all active, reserve, and paramilitary forces, roughly 25 million Chinese have military service obligations; yet this amounts to only 2.4 percent of the population—less than some NATO countries.<sup>15</sup>

The importance of these statistics is in the military's social "presence." Things military are pervasive in Vietnam and North Korea. Virtually every male is a soldier for at least three years and has a long reserve obligation thereafter. Armed uniformed men are omnipresent in city and countryside. The military's presence is lower in China, especially in rural areas of the interior. The presence of military veterans is important, for military service tends to inculcate a "task orientation" mentality. In all three countries, disproportionate numbers of civilian officials are military veterans.

The economic burden of the military is important politically, and here too the statistics distinguish China from her smaller neighbors. In China, the overall burden is relatively low and has been shrinking since the late 1970s. Even as China engaged in war by proxy in Cambodia and sporadic warfare on the Vietnamese border, its military establishment shrank. Military budgets have held at, or slightly below, the pre-1979 level<sup>16</sup> and fallen rapidly as a percentage of the expanding gross domestic product (GDP). In both Vietnam

<sup>12</sup>Pike (see n. 2), 125; and Carlye A. Thayer, "Vietnam," in *Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia*, ed. Zaharia Haji Ahmad and Harold Crouch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 262.

<sup>13</sup>Thayer (see n. 12), 262.

<sup>14</sup>Paek Hwan-ki, "North Korea's Arms Buildup and Its Economic Dilemma," *Vantage Point* (Seoul) 9, no. 12 (Special Ed., Dec. 1986), 2–3; and U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1986*, 19.

<sup>15</sup>*Jane's Defence Weekly*, Nov. 1, 1986, 1023.

<sup>16</sup>Author's estimates based on official PRC budgets and IISS figures in *The Military Balance, 1986–1987*, 142.

and North Korea, military expenditures have been expanding, despite economic stagnation.<sup>17</sup>

North Korea is one of the very few countries that spends over 20 percent of GDP on armaments.<sup>18</sup> At the Fifth Party Congress, in 1970, Kim Il Sung frankly stated that the burden of the military budget was “too heavy for us in light of the small size of the country and its population.” Military budgets increased an average of 15 percent a year until 1972, when they sharply declined. From 1972 to 1985, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) military budget increased more slowly, but it still continues to expand.<sup>19</sup> The North Koreans continue to confound foreign analysts who assert that North Korea’s economy cannot possibly sustain further military growth. Korean leaders, and even the population, do not seem to regard it as an unusual sacrifice. Growth in military power is seen as “a necessary evil at worst or an end in itself at best.”<sup>20</sup> Pike portrays a similar situation in Vietnam, where the PAVN seems to live in an economic world of its own. Resources somehow are always there, regardless of the cost to the rest of society.<sup>21</sup>

In Vietnam and North Korea, society is militarized and militaristic. The content and tone of most public discourse are military. Both polities perceive themselves as beset by merciless enemies who can only be staved off by the exertions of every member. All phenomena, foreign and domestic, tend to be treated as military campaigns. Perhaps this is understandable in Vietnam, whose leaders are more experienced in warfare than in any other endeavor—more so than any other national elite in the world. Virtually all have military backgrounds and have risen to the top as a result of military-political struggle. This is true not only of the old men who long populated the Vietnamese Workers [Communist] Party (VWP) Politburo and Central Committee (average ages were respectively seventy two and sixty nine in 1986), but also of the slightly younger men who are replacing them in 1987, and even of the lower levels of leadership; for Vietnam is still engaged in extensive military-political operations. The Vietnamese see themselves as perpetually engaged in political and military struggle (*dau tranh*).<sup>22</sup> They currently face “hegemonist and expansionistic forces” (China) in collusion with American imperialists and “international reactionaries” (the Sihanouk and Sonn San factions in Cambodia) who have “unleashed sabotage on Vietnam to prevent its advancement.” These enemies have “pushed their Pol Pot henchmen to wage aggression at

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<sup>17</sup>Paek (see n. 14), *passim*; and Yu In-taek, “Prospects for North Korea’s Military Policy under the Rule of Kim Jong-il,” Pt. 1, *Vantage Point* 8, no. 6 (June 1985): 4–7.

<sup>18</sup>Paek (see n. 14), 7.

<sup>19</sup>Winn (see n. 2), 111–12.

<sup>20</sup>Yon Ha-chong, “North Korea’s Economic Trends and Policy Decisions,” *Vantage Point* 9, no. 11 (Nov. 1986): 6.

<sup>21</sup>Pike (see n. 2), 130.

<sup>22</sup>Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 16–18.

our country's southwestern border and have then sent their troops to directly invade our country's northern border." The PAVN must deal with all these problems and "remain ready to cope with a possible large-scale enemy war of aggression."<sup>23</sup>

This helps justify the overall militarization of Vietnamese society. Militia and self-defense forces are the "main tools of revolutionary violence" throughout the country, needed in the struggle against domestic "sabotage and counterrevolution" and for the maintenance of political security and public order. The militia and self-defense forces also have "the role of a hard-core and assault force in productive labor in various revolutionary movements, and contribute to building a new type of man at the grassroots level."<sup>24</sup> This last sentence is a good example of the military rhetoric that is applied to political and economic affairs as well as to national defense. Such rhetoric is common in Vietnam and North Korea and, until the death of Mao, was common in China.

It is striking that although Vietnam is currently involved in chronic warfare in Cambodia and sporadic warfare along the Chinese border, even PAVN spokesmen speak of the present as "peacetime." By contrast, in North Korea, where few soldiers are involved in real military operations, the state maintains a posture of near war hysteria. Virtually any military activity by the United States or Japan, let alone the Republic of Korea (ROK), is characterized as "final preparation" for an imminent attack on the DPRK.<sup>25</sup>

Military indoctrination in North Korea is even more extensive than in Vietnam, and begins in kindergarten. Everything from arithmetic problems to nursery songs is couched in terms of military struggle and the battlefield.<sup>26</sup> Military values, as well as party slogans and doctrine, permeate North Korean society. Economic, political, and social campaigns often have military-style slogans: "Maintain a Speed Battle" to meet economic targets, or "Everybody to the Battle to Pull Weeds." Military themes permeate films and plays. All university students receive two to three hours of military training a week.

In Korea and North Vietnam, where such high percentages of youth serve in uniform, the political socialization function of the military is prominent. Historically, it has also been important in China and in the Soviet Union. Under Mao, the PLA was seen not only as a "great school" for indoctrinating the soldiers but also as an instrument for indoctrinating the population. That is still true in Vietnam and North Korea. A further use of the armed forces is to

<sup>23</sup>Speech by Senior General Le Duc Anh to the Sixth Vietnamese Communist Party Congress, Hanoi Domestic Service, Dec. 17, 1986, FBIS-APA 86-244, K 19-22.

<sup>24</sup>Hanoi Domestic Service, Feb. 5, 1987, FBIS-APA 87-027, K 5.

<sup>25</sup>Pyongyang Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), English, Jan. 22, 1987, FBIS-APA 87-014, D 1-2; Pyongyang Domestic Service, Mar. 14, 1987, FBIS-APA 87-50, D 6-8.

<sup>26</sup>"Ideological Indoctrination of North Korean Children," *Vantage Point* 8, no. 8 (Aug. 1986): 11-16; and "The Orwellian World of North Korean Education," *ibid.*, 7, no. 2 (Feb. 1985): 12-17.

spread party values to the general population through discharged veterans. This is still important in all three societies and in the Soviet Union.

The homogenization and nationalization functions of the KPA are probably less important because of Korea's traditional homogeneity, reinforced by the extensive system of civilian education and indoctrination. The KPA does not, for example, need to indoctrinate disaffected youth as the PAVN does. Recently, some PAVN leaders have complained about the high percentage of recruits from the South, drafted into the PAVN to be "socialized." Their presence in the ranks has contributed to a high defection rate and lowered military efficiency. There is no comparable need to do anything like this in North Korea because there are no disaffected population sectors or geographical areas.

Over the past decade, the Chinese PLA, which was historically a peasant infantry army, has been recruiting better-educated urban soldiers, particularly in specialized branches. The demographic effect on the PLA officer corps is still uncertain, but the older, poorly educated, peasant guerrilla leaders will largely disappear by the end of the century. In both Korea and Vietnam, however, the relatively uneducated peasant guerrilla leader is still much in evidence at the top and, in Vietnam, is the norm throughout the entire civil and military structure. It will be noted, in this as in many other ways, that the PAVN's present looks much like the PLA's past; the Vietnamese officer corps and its relationship with the VWP look similar to the Chinese officer corps and army-party relationship in 1954.

The social prestige of the officer corps is high in the Soviet Union and in the three Asian countries under study. The prestige of the military has dropped somewhat in China over the past decade as national priorities have shifted to economic and scientific matters and as the polity reacted against real and supposed abuses by the PLA during the Cultural Revolution. In North Korea and Vietnam, however, the officer corps continues to be extremely prestigious and privileged.

In all three societies, officers are among the best-educated national elites. The KPA officer education system includes approximately seventeen schools and academies, leading up to the Kim Il Sung Military University for advanced officer-education.<sup>27</sup> In China, an elaborate system of professional military education has been developed over the past decade. Hundreds of academies and schools train officers, up through the new National Defense University.<sup>28</sup> In Vietnam, a similar system of six academies and twenty-one schools culminates in the PAVN Military Institute.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Winn (see n. 2), 111.

<sup>28</sup>Harlan W. Jencks, "Educating China's Military," in *The Education of Armies*, ed. Michael D. Stephens, forthcoming.

<sup>29</sup>Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 198–99, 207 n. 12.

## Civil-Military Evolution

Traditional China, Korea, and Vietnam were Confucian societies, which shared at least the theory of the subordination of military institutions and officials to civilians. The practice, however, varied. In traditional Vietnam, next to the emperor himself, the army rather than the civilian mandarins tended to dominate, despite the denials of most Vietnamese historians.<sup>30</sup> The attitude toward the military was negative in Confucian societies, and there was a strong popular aversion to soldiers and soldiering among common people, especially in Korea and China. In Vietnam, although military service was not sought after, it carried little of the social stigma it had in the other two societies. The military was largely kept in check by civilian officialdom in Korea and China, though in different ways, prior to the twentieth century revolutions.

In all three countries, there was a recurrent historical pattern of deteriorating military power resulting from efforts by the throne to control the army. This in turn produced security crises when the country was invaded or when rebellion broke out. The response in all three countries was usually the raising of armies by local officials. In the twentieth century, this resulted in internal warfare, particularly in China and Vietnam. Warlords kept China at war with itself through the first half of this century. Armed rebellions arose in Vietnam, particularly among religious sects in Annam and Nam Bo. Lee Suk-ho writes that as a result of neglect and deterioration, the Yi dynasty's military defenses were minimal. Whenever Yi dynasty Korea was invaded or faced national crisis, a localized volunteer army, called *uibyong*, tended to arise. Thus began a tradition whereby, in time of emergency, all people participated in the defense of the country. "This tradition was carried on into the Japanese colonial period (1910–1945). . . . There were several anti-Japanese militias voluntarily organized by Koreans. Among them was Kim Il-sung's group."<sup>31</sup> This history of local militias and warlords is seen as a historical lesson by all three communist governments. National leaders are determined to prevent any local military challenge to the center.

All three armies and all three communist movements were influenced by one another, by Comintern advisers, and by Soviet training during their formative periods. Comintern agents were particularly active in founding the communist parties of China (CCP, 1921) and Vietnam (1930). Officers from all three countries attended the Whampo (Huangpu) Military Academy in China in the mid-1920s, and others were trained at various Comintern-run institutions, such as the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow. There was also a substantial interchange of personnel and ideas among the leaders of the revolutionary movements of the three countries, particularly linking the

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 9–14.

<sup>31</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 123–24.

Vietnamese and the Chinese communist elites.<sup>32</sup> The Korean movement had a strong Yan'an faction until it was purged in 1950–56.

Relations between and among the revolutionary elites and parties of these three states and the Soviet Union have been especially important, not only because of the rise and fall of military alliances and threats but also because of changed ideology and personal relations. Exacerbating this has been the Vietnamese proclivity to suspect betrayal by their friends. They point to alleged Sino-Soviet betrayal at the Geneva Conference of 1954 and, of course, to the Chinese turnabout in the late 1970s. Vietnam's 1978 treaty with the Soviet Union is crucial to Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) security, and therefore all the more worrisome to Vietnamese leaders. Fluctuating relations with their two larger communist neighbors have influenced the Koreans also to turn inward, creating an artificial, homegrown guerrilla myth and a self-sufficient national military industry.

### *Structure*

At the tops of the Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese parties sit the central committees. Within the Central Committee is the hard core of top leaders who carry the decisive political voice, organized as a politburo (called the Political Committee in North Korea prior to 1980). Under each of the three central committees is a military affairs commission. The Military Affairs Commission (MAC) of the CCP was probably established at the Cunyi conference in 1935, and the Central Military Party Commission (CMPC) of the VWP was established in 1945. The MAC of the KWP, however, was established only in 1963. If we accept Mao Zedong's dictum that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," it is important to recognize that the MAC ultimately controls the gun in all three countries. In all three armies, the military commission sits at the top of a series of party committees organized within army units down to company level.

Party organization parallels military organization at all levels. Precise details vary, but the parallel hierarchies are similar and are based on early Soviet practice. Typically, the secretary of the company-level party organ is elected by the general membership. At all higher levels, party secretaries are elected by party congresses or conferences in a typical "Bolshevik" style, paralleling Soviet practice.<sup>33</sup> In describing the party organization within the PAVN, Pike emphasizes that military and party "should not be regarded as

<sup>32</sup>Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 49–50. This study ignores the debate over "Chinese influence" in the Vietnamese revolution: See Pierre Brocheux, "Vietnamese Communism and the Peasants . . .," in *Vietnamese Communism in Comparative Perspective*, ed. William S. Turley (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), esp. 80–81. On Koreans at Whampoa, see Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-sik Lee, "The Society," Pt. 2 of *Communism in Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 923–24.

<sup>33</sup>For details, see Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), chap. 6; Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), chap. 6; and Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles . . .* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), 231–43.

separate institutions somehow entwined but rather as a single integrated entity.” In each military unit there is a command structure that contains a party *apararat*.<sup>34</sup> The same is true in the PLA and the KPA.

The Ministry of National Defense (Ministry of the People’s Armed Forces in Korea) is the main state organ controlling the armed forces. In all three states, there has usually been an organ called the State (National) Defense Council, which on paper is a virtual subcabinet charged with defense policy. In China, the National Defense Council established by the constitution of 1954 was impotent—it had no function at all and is not known to ever have met. It provided honorific sinecures for senior retired generals, many of them Nationalist leaders who had defected late in the civil war. Under the PRC constitution of 1982, the National Defense Council was functionally replaced by the State Central Military Commission (CMC, Zhongyang junshi weiyuanhui), which was supposed to take over as the supreme command organ of all the armed forces, replacing the MAC of the party.<sup>35</sup> Over the past five years, this State CMC has seldom been mentioned; the CCP MAC remains the ultimate locus of military control. The Chinese have camouflaged this by having identical membership in the state and the party commissions and referring to the Central Military Commission as the “Zhong jun hui,” an abbreviated term frequently applied to the MAC before 1982—thus muddling whether the reference is to the state or to the party organ. Consequently, under both its state constitutions, China has had a supreme state military organ with no evident function.

In the Soviet Union, the State Defense Council was created at the beginning of World War II and apparently has wielded great power ever since; the first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) is always chairman and (therefore?) commander in chief of the Soviet armed forces.<sup>36</sup> There is a similar body in Vietnam that seems close to the Soviet model. The SRV National Defense Council has always included the top half dozen or so party and military leaders and wielded great power, particularly over mobilization and grand political-military strategy. It seems to serve as an executive organ of the Central Military Political Committee.<sup>37</sup> The North Korean State Defense Council appears virtually identical to its Soviet counterpart, and it and the MAC seem to be almost equally important. In addition, the 1972 Constitution of the DPRK established the Central People’s Committee (CPC) as the “highest organ of state power.” The powers of the CPC include directing national defense and state security, appointing and removing high-

<sup>34</sup>Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 150–51; Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 211–15.

<sup>35</sup>Interview of Premier Zhao Ziyang on NHK-TV (Tokyo), June 4, 1982, FBIS-China, 82–109, D 1–2. Zhao stated that “the army is an important component of the state.”

<sup>36</sup>Harriet F. Scott and William Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR*, 3d. ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), 23, 106–7.

<sup>37</sup>Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 92–94.

ranking officers, ordering national mobilization, and proclaiming war. Because of the nearly exact overlap in their memberships, the Politburo and the CPC frequently meet jointly.<sup>38</sup> In Korea and Vietnam, the memberships of the Military Affairs Committee of the party and the State Defense Council overlap to near identity. The same situation exists under the 1982 Constitution of China, as described above. Thus, each of the three Asian countries has two theoretically separate organs that have virtually identical memberships and virtually identical functions—one under the government and one under the party. One can only speculate why they maintain two apparently redundant organs. The answer probably lies in the sticky question of whether the armed forces serve the state or serve the party.

Another important factor in the state structure is the existence of other armed organizations, particularly various armed security police forces. These exist in all three states and in the Soviet Union; their organizational forms and subordination vary. At least on a small scale, these are alternative organs of organized violence that could be brought to bear against isolated rebellious military organizations. Counterarmy armies seem to be characteristic of twentieth century totalitarian regimes. Note the SS and the SA in Nazi Germany and the KGB and the MVD and their various organizational predecessors in the Soviet Union. In China, the Ministry of Public Security maintained separate armed forces until 1959, and has again since about 1983. Similar organs have existed in Vietnam since roughly 1954. In North Korea, the Public Security Forces predate the KPA, having been first organized under Soviet tutelage in 1946. The rise and fall of these units frequently parallels civil-military friction. The army always seeks to reduce their prestige and importance, or to take command of them; civilian leaders seem to feel more secure having a counterarmy army available. In 1959, as Mao and Lin Biao set about organizing their challenge to the mainstream CCP, security forces were absorbed into the PLA. Currently, the Chinese People's Armed Police Forces (PAPF) are expanding. Many PLA local and regional force units have been converted into the PAPF in the past five years, resubordinated to the Ministry of Public Security, and retrained for police, security, and border guard duties.

In North Korea, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces were removed from the state cabinet in 1982 and placed directly under the CPC. At the first session of the Eighth Korean Supreme People's Assembly, in December 1986, the Ministry of Public Security was transferred back to the cabinet, leaving the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces directly subordinate to the CPC and therefore "actually led by Kim Il-sung."<sup>39</sup> This would appear to indicate that the Ministry of

<sup>38</sup>Byung Chul Koh, "Political Institutionalization in Asian Communist Societies: China, North Korea, and Vietnam," chap. 3 in this vol.

<sup>39</sup>*Vantage Point* 10, no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 15, 16. I am grateful to B. M. Huang for this clarification regarding the CPC.

Public Security has lost at least a degree of prestige vis-à-vis the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces.

In all three armies, there is a degree of interpenetration of security organs and the military. In particular, political security agents and organizations may be assigned to, or hidden within, the armed forces. This appears to be particularly so in Korea. In 1973, political security functions for the military were made the responsibility of the State Political Security Department (SPSD), which was headed at that time by Kim Byong-ha, a kinsman of Kim Il Sung. The SPSD exercised "indirect control" over the Political Security Bureau of the KPA. The Political Security Bureau is unique to the Korean army in that it provides a hierarchy of political security officers, in addition to party representatives and political commissars, at all levels of command. Like the Soviet KGB, it controls networks of informants within the military as well.<sup>40</sup> Mutual surveillance and political paranoia inside the army seem to be more intense in North Korea than in either China or Vietnam.

Just below the Ministry of National Defense in all three countries is the General Staff Department. There is also the General Political Department (GPD—the Chinese term; it is called General Political Directorate in Vietnam, and General Political Bureau in Korea). In China and Korea, the GPD is parallel to and theoretically equal to the General Staff Department, whereas in Vietnam the GPD is formally subordinate to it. In practice, the director of each GPD responds to the directives of the chief of the General Staff Department.

The General Political Department presides over a system of political departments, parallel to but formally distinct from the party committees, at each level of command, down to regimental or battalion level. This is a political work organization of the army itself. The GPD is part of the armed forces but is supervised especially closely by the party Military Affairs Commission. The GPD and the political department system are made up entirely of party members. The membership of a unit's political department and the leadership of its corresponding unit party committee will always overlap, and often be identical. Frequently, the chief of the political department also will be the unit political commissar, especially at lower levels. At higher levels, the chief of the political department of a unit and its political commissar may be different people, particularly in China. The head of the General Political Department will often be referred to as "the army's top political commissar" by foreign journalists.

Leon Trotsky is usually credited with inventing the military political commissar, to serve as political watchdog over former czarist officers during the Red Army's early days. Chinese revolutionary forces gathered together from disparate bandit and warlord armies initially had a somewhat similar requirement for commissars. The Soviet dual-command system of the 1920s

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<sup>40</sup>Gregory F. T. Winn, "National Security," in *North Korea: A Country Study*, ed. Fredrica M. Bunge, prepared for the Department of the Army (Washington, D.C., 1981), 213.

was imposed by the Comintern and taught at the Whampoa Military Academy. The PLA has, at least in theory, adhered to this system ever since, showing greater continuity in the organization of its commissar system than the Koreans, the Vietnamese, or the Soviets themselves.

The dual-command system places two men in charge of each military organization down to company level; the military commander and the “political commander” (commissar) bear equal responsibility for everything the unit does or fails to do. The former specializes in “strictly military” affairs; the latter is responsible for indoctrination, for political reliability, and for assuring the integration of the unit’s military activities into the party’s overall political strategy. The dual-command system was formally adopted by the PAVN around 1952, and by the KPA only in September 1961.

The exact division of labor between the two commanders under the dual-command system can vary. During the Chinese civil war (1946–49), political commissars frequently handled unit administration, logistics, and intelligence functions, as well as political work. The practice has varied greatly in the degree of authority sharing. In the PLA and in the PAVN, extended periods of intense combat have usually seen the military commander ascend to primacy while the commissar becomes at best an administrative asset and at worst an extraneous nuisance. Over the years, party and military regulations have consistently given the commissar the advantage in the event of commander-commissar disagreement. Yet commanders have tended to dominate in practice, not only in combat but also in peacetime periods when the armed forces are modernizing. During such periods, the political commissars fight to maintain their prerogatives, often backed by civilian ideologues. China saw such a period of military commander ascendancy in 1954–59, and all three armies are currently in such periods. The debate over the military-commissar systems in 1987 was most heated in Vietnam and least so in Korea.

In the PLA up to the mid-1970s, and in the PAVN up to the present, certain high-level military leaders have served concurrently as their own political commissars. Lower-level leaders, who are presumably less reliable, have not been officially allowed to use this simple solution, which in effect allows one-man command while maintaining the theory of dual command.

In all three states, the commissar system has often been the focus of party-army conflict. The very existence of the system implies mistrust of military commanders. It is telling that in 1945–52, the PAVN was simply led by party cadres—there were no military specialists as such, and there was therefore no need for a commissar system. Only with the expansion of the Viet Minh armies in 1951–52 was it deemed necessary to create a dual-command system.

In Korea, where the Kapsan faction dominated the KPA but not the Korean Workers’ Party, prior to the purges of 1956–58, there was no commissar system either. Kim Il Sung trusted the officer corps more than the party and kept the two separated until he had consolidated his hold on the latter. Only then did he establish an orthodox dual-command system.

The Soviet Union, under the pressures of combat, abolished the two-man command system early in World War II and adopted the principle of one-man command (*yedinonachaliye*), which it has followed ever since. In the Soviet armed forces, the political officer is a "deputy commander for political affairs" who wields considerable power and answers to a separate political chain of command, but the military commander is still the individual held responsible. His political assistant is expected to help him exercise command and maintain discipline. Under the pressures of modernization and Soviet advice, the Vietnamese army adopted Soviet-style one-man command in 1980.<sup>41</sup>

### *Party-Army Relations*

The three armed forces under consideration have evolved in remarkably different ways vis-à-vis their communist parties, yet they have more in common with each other than with their Soviet mentors. In China, the PLA and CCP hierarchies overlapped extensively almost from the outset. Some leaders (like Mao) recruited peasant soldiers; others (like Zhou Enlai) penetrated and subverted the revolutionary armies of the Kuomintang, as well as warlord units and bandit gangs. From the Long March (1934–35) onward, however, there was little distinction between communist military and party leadership.<sup>42</sup> From the beginning, the PLA was regarded as the army of the CCP. The distinction between party and army was never very clear before 1949, though top PLA leaders tended to be lifelong military specialists. There was essential agreement on civil-military issues and a recognition by soldiers and civilians alike that party and army needed each other.

Nevertheless, there was a degree of institutional and personnel distinction, which became more pronounced after 1949. Under extreme circumstances such as the Cultural Revolution, a few PLA officers may have regarded their fates as not totally dependent on the fate of the regime. One reason that this could happen in China is simply its geographical extent together with its long history of independent regional political-military powers. During the worst days of the Cultural Revolution, it was possible for regional military leaders, such as Wang Enmao in Xinjiang and Huang Yongsheng in Canton, to maintain de facto political-military autonomy. Nevertheless, the PLA resisted involvement in the Cultural Revolution in 1967–69 and quickly "returned to barracks" following the death of Lin Biao in 1971.<sup>43</sup>

In all three countries, the distinction between party and army is least evident in the upper echelons, where multiple office-holding is most com-

<sup>41</sup>On commissar systems, see Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 150–51, 166–70; Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 244–53; and Kao Ying-mao et al., *The Political Work System of the Chinese Communist Military* (Providence, R.I.: East Asia Language and Area Center, 1971).

<sup>42</sup>Jonathan R. Adelman, "Origins of the Difference in Political Influence of the Soviet and Chinese Armies," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1977): 347–69.

<sup>43</sup>Ellis Joffe and Gerald Segal, "The Chinese Army and Professionalism," *Problems of Communism* 27 (Nov.–Dec. 1978): 1–19; Jencks, *Muskets to Missiles* (see n. 33), 255–57.

mon. Over the past decade, multiple office-holding has been curtailed in China, in contrast to Korea and Vietnam, where the practice remains extensive. Today, in nearly all Chinese organizations below the MAC, institutional distinctions among party, army, and government are reflected in division of labor among individuals.

The PAVN began as the armed party. Far from being a tool of the party, it *was* the party, and there was no distinction between party cadres and military commanders. That distinction emerged only as the party expanded and increasing numbers of noncommunists came to command Viet Minh units during the united front war against France. Since the end of the French war, the PAVN and the VWP have evolved into somewhat distinct organizations, so that the issue of army-party relations has arisen. Even today, however, the degree of overlapping membership among party, government, and army hierarchies is great in Vietnam. At the top of the Vietnamese military establishment are twelve to fifteen generals and a few "civilians," representing party and state "in a single entity," who make virtually all the decisions. "There is no true hierarchy or chain of command, or even a superior-subordinate arrangement within this upper level; rather there are various sets of organizational boxes occupied by the same few individuals and organized in this fashion for division of labor only."<sup>44</sup> In the 1980s, the PAVN is officially described as "a tool of the party" that must "unconditionally submit to the leadership of the party."<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, as the PAVN has modernized under Soviet tutelage, "there are muted questions, even by loyal party members, asking if the party [within] PAVN is not a useful 'fifth wheel on the cart.'"<sup>46</sup>

Although party and army grow more distinct, there probably will not be any major rupture. The VWP will continue to co-opt the PAVN officer corps. The dangerous "subliminal challenge" is likely to be PAVN penetration and "militarization" of the party. "Because of its [the PAVN's] overwhelming presence, the sociological struggle for influence, whether intended or not, will have profound effects on both institutions. It is probable that both will be altered in the process if the struggle continues for a decade or more."<sup>47</sup> Militarization of the party threatens through ideas, influence, and sheer numbers. In 1975–82, six of every ten new party members came from the army. This appears to be deliberate; quotas for party recruiting within the PAVN are set for each military region and unit. At present, 10–20 percent of the People's Army of Vietnam are party members,<sup>48</sup> about the same as the PLA and somewhat less than the KPA.

In Vietnam, the relationship of military units to local civilian party

<sup>44</sup>Pike (see n. 2), 128.

<sup>45</sup>*Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, Dec. 19, 1986, FBIS-APA 86–247, K 7.

<sup>46</sup>Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 160.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 160–61.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 147–48, 158. See n. 59.

organizations is similar to that which is supposed to exist in China. Party organs in non-main-force units of the PAVN are "subordinate to the local party organs and placed under the comprehensive direct leadership of the local [party] committee echelons within the scope determined by the Central Committee."<sup>49</sup> Main-force units are expected to coordinate with local civilian party organs. Similarly, Chinese civilian party secretaries were supposed to serve as political commissars of local-force PLA units as far back as the Yan'an period (1936–45). Directives of the CCP have recurrently decried that this is not being done, however. There was a major PRC campaign to reassert the practice in 1978–80. As in previous periods, however, neither local party secretaries nor regional-force PLA units were enthusiastic about the arrangement. It appears that civilian cadres preferred to avoid involvement with the military, and the PLA preferred to remain apart from the local party organization. The scanty evidence indicates a similar situation in Vietnam today. This is not because of disloyalty. Commanders of the PAVN and political commissars simply prefer to operate apart from the local party, and local VWP officials feel they have enough to do without getting involved in a sticky relationship with the PAVN.

The situation in Korea is, and has been, drastically different. From 1945 onward, the KPA was Kim Il Sung's power base, which he kept separate from the Korean Workers' Party, even as he infused the KWP with his Kapsan faction. Only after he had gained full control over the party did Kim institute a system of civil-military institutions superficially similar to the Soviet model.

With Soviet backing, Kim dominated the KPA from its inception in 1947–48. He consolidated his hold, not coincidentally, just as the Chinese military came to his aid in the war against the United Nations. In late 1950, Kim purged Mu Chong and the other major military leaders of the Yan'an faction, men who had served with the CCP during the anti-Japanese war and were closely identified with Chinese interests. He was able to purge the remainder of the Yan'an faction, along with most of the Soviet-Korean faction, as a result of the alleged coup plot by Lieutenant General Chang Byong-san in 1956 and the so-called War College Incident of 1957. Lee Suk-ho emphasizes that party-army relations were never a big problem for Kim, even during the power struggle of 1956. The KPA officer corps, dominated by the Kapsan faction, solidly supported him as he rid the party of his opponents.<sup>50</sup> Once army and party had been purged, Kim created a more orthodox communist style of civil-military relations, though it still differs markedly from the Soviet model.

Since about 1960, party and army have grown together, although the KPA has penetrated the civilian party much more than the reverse. The Central Committee Plenum of 1958 called for strengthened political work in the KPA

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<sup>49</sup>Thayer (see n. 12), 247, quoting Vietnamese Communist Party Statutes.

<sup>50</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 136–49.

and the expulsion of “warlordism,” “factionalism,” and “bureaucratism.” Organizational controls were tightened, and a new system of KWP committees was created within the army. Political education, centered on the teachings of Kim Il Sung, was intensified.<sup>51</sup> The 1961 party rules contained a new chapter: “The Party Organization of the Korean People’s Army.” These rules, revised in 1970 and 1980, remain in force.

This reorganization was accompanied by dramatic revisions in military doctrine and party history. Theretofore, the KPA had been a relatively conventional army, organized and equipped in the Soviet mold. Military doctrine envisioned a conventional defense of the DPRK against conventional attack by the United States and the ROK. Once he consolidated undisputed control of the party and began to reorganize the system of civil-military relations, Kim Il Sung imposed a new national myth, “The Korean People’s Army is a genuine people’s army and a revolutionary armed force of the Korean Workers’ Party, which is the successor to the glorious tradition of the anti-Japanese armed struggle [Article 46].”<sup>52</sup> Gone was wholesale copying of the Soviet Union and conventional defense strategy. Instead, a doctrine of People’s War and defense in depth was justified by, and justification for, a new system of civil-military relations.

In 1962, Kim put forward his “four-point military line,” which continues in force. The first of the four points is “cadrefication”: This principle requires that every soldier learn the job of his immediate superior and that all military men be potential military cadres for a vastly expanded nation-in-arms. Point two is “nationalization”: Modern military techniques are to be adapted to the unique characteristics of Korea’s terrain and conditions. Point three is “mass mobilization” in the event of invasion: This principle led to a gigantic program of military construction during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The entire country is now said to be crisscrossed with antitank obstacles, bunkers, fortifications, underground logistic installations, et cetera. The fourth point is “protracted struggle”: To make this possible, North Korea began developing an independent military-industrial system and stockpiling strategic materials.<sup>53</sup>

In 1969–70, Generals Kim Ch’ang-bong, Ho Pong-hak, and Ch’oe Kwang were purged. Their loyalty and obedience were never in question, but they evidently failed to come up to the Great Leader’s expectations in his aggressive policies toward the ROK. In this, and in all subsequent removals of individuals from the army, civil-military tensions do not appear to have been at issue. Kim Il Sung is just a demanding taskmaster, and no amount of loyalty is sufficient to excuse failure. Nevertheless, Kim took advantage of these purges to reinforce his control of the army. Henceforth, “the orders of

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 150–51.

<sup>52</sup>1970 KWP rules, quoted *ibid.*, 231.

<sup>53</sup>Winn, “National Security” (see n. 40), 226.

commanders at any level could not be carried out without a political officer's signature."<sup>54</sup> This system supposedly remains in force.

Until 1982, the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party was specified as the commander of the PLA. As we have seen, this may be changing in China, but is in dispute. The PAVN is still explicitly the "armed forces of the party" in Vietnam. In North Korea, the institutional link is closer still. As observed earlier, the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces is directly subordinate to the Central People's Committee.

As in the VWP, KWP membership is highly "militarized." From the First KWP Congress (1946) through the Sixth KWP Congress (1980), "military men" have constituted an average of about 20 percent of Central Committee (CC) membership. Although the turnover rate in CC membership is high, soldiers get reelected much more consistently than civilians. Military representation on the CC was fairly constant between 1961 and 1980 but soared on the Politburo from 6 percent to 29 percent. The Politburo reelection rate of active military men has been very high, except at the Fifth Congress, in the aftermath of the KPA purges of 1969–70. "Military" percentages for both bodies (CC and Politburo) are considerably higher if one counts senior civilians, including Kim Il Sung, who had extensive military experience before 1950.<sup>55</sup>

The expansion of the Politburo from sixteen to thirty-four members at the 1980 Sixth KWP Congress was probably related to the Great Leader's decision, about then, to be succeeded by his son, Kim Jong Il. Among the twenty-five new members, seven were military professionals, including the "rehabilitated" Ch'oe Kwang. Like the eighteen new civilians, they were all thought to be supporters of the younger Kim.<sup>56</sup>

### *The Officer Corps and the Party*

In North Korea, as Eugene Kim observes, "the officer corps is a privileged class intimately tied to the fate of the regime."<sup>57</sup> This is equally true in Vietnam and, to a slightly lesser degree, in China. Twenty to 25 percent of all North Korean soldiers, including all the officers, are thought to be party members. Members of the KWP are said to constitute up to 70 percent in the companies along the DMZ.<sup>58</sup> This is probably the highest percentage of party members in any communist state's army.<sup>59</sup>

The KPA is supposed to assist local KWP organs by providing instructors,

<sup>54</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 154–58.

<sup>55</sup>See the tables *ibid.*, 283, 289. Even higher military percentages are given by Eugene Kim (see n. 2), 15.

<sup>56</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 284–85.

<sup>57</sup>Eugene Kim (see n. 2), 14.

<sup>58</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 279.

<sup>59</sup>Thayer (see n. 12), 248, claims 35–40 percent of the PAVN were party members in 1983. This

agitators, technicians, et cetera. This is partly to keep the two institutions “united,” but also to serve the interests of People’s War. “The shift of emphasis in military doctrine from regular to irregular warfare, while creating the militarization of society and the politicization of the military, has also fostered closer cooperation between the party and the military.”<sup>60</sup> However, this relationship is couched mainly in terms of military participation, assistance, and penetration into the civilian population and civilian party, rather than the reverse, as in Vietnam and China. Little is ever said about local civilian party cadres having any say in the affairs of military units. The 1980 party rules encourage military party organs to join in, participate, guide, and educate local KWP organs. “The party committees within the KPA can recommend political and military cadres to be members of the elementary party committees of the factory or plant, or members of province and district committees in the areas of the military station.”<sup>61</sup>

In China, the officer corps has been somewhat distinct since at least the end of the Korean War. In Vietnam, the distinction also exists, particularly in the post-1954 period, and is currently becoming more marked, at least partly because of Soviet influence. In North Korea, the trend is exactly the opposite. The distinct officer corps of 1948–58 has since amalgamated with the party. It is more precise to speak of the North Korean party and army as an integrated whole with interpenetrating controls. Scalapino and Lee note that party rank correlates closely with overall status, power, and office holding, much more precisely than in China, the Soviet Union, or Vietnam.<sup>62</sup> Both hierarchies are absolutely dominated by Kim Il Sung and his personal following. The result is a nearly perfect political control network unique to the DPRK.<sup>63</sup>

The “red versus expert” contradiction, which has plagued all Leninist armies, implies fundamental questions about party-military relations. The tendency for military commanders to dominate the commander-commissar relationship is closely related to the decision, made since 1975 in both China and Vietnam, that military expertise is ultimately more important than “redness.” This is likely to happen in any army engaged in, or preparing for, conventional warfare with modern weapons and combined arms.

If an army is preparing to engage in a protracted People’s War of mass mobilization, “redness” may be more important. The 1958–60 revision of Kim Il Sung’s military doctrine, from modern, Soviet style to People’s War, was dictated largely by his desire for internal political control. It also implied the priority of “redness” (defined as loyalty to Kim) over military expertise. A

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would be the highest proportion anywhere, if true. Even considering extensive party “rectification” in 1983–85, Thayer’s figure seems too high. See n. 48.

<sup>60</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 197.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 250, 251.

<sup>62</sup>Scalapino and Lee (see n. 32), 1004.

<sup>63</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 306–7.

national strategy of People's War promotes interpenetration of the military and the party, facilitating control of both.<sup>64</sup> It places a premium on control and mass mobilization and makes ideological motivation *militarily* relevant. This was pointed out incessantly in China during the Cultural Revolution when, for example, the PLA sent Three Supports and Two Militaries Teams into civilian schools and enterprises: "The Three Supports and Two Militaries are the best preparation for a people's war."<sup>65</sup>

Scalapino and Lee observe that the "red versus expert" issue is inevitable in developing communist states, but that it is less so in North Korea because—like Stalin at his zenith—Kim Il Sung's imprimatur is on all matters, civil, military, and other. This reduces the scope for any pressure groups or opinion groups to emerge advocating any particular "red" or "expert" line separate from that of the Great Leader. Kim's political style is for "total unity and absolute synthesis."<sup>66</sup>

For different reasons, it is difficult to identify a "military mind" in either the North Korean or the Vietnamese armies. In Vietnam, Pike observes that although the relationship of soldiers and officers with civilians is complex and sometimes contradictory, the PAVN is "as integrated as an armed force can be into a social system." The party is distinct from the state in Vietnam, but the military transcends both. Because of their origins and revolutionary experiences, the entire SRV leadership is "vastly experienced in military matters," having been involved in warfare for decades. "Yet, by standards normally used to judge military leaders, the Vietnamese are neophytes. Primarily this is because they are creatures of the Party's civilian process."<sup>67</sup> Pike concludes that although there is no "military mind" in the PAVN officer corps, the entire national leadership has a shared mentality that is "martial but not military."

North Korean officers seem to be more professionally military than either their Vietnamese or their Chinese counterparts. The KPA is more separated, physically and functionally, from civilian society, and it is more specialized in its military function.<sup>68</sup> The Korean officer's expertise and responsibility are specifically military, though compromised by the People's War doctrine. The "corporateness" of the KPA officer corps presents a mixed picture. In terms of its hierarchical system of rank, its separation from civilians and civil functions, and so forth, it does appear to have a corporate consciousness. On the other hand, the overall militarization of North Korean society reduces the degree of distinction, as does the military's high social visibility. So does the extraordinarily high percentage of the population who are in military organizations, and the high percentage of soldiers who are party members.

<sup>64</sup>I am grateful to B. M. Huang for pointing this out.

<sup>65</sup>*Peking Review*, Jan. 16, 1970, 16. Also see Jencks, *Muskets to Missiles* (see n. 33), 85.

<sup>66</sup>Scalapino and Lee (see n. 32), 961–62.

<sup>67</sup>Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 193.

<sup>68</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 163.

Pike observes that factionalism is endemic to all Sinic societies. Family ties, past associations, common interests, and personalities all contribute to factional strife. Military and quasi-military doctrinal disputes are frequently vehicle and pretext, rather than cause, of factionalism. I have shown elsewhere that Lin Biao's attack on the "bourgeois military line" in the 1960s, for example, was mere pretext to attack his enemies in the PLA.<sup>69</sup> Another perennial issue in civil-military factional strife is self-sufficiency versus foreign assistance. If there is consensus on foreign assistance, there is likely to be further dispute over the preferable source. In China, the consensus shifted from Soviet aid (1950–60), to self-sufficiency (1960–75), to Western Europe and the United States. In North Korea and Vietnam, the choice has always been between China and the USSR. In Vietnam, the debate has been "won by the pro-Soviet faction but as a factional issue it is not dead, merely dormant."<sup>70</sup> The "red versus expert" dispute and various subdisputes have also provided fuel for factionalism. So has regionalism: Historic Vietnamese factional differences between the Tonkin delta, Annam, and Nam Bo have more recently been replaced by differences between northern and southern cadres. There has been similar regional factionalism in the Chinese armed forces, as described, for example, by William Whitson.<sup>71</sup> In North Korea, regional disputes do not appear to have been significant since Kim purged the "domestic" faction of the KWP in the late 1940s, and there has never been regionalism in the KPA.

The KPA's Yan'an and Soviet-Korean factions were eliminated nearly thirty years ago. There is no available evidence of any disagreement over foreign assistance. For example, everything indicates a personal decision by Kim Il Sung in 1985 to grant overflight rights to the USSR in exchange for MiG-23 interceptors. Kim is clearly "above" the factionalism, but there may well be vicious competition behind the scenes for access to his ear. Like a Chinese emperor, Kim is to some extent dependent upon his advisers for his understanding of reality. His lifelong practice of traveling about "inspecting" and "delivering on-the-spot guidance" is evidence of his desire to corroborate and supplement his advisers and bypass the bureaucracies. Still, he must depend on advisers, and access to Kim's office and his confidence are the ultimate prizes in DPRK politics.

### Succession

According to Mao, the party must control the gun. In North Korea it is more accurate to say that Kim Il Sung and his Manchurian guerrilla group control both the gun and the party. However, the military dominates Kim's personal circle of power holders. "The party and the military share power in

<sup>69</sup>Jencks, *Muskets to Missiles* (see n. 33), 58–59, 253–56.

<sup>70</sup>Pike, *PAVN* (see n. 2), 184–85.

<sup>71</sup>William W. Whitson, *The Chinese High Command* (New York: Praeger, 1973).

North Korea, in a fused and monocratic mode.”<sup>72</sup> The first question about succession, then, must be, Will it be possible for Kim Jong Il to replicate this “monocracy” when his father passes from the scene? Another question is, What will be the role of the military officer corps and the military high command in the transition?

Since Kim Jong Il became party secretary in September 1973, he has strengthened his power in the army via a series of purges and deaths. Some of those removed include Nam Il (who died mysteriously) and Lee Yong-mu (General Political Bureau director) in 1977, Jang Jong-hang (deputy minister of defense) and Bang Chol-gap (chief of the naval staff) in 1980, Kim Ch’ol-man (deputy chief of staff) in 1981, Kim Byong-ha (minister of national security) in 1982, and Choe Hyun (deputy chief of staff) in 1983.<sup>73</sup> Enough division deputy commanders and regimental commanders were replaced by junior officers that by the end of 1975, middle-echelon officers of combat units were in their thirties, over a decade younger than before. Subsequently, many younger officers who had graduated from the Mankyongdae Revolutionary Institute or from the Kim Il Sung Integrated University took over the middle ranks of the KPA. Altogether, it was a sweeping generational change.<sup>74</sup>

In the mid-1970s, Kim Jong Il also launched the Three Revolutions Teams. These teams “infiltrated . . . all units of production, public administration, social and cultural activity. They uprooted sources of potential resistance and accelerated the replacement of elder cadres by younger ones for the sake of strengthening . . . the rise of Kim Chong-il to power.”<sup>75</sup> The Three Revolutions Teams evidently committed various abuses and were arrogant and beyond the orthodox party control system. Their activities were temporarily curtailed in 1976–79 when Kim Jong Il dropped out of public view.

It seems possible that there was resistance to Kim Jong Il’s succession and to his Three Revolutions Teams, but we do not know what happened. Young Kim reappeared in March 1979, and at the Sixth KWP Congress, in 1980, further steps were taken to secure his succession as head of party and state. The Political Committee of the Central Committee was renamed the Politburo, and its membership expanded from 16 to 34 members. The percentage of military members expanded slightly, and the new military men were all closely identified with Kim Jong Il. Central Committee membership expanded from 172 to 248, 175 being new faces, many of them graduates of the Mankyongdae Institute or veterans of the Three Revolutions Teams. Young Kim was also named to the Military Commission of the Central Committee. Kim Jong Il’s protégés and classmates were planted throughout the leadership of the KPA, and “one or two [Three Revolutions] squad members were

<sup>72</sup>Eugene Kim (see n. 2), 26.

<sup>73</sup>Lee Suk-ho (see n. 2), 317; and Kim Gahb-chol, “The Style and Policies of the Post–Kim Il-sung Regime in North Korea,” Pt. 2, *Vantage Point* 10, no. 2 (Feb. 1987): 1–12.

<sup>74</sup>Yu In-taek (see n. 17), 10.

assigned to each army unit above the company level . . . in order to insure the loyalty of servicemen to Kim Chong-il and to keep watch against ideological deviation.”<sup>76</sup> Gradually, Kim established three information channels for himself. First was the normal military command channel, second the political surveillance channel leading up to the Military Affairs Commission, and third a separate chain of Three Revolutions Team members.<sup>77</sup>

General O Guk-ryol is the son of the late O Chung-hup, one of the elder Kim’s comrades in arms in the Manchurian guerrilla days. Supposedly, he is also one of Kim Jong Il’s closest friends. When O Guk-ryol took over as chief of staff of the KPA in early 1980, the special forces units of the KPA were expanded, reorganized, and deployed nearer the DMZ. Some observers therefore link Kim Jong Il with these special forces units and their various activities in attempting to infiltrate the South. Certain South Korean observers claim that he controls them directly.<sup>78</sup> Special forces units would be particularly useful for a coup or countercoup in the event of a succession crisis.

Many observers point to the importance of military generations in DPRK power politics. The oldest generation of Kim’s faction are the anti-Japanese guerrilla fighters who are now in the seventies and retiring. Most of them have meager formal education but ample military training, in China or in the Soviet Union. They have extensive combat experience. They were the top-ranking commanders in the 1950–53 war and are characterized today first of all by their survival—of both war and factional infighting. They are characterized, secondly, by their long loyalty to, and association with, Kim Il Sung and, thirdly, by their ability and success. As we have seen, Kim does not keep incompetent followers, no matter how loyal. Fourthly, they are characterized by a network of personal relationships. Scalapino and Lee describe a sponsor-benefactor system within the Korean military hierarchy in terms almost identical to those of Harvey Nelsen describing the Chinese PLA. These personalized factions remain important even within an overall context of loyalty to Kim Il Sung.<sup>79</sup> Officers of the second generation, now in their fifties and sixties, are veterans of the 1950–53 war. This is perhaps the most crucial generation, and Kim Jong Il has made the strongest effort to cultivate its backing. The third generation was educated after 1945, and its members were children in the early 1950s. These men are fifty or younger. They may be ambivalent, having been raised to be “revolutionary shock troops” but educated to believe in rationalism based on technical education.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup>Kim Gahb-chol (see n. 73), 8.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>77</sup>Testimony of KPA defector Captain Shin Jung-chol, cited by Yu In-taek (see n. 17), 10.

<sup>78</sup>Winn, “National Security” (see n. 40), 231.

<sup>79</sup>Scalapino and Lee (see n. 32), 1004–5; and Harvey W. Nelson, *The Chinese Military System* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977), 152.

<sup>80</sup>Yu In-taek (see n. 17), 7.

Young Kim has had relatively little military experience. He was born in 1942 and studied for two years at the East German Air Force Academy; he graduated from Kim Il Sung University with a major in political science and economics. He has many military protégés, however. These include General O Guk-ryol, mentioned above, and Generals O Paek-yong and Yim Chun-chu. They, and others, have received a series of promotions beginning in the early 1970s, paralleling the rise of Kim Jong Il.<sup>81</sup>

The younger Kim also seems to have several particularly important sponsors among the first-generation leaders. Preeminent among these is Defense Minister O Chin-u. O was a member of Kim Il Sung's anti-Japanese guerrilla group in the 1930s and trained at a Soviet infantry school during the Siberian exile (1940–45). In 1946–48, he commanded the Central Public Security Officers' Training School, which was the source of many of the early officers of the KPA.<sup>82</sup> O ranked twenty-fifth in the party in 1961 and seventeenth in early 1968, when he was the chief of the KPA General Political Bureau. He was one of the major benefactors of the purges of 1968–70, jumping to rank 14 in early 1970, and rank 7 in November 1970. In 1968, he was appointed chief of staff, and in 1976 became minister of defense. By April 1985, O Chin-u, along with the elder and younger Kims, sat on the three-man Presidium of the party Central Committee. In April 1985, he was accorded the singular honor of promotion to vice-marshal—the only one in the army (the only marshal is Kim Il Sung). On March 3, 1987, on his birthday, O Chin-u was decorated with the Order of Kim Il Sung, the highest award in North Korea.<sup>83</sup> He was last seen in public in Pyongyang in September 1986. The *Far East Economic Review* reported in April 1987 that O Chin-u was recovering in a hospital in Moscow from injuries sustained in a 1986 traffic accident. "He would like to return home but Pyongyang is telling him to take his time." He evidently retains all party and military posts.<sup>84</sup>

At the time that O Chin-u was made vice-marshal, a number of officers were promoted to four-star general rank. These included O Guk-ryol, the chief of staff; Paek Hak-rim, vice-minister of the armed forces (also made minister of public security in October 1985); Kim Du-nam, Li Ul-sol, and Chu Do-il, all members of the Military Commission; Kim Bong-yul, vice-minister of the armed forces; Kim Kwang-jin, commander of the artillery; and Li Du-ik, member of the MAC. The official announcement said that these generals were the ones who had been the "most meritorious in realizing Kim Il-sung's

<sup>81</sup>Winn (see n. 2), 113.

<sup>82</sup>Scalapino and Lee (see n. 32), 924, 1001–2.

<sup>83</sup>*North Korea News*, no. 364 (Mar. 1987): 2–3. It is illustrative of our lack of basic data on the DPRK that although this article says O was seventy years old in 1987, Lee Chong-sik believes he was born in 1910. See Lee, *Korean Workers' Party: A Short History* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 118.

<sup>84</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, Apr. 23, 1987, 13.

Chuch'e-oriented military policy."<sup>85</sup> It might have added that they were all supporters of Kim Jong Il, as well.

Throughout the 1980s, there have been continual efforts to assure the army's loyalty to Kim Jong Il. In 1982–85, there was a campaign within the KPA to "become Kim Hyuk and Cha Kwang-su of the 1980s." Kim and Cha both served under Kim Il Sung, who was much younger than they, during the anti-Japanese war. Supposedly, they had "unlimited loyalty" to their young leader. The message for the present is clear.<sup>86</sup> The Korean army has continued to participate in the annual "loyalty festival" between Young Kim's birthday in February and his father's in April. On February 13, 1986, for example, the People's Armed Forces Ministry hosted a banquet for all military attaches in Pyongyang to celebrate Kim Jong Il's birthday. The junior Kim's role in leading the armed forces is emphasized incessantly: "By successfully inheriting the Chu-ch'e-oriented thought from the great Leader, Dear Leader Kim Chong-il has greatly contributed to the development of our armed forces."<sup>87</sup>

If there has been any recent attempt to thwart the wishes of Kim Il Sung on the succession of his son or anything else, it was not evident in the name lists released at the end of the Twelfth Plenum of the Sixth KWP Central Committee on December 27, 1986. Perhaps the most puzzling change in the past year or so has been Paek Hak-rim, who was dropped from the Politburo by the Eleventh Plenum in February 1986 but continues to serve as minister of public security. Kim Jong Il is one of the three members of the Presidium of the Politburo, but still had no government office at the Eighth Supreme People's Assembly, which also met in December 1986.<sup>88</sup>

According to Huntington, the military's political power tends to increase whenever civilian power weakens. That has been the case in several Leninist states since World War II. The most frequently cited example is the political importance of the Soviet army, and Marshal Zhukov in particular, in the rise of Khrushchev. In China, the PLA's deep involvement in politics during the Cultural Revolution mainly benefited Lin Biao, who was designated Mao Zedong's successor at the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969. By 1971, however, Lin had provoked Mao's suspicion by attempting to reinforce his own institutional base, apart from Mao's personal support. Mao moved to rid himself of his erstwhile "close comrade in arms," provoking the mysterious events of September 1971, when Lin allegedly died in a plane crash while fleeing to the Soviet Union. In the years that followed, the PLA returned to barracks and largely withdrew from politics.

<sup>85</sup>Quoted by *North Korean News*, no. 267 (Apr. 22, 1985): 4–5.

<sup>86</sup>Yu In-taek (see n. 17), 10–11.

<sup>87</sup>"Celebration of Kim Chong-il's Forty-fifth Birthday," *North Korean News*, no. 361 (Feb. 23, 1987): 2.

<sup>88</sup>"Li Gun-mo Replaces Kang Song-san as Premier in New Government Lineup," *Vantage Point* 10, no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 15–18; and "Party Session Discusses 1987 Economic Plans, Elects New Secretaries," *ibid.*, 19–21.

Mao's death in November 1976 was swiftly followed by the fall of the Gang of Four. Details are not entirely clear, but all accounts agree that top military men, such as Defense Minister Ye Jianying, Marshal Nie Rengzhen, and General Xu Shiyou, played instrumental roles. There was little if any shooting, and no use of combat troops. The relatively easy transition was facilitated by the Gang's lack of armed backing. Their attempt in 1973–75 to create a national militia command responsive to themselves had failed, and they had no support in the PLA. Their fate was, thus, sealed even before Mao's death.<sup>89</sup> Just as important was the unity of the Gang's opponents, who agreed, temporarily, on Hua Guofeng as the new CCP chairman. Hua also succeeded to Mao's chairmanship of the Military Affairs Commission. When Hu Yaobang replaced Hua as head of the party, Deng Xiaoping took over the MAC. Through it all, the PLA officer corps, subject to strong, unified command from the MAC and the Defense Ministry, remained disciplined and silent.

There has been no apparent "military" role in leadership succession in Vietnam. The collective leadership that followed the deaths of Ho Chi Minh in 1969 and Le Duan in 1986 of course included top-ranking military men, but they were acting as leaders of the party rather than as soldiers per se. The same was evidently true in the aftermath of the Sixth National Congress of the VLP, which met in late 1986. The PAVN officer corps has had no visible *institutional* influence in the selection of a new Politburo and the replacement of Truong Chinh and Pham Van Dong by a reformist leadership led by Nguyen Van Linh. In fact, there are rumors that some of the younger civilian reformers hoped to nominate General Vo Nguyen Giap as the new prime minister. Conservatives reportedly prevented Giap's election to the new Politburo at the Sixth Congress. In Vietnam, as in China, economic, political, and even military issues seem to be institutionally crosscutting. "Military men" and "civilians" form alliances over particular issues without respect to institutional lines, so that "soldiers" and "civilians" frequently stand on both sides of contentious issues.

In a period of government weakness or instability, it would certainly appear that in North Korea, with its high degree of militarization, KPA leaders would have an advantage over others in determining the succession. The KPA controls the regular armed forces, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Militia, and other paramilitary forces; the only other significant armed units are the public security forces of the Ministry of Public Security. These do not have enough guns to challenge the KPA if it should come to that, but the public security forces (PSF) and the KPA are so tightly interconnected that this seems unlikely in any case. Nevertheless, the KWP, with its leadership, will remain the critical institution, rather than the army. The little available evidence indicates that all political decision-making is concentrated in a few dozen men in the KWP Politburo and Secretariat. The second generation of KPA officers, mentioned earlier, appear to be bureaucratized technicians with less

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<sup>89</sup>Jencks, *Muskets to Missiles* (see n. 33), 122–23.

political experience and ambition than their elders. Ideology does matter in North Korea, to the extent that party backing will be vital to whoever succeeds Kim Il Sung. No one is likely to make a challenge for power by renouncing Marxism-Leninism or the party. Therefore, the second-generation military men would be at a decided disadvantage even if they were to make a challenge for power.<sup>90</sup>

Writing before the rise of Kim Jong Il, Scalapino and Lee predicted an increased military role in the post-Kim Il Sung period. "As long as the goals and the level of development of North Korea remain roughly what they are . . . , there is a good chance indeed that the Kim dictatorship will be followed by a period of remilitarization, an era of complex 'coalition' politics in which the quotient of military power is significantly raised in comparison with that of the civilian technocrats and ideologues."<sup>91</sup> In 1988, however, Kim Jong Il seems positioned to assume his father's mantle and to continue the one-man system Eugene Kim calls a fused monocracy.

Fused monocracy seems to be congenial to Korean culture and statecraft. Most observers agree that the North Korean army and people are dedicated to Kim Il Sung. It is entirely possible that within the tightly controlled milieu of North Korea, that loyalty can be, and is being, transferred to Kim Jong Il. However, this suggests one danger to Young Kim's succession: If numbers of politically aware North Koreans were to learn of the bemused contempt in which both the Kims, particularly the younger, are held outside North Korea, it could have devastating internal political effects. If the two Kims keep their country sealed against outside ideas and views, then Kim Jong Il will probably make a fairly smooth transition to power, with the full backing of DPRK military leaders. The DPRK has the most effective political control system on earth, and the most highly controlled subsystem must surely be the North Korean army, with its deeply interlocked systems of political officers, commanders, and political informants. Leaders of the KPA have stood firmly with Kim and the party when major changes took place in military doctrine (as in 1960) and in North Korea's relations with the Soviet Union and China. Changes of this sort provoked controversy in China and are provoking it today in Vietnam, but there is no evidence that they have provoked resistance or controversy within the KPA, or between the army and the Korean Workers' Party.

## Conclusion

For different reasons, direct intervention by the North Korean, Vietnamese, or PRC armies in the politics of their countries seems unlikely as of 1988 but it is wise to conclude with a caveat. Ellis Joffe, the distinguished student of China's civil-military relations, observes that up to 1964, there was

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<sup>90</sup>Scalapino and Lee (see n. 32), 1007–8.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 1010.

no reason to expect PLA intervention in Chinese politics, and for all the same reasons that army intervention seems unlikely today in Vietnam, the DPRK, and the PRC. All previous trends, events, examples, and principles indicated that the PLA would obey the party. China watchers failed to foresee—indeed the Chinese failed to foresee—the extraordinary circumstances of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. If we had applied today's civil-military relations models in comparative fashion, looking at the experiences of other states and societies, we would have concluded that “the insights derived from such a [comparative] approach were largely incompatible to the Chinese scene.”<sup>92</sup> I must therefore regretfully conclude that unpredictable political events in Vietnam, or especially in North Korea, could mean that all bets are off. What happens, for example, if Kim Il Sung, like many an aging despot before him, denounces his designated successor at the eleventh hour? What happens if the 1988 Olympic Games open the country to the painful truth about Kim's international reputation?<sup>93</sup> Prediction is particularly difficult on North Korea because it has never faced a succession crisis before.

Thayer's observations on the future of civil-military relations in Vietnam apply to one extent or another to all three of the countries under discussion.<sup>94</sup> In the future, particularly in peacetime, there are five major areas wherein civil-military contention may arise. The first, and undoubtedly the most important, is the leadership succession question. The second, which applies as much to Korea as to Vietnam, is how to maintain the People's War ethos and with it the justification for maintaining a large standing army. The Chinese have already backed away from both. It remains to be seen whether Vietnam and Korea, in view of their peculiar geostrategic and political characteristics, will be able to do so. Indeed, in North Korea, maintaining a war ethos is essential to the maintenance of the closed milieu that makes the Kim Il Sung dictatorship possible and the Kim Jong Il succession probable. The third, which exists in virtually all societies, is the question of resource allocation. In Korea and Vietnam, resource allocation is skewed toward the military and is justified by the war ethos. If peace comes to Vietnam, and if North-South Korean relations are settled, this question too will come to the fore. Continuation of the DPRK government and KWP rule in their present forms depends upon continued hostility toward South Korea. The fourth, which has caused controversies in both China and Vietnam, is military dependence on the Soviet Union versus self-sufficiency or possible opening

<sup>92</sup>Ellis Joffe, “The Political Role of the Chinese Army,” in *Power and Policy in the PRC*, ed. Yuming Shaw (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), 167.

<sup>93</sup>Edward Olsen points out, in private conversation, that Kim's insistence upon hosting part of the Olympics—with the consequent “opening” to sports fans, athletes, and reporters—could turn out to be the biggest mistake of his political life. See Olsen's related article in *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 2, 1986, 26.

<sup>94</sup>Thayer (see n. 12), 263–64.

to the West. This does not appear to have ever been a significant source of civil-military friction in North Korea—the army simply goes along with whatever Kim Il Sung decides. Whether it will continue to obediently support the leadership in the absence of the Great Leader remains to be seen.

Finally, in all three countries, but especially in Vietnam and North Korea, the army's role as protector versus its role in economic development may lead to civil-military problems. Internal dissension and open conflict have occurred in the PLA and in the PAVN over the issue of army economic construction versus combat training. This disagreement was especially strong in the PLA in the 1950s and in the PAVN in 1975–79. Again, there is no known disagreement within the KPA over this issue, perhaps because the controlled milieu does not admit the possibility of disagreement or allow any evidence of it to appear.

## 10. Party-Military Relations in North Korea: A Comparative Perspective

YONG-CHOO HA

This essay is an attempt to analyze the patterns of development of party-military relations in North Korea. I shall also briefly review literature on party-military relations. The following questions will be raised: How have party-military relations evolved in North Korea? How can one characterize the change? To what extent are these relations unique to North Korea and to what extent are they similar to those in China, Vietnam, and other socialist countries? In view of these comparisons, what can one say about party-military relations in North Korea in the near future?

One caveat is in order. As will be seen below, the origin and development of party-military relations are so contextually specific that they do not allow for a universally applicable comparative framework or model.<sup>1</sup> This means that even if all possible variables that are regarded as affecting party-military relations are known for certain cases, the weight and number of variables relevant to each case are so diverse that no general pattern emerges. This difficulty becomes more serious when one wants to compare the dynamics of the relations. The three cases included in this study are no exceptions to such difficulty. Thus, this comparison is likely to emphasize differences.

Studies of civil-military relations have been greatly influenced by Samuel Huntington's path-breaking work *The Soldier and the State*. His main interest was how to control the military in the context of Western liberal democracy. He believed that keeping the military politically neutral was best for democratic practice and suggested two mechanisms to achieve this goal. One was to limit institutionally the power of the military (subjective control), the other to make the military professional (objective control).

Huntington defined professionalism as "a sense of corporativeness" among its practitioners, an expertise that could be gained only through years of training and experience, and a set of ethical standards by which its practitioners could judge their social responsibility. In his view, developing a deep sense of professionalism in the army constituted a means of preventing

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<sup>1</sup>David Albright, "A Comparative Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," *World Politics* 32 (July 1980): 553-76.

military interference in politics and encroachment upon liberal democracy.<sup>2</sup>

What are the components of the military professional ethic and values that Huntington regarded as inimical to democracy? These have much relevance to this essay in that they can be viewed as universal, given the similar goals of modern military organizations.

In its perception of man and society, the military ethic presupposes conflicting interests and thus views conflict as a universal pattern throughout nature. The military is based on the view of the nation-state as a basic unit to which its members belong, and believes in "the permanency of insecurity and the inevitability of war." It tends to exaggerate the threats that face a state. Thus, it continually seeks to secure a large share of the national budget for the military sector. The military prefers regular troops to security forces and a stockpile of weapons to factories capable of building weapons. Military professionalism lies in defending the security of the nation-state. The military's duty is to serve society as a whole. To accomplish its task well, it emphasizes group activities, that is, subordination of the individual to the group.<sup>3</sup>

Huntington's contributions notwithstanding, several themes in his work must be subjected to critical review. First of all, military behavior cannot be governed by purely professional ethics, even in Western countries. Second, the assumption of corporativeness is dubious at best.<sup>4</sup> Third, the ideal of keeping the military politically neutral is not a universal political goal. Although the issue of professionalism in the military may be viewed as having universal validity, not all find military professionalism politically desirable. Whether professionalism is regarded as desirable depends upon the type and posture of a regime.

There has not been much theoretical discussion concerning party-military relations in Asian socialist countries.<sup>5</sup> Comparative studies are even fewer, although implicit comparisons have been drawn in several instances.<sup>6</sup> Active debate has occurred regarding the party-military relations in the Soviet Union. There are three approaches.

The first is Roman Kolkowicz's conflict model. Its focus is on tension and conflict between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the

<sup>2</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 80ff.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 62–79.

<sup>4</sup>William Odom, "The Party-Military Connection: A Critique," in Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978), 35.

<sup>5</sup>For the reasons for such a lack of comparative research, see Lee Suk-Ho, "Party-Military Relations in North Korea: A Comparative Analysis" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1983), 43–44.

<sup>6</sup>An important exception to this is the pioneering above-mentioned work by Lee Suk-Ho.

Soviet military in outlook and interests.<sup>7</sup> The party's orientation, according to this model, is toward egalitarianism, internationalism, preference for anonymity, and ideological subordination of the military to the party. In contrast, the military is elitist, pursues professional autonomy, and is nationalistic, detached from society, and heroic symbol-oriented.<sup>8</sup> Further, Kolkowicz views the military as capable of tipping a delicate power balance in the Soviet political system as the military shifts its influence. For instance, lack of institutional succession is likely to increase the political weight of the Soviet military. Thus, Kolkowicz argues that the party tries to keep a tight grip on the military.<sup>9</sup>

The second approach is the congruence model.<sup>10</sup> This model, originally proposed by William Odom, does not see a conflict in ethos between the military and the party but sees the two in a symbiotic relationship, the military largely playing the role of executant of policies set by the party. Odom supports his argument by references to Russian political tradition in which the military is not autonomous.

The differences between these two approaches revolve around the nature of Soviet politics and the gap between political reality and ideological propositions in the Soviet Union. Kolkowicz approaches Soviet politics through interest group politics. This invariably leads him to emphasize conflicts among different groups. Odom's understanding is based on a bureaucratic politics model. To him, conflicts occur within bureaucratic structure and thus are not irreconcilable because they arise within controlled boundaries.

Kolkowicz's contrast in ethos between the party and the military is ideal-typical in that such a contrast is nonexistent. The ethos of the party has become elitist as party members have tried to defend their interests over time. Differences in ethos may not coincide with differences in interests.

Both these approaches fail to demonstrate types of conflict that might affect party-military relations differentially. The third approach, Timothy Colton's participatory model, is an advanced model in differentiation of the issues and means that concern the military.<sup>11</sup> Regarding issues, Colton proposes four areas: internal, institutional, intermediate, and societal. There are four types of means to be used by the military: official prerogatives, expert

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<sup>7</sup>Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967). A summary of Kolkowicz's view can be found in his "Interest Groups in Soviet Politics: The Case of the Military," in Herspring and Volgyes, *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, 9–27.

<sup>8</sup>Lee Suk-Ho, "Party-Military Relations," 46.

<sup>9</sup>Kolkowicz, "Interest Groups in Soviet Politics," 14–15.

<sup>10</sup>Odom, "Party-Military Connection."

<sup>11</sup>Timothy Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

advice, political bargaining, and force. Using this framework, Colton identifies the areas in which the military's influence is significant and effective without resort to force. The merits of Colton's analytic scheme are obvious. It approaches party-military relations in decision-making contexts without much reference to ethos. It does not maintain a dichotomous view of the relationship; rather it paints a complex picture of reality.

The congruence model does not seem to recognize a distinct institutional boundary between the party and the military; the other two models do. This difference can be reconciled by approaching party-military relations at two levels: the central and the local. Perhaps the congruence model is more suitable for understanding the relationship at the central level, whereas the boundary is clearer at the local level, although the distinction is not always clear-cut. Even at the central level, one may view the top leader and the party as separate for the purpose of understanding party-military relations.

The three models are static. They do not address whether, to what extent, and why changes in party-military relations occur. Colton's schema could be an exception, but his framework only raises questions related to changes in party-military relations; it does not go far in explaining change. The three models are static primarily because they deal with the Soviet Union, where relations have been quite consistent since the late 1920s.

Dale Herspring proposed a developmental model that can incorporate change. It posits three developmental stages in a Leninist regime: transformation, consolidation, and system maintenance. *Transformation* means elimination of the old power elite and social structure, *consolidation* means building a new socioeconomic order, and *system maintenance* means management of the results of revolutionary achievements.<sup>12</sup>

Herspring explains conflicts between the party and the military in terms of the degree of acceptance of the party's values by the military. Thus, the greater the accommodation, the less the need for exercising party control.

Herspring's formulation is useful in explaining change in party-military relations when different developmental requisites are emerging. However, one can question several of his theses. First, he overemphasizes congruence of values or its absences in explaining conflicts. Agreement on basic values certainly can reduce conflicts, but conflicts can arise for other reasons, such as those of interest or situation. It is empirically difficult, moreover, to apply valid criteria to measure the degree of value congruence. Second, an assumption of a three-stage development process may not reflect reality, and there are no fixed criteria to distinguish different stages.<sup>13</sup> More important, party-military conflicts arise from party, or the top leader's, definition of a

<sup>12</sup>Dale R. Herspring, "Introduction: Developmental Model," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 7 (Spring-Summer 1974): 74-82.

<sup>13</sup>Herspring's three-developmental-stage approach was adopted from Kenneth Jowitt's "Inclusion and Mobilization in European Leninist Regimes," *World Politics* (Oct. 1975): 39-60.

developmental stage, which may or may not correspond to objective reality.

The above discussion should have established the following points. First, party-military relations are not fixed. They fluctuate with time and circumstances. Second, these relations can be best understood when they are approached in the context of the whole system. In short, developmental and systemic analyses are required for an understanding of party-military relations.

Important in understanding party-military relations is a regime's posture. Regime posture is here defined as the regime's choices concerning developmental tasks and the internal and external environments compatible with, and conducive to, the chosen tasks. The political influence of the military<sup>14</sup> will depend on the roles and contributions expected of the military in accomplishing these tasks. These expectations are affected by many variables, such as the military's participation in revolutionary achievements, the degree of dependence on foreign help in establishing the regime, and ideological orientation. Thus tasks chosen at a given moment are an important factor in the regime's orientation toward the military, but not the only factor. One cannot expect the same orientation toward the military from two regimes at the same revolutionary stage under different circumstances.

One can discern two postures of a regime toward the military: fusion and differentiation. *Fusion* refers to identity of ethos, goals, experiences, and interests between the party and the military. It also refers to regime efforts to achieve that condition. In a fused party-military relationship, separate institutional identities of the military are minimal, especially at the central level, and frequently the military participates in decision making.

Successful fusion is possible under a strong and unified leadership, or it may come about as a result of historical development. The military's threat to party supremacy depends on the degree of fusion. The status of the top leader's power consolidation and the unity of the party determine the degree of fusion. At the lower level, interlocking relations develop between the local party and state bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the local party and military, on the other.

*Differentiation* refers to party-military relations in which the roles and tasks of the military are strictly specified and its place in national development is thus restricted to defined areas. Military participation is encouraged "only on questions related to their professional functions." Put differently, differentiation is close to what Huntington calls the combination of subjec-

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<sup>14</sup>The military is defined here in institutional and role terms, i.e., organizations engaged in security and defense. This definition emphasizes the role identification at a given time. Thus, individuals who have experiences in both military and political areas can be regarded as military only when their current position is in the military. According to this definition, therefore, Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung are categorized as politicians with military experience. The extent to which a distinction can be drawn between politicians and the military will depend on political systems and the political history of a given country.

tive and objective control. Under differentiated relations, the military's interactions with the government and the party at the local level are limited and irregular. The following statement by Stalin is typical of a differentiated military: "They [military and civilians] are not to be in cooperation. The military should occupy themselves with their own business and not discuss things that do not concern them."<sup>15</sup>

Several questions can be raised: What makes a regime choose fusion or differentiation strategies? What are the problems and consequences of adopting one strategy over another? Are there different types of fusion and differentiation? Are the two mutually exclusive? Are fusion and differentiation on a developmental continuum? Attempts to answer some of these questions will be made in the context of the three Asian socialist countries.

### North Korea: Imposed Fusion

#### *Historical Background of KWP-KPA Relations*

There are distinct features in the formation of the Korean People's Army (KPA) that are important to understanding party-military relations in North Korea. First, it was established under the tutelage of the Soviet Union. When the Soviet forces occupied the northern part of Korea in 1945, there was a political vacuum after the Japanese evacuation. Thus, the Soviets were deeply involved in the establishment of the KPA from the beginning. The Soviet occupation forces disbanded various militia forces in North Korea and organized the KPA in February 1946 under the leadership of Kim Il Sung. In the process, they introduced the Soviet military organization, training, and insignia system. Their influence was unmistakable, as indicated in the following:

The Korean people for the first time in their history had created armed forces genuinely of the people and capable of defending their democratic achievements. . . . [and stressed] the tasks of strengthening military discipline, educating the soldiers in bravery and heroism, and mastering Soviet military science and valuable combat experience of the Soviet armed forces.<sup>16</sup>

A second characteristic was the heterogeneous origins of the officer corps. This reflected factional groups of political elites with different backgrounds. There were five political groups after the Liberation: (1) noncommunist nationalists, (2) native communists, (3) Soviet-Koreans, (4) the Yan'an group and (5) the Kapsan group. Tension was acute among the different groups, especially between the Yan'an group, on the one hand, and the Soviet-Korean and Kim Il Sung group on the other.

<sup>15</sup>P. I. Iakir et al., *Komandarm Iakir* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), 111–12, quoted in Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority*, 254–55.

<sup>16</sup>V. A. Matsulenko, *Koreyskaya Narodnaya Armiya* (Moscow: Voennoe Izd-vo, 1959), 17, quoted in Kiwan Chung, "The North Korean People's Army and the Party," in Robert A. Scalapino, ed., *North Korea Today* (New York: Praeger, 1963), 108.

The party was imposed from the top. Revolutionary transformation was relatively easy given the power vacuum after Liberation. Thus, neither the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) nor the KPA could claim credit for bringing socialism into North Korea. This means that the party did not have a superior moral and political base from which to control the military. Rampant factionalism within both the party and the military rendered party control over the military meaningless.<sup>17</sup>

*Transition to Fusion: 1948–61*

At the time of its establishment, the KPA was fraught with factionalism at the top and with lack of discipline at the lower level. The first opportunity to deal with this came with the Korean War. The war was a watershed in establishing the party's control over the military. It provided Kim Il Sung with an opportunity to eliminate his rivals.

The Military Committee was organized to coordinate all operational activities. It was vested with the authority to mobilize all forces of the country. Kim Il Sung was in charge of the committee to oversee the entire war effort. He was concurrently the supreme commander in chief. Using these positions, he purged several major military figures, for example, Kim Il and Mu Chong (leader of the Yan'an group), for their failures in the war efforts, at the Byolori meeting in December 1950.

Kim took the same opportunity to install party organizations and political organs in the KPA to strengthen ideological and political work among the officers and men. Before this decision, the cultural commissar was responsible for political-cultural work and was not responsible to the Central Committee of the party. The cultural commissar system was a divided system of control under which orders of military commanders were countersigned by cultural commissars. Thus, it was difficult to balance the competing demands of military and political tasks. Under the new system, the political commissar was put under the control of the General Political Bureau, which is directly responsible to the Central Committee (CC) of the party. Political commissars were only in charge of the general directions of party organization and evaluation of training and morale. In addition, party organs and cells were established at all military units above battalion level.

Another outcome of the war was an emphasis on nationalism and patriotism vis-à-vis Soviet influence and socialist internationalism. Kim made frequent references to Korean military heroes, such as Ulchimundock, Kang Gamchan, and Yi Sunshin. He said:

The national liberation struggle, which the Korean people are waging for the freedom and independence of their fatherland against the U.S. imperialists who attempt to enslave them, does not arise from a transient or temporary

<sup>17</sup>Jae Souk Sohn, "Factionalism and the Party Control of the Military in Communist North Korea," in Jacques Van Doorn, ed., *Military Profession and Military Regimes* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 269–72.

cause but from the fundamental national aspiration of the Korean people who do not wish to become slaves again to foreign imperialists after experiencing long enslavement under Japanese imperialism. For this very reason, the Korean people will be victorious.<sup>18</sup>

The Korean War was an attempt by Kim Il Sung to extend the transformation task to the South. In addition, it was an attempt to combine nationalism with revolutionary tasks.

The Korean War was also important because the failure to achieve the original goal of “liberating” the South caused Chinese and Soviet influence in North Korea to wane. It was the beginning of the end of the linkage between domestic factions and foreign influence. In party-military relations, the withdrawal of Soviet and Chinese troops in 1957 enhanced party control over the military, although one must recognize that Kim’s move away from the Soviet Union was more pronounced.

Kim Il Sung, in a strange twist of events, reaped political benefit from the war through purges of anti-Kim factions and by putting his own people into major posts. The failure to achieve the original goal in the war inevitably tarnished the image and status of the military. All this reinforced the already strong grip of Kim on the military and further consolidated his power in other areas as well.

Kim’s power was seriously challenged when the shocks of Khrushchev’s anti-Stalinism campaign reached North Korea in 1956. Remaining Yan’an and Russian groups revolted against Kim and his policies. In 1958, Lieutenant General Chang Pyongsan attempted a coup, which was aborted. The upshot was further consolidation of Kim’s power and authority. Thus, unlike 1948, Kim Il Sung could say:

We have to practise one-management under party control because the People’s Army is the army of the Party and controlled only by the Party leadership and because it is the armed forces for the fulfillment of revolutionary tasks proposed by the party.<sup>19</sup>

In party-military relations, the party became more monolithic by 1959, under Kim Il Sung’s control. The party’s control over the military became stronger, and the political role of the military became minimal. Kim Chang-Bong’s following remarks reflect KWP-KPA relations:

The Korean People’s Army which has inherited the glorious tradition of anti-Japanese patriotism . . . is organized with the revolutionary fighters as its core. . . [It has] developed into a mighty and modern army, with a high

<sup>18</sup>*History of the Just War for the Liberation of the Fatherland of the Korean People* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1961), 138, quoted in Chung, “North Korean People’s Army,” 113–14.

<sup>19</sup>*Kim Il-Sung Sonjip* 5: 318, 343–46, quoted in Chung, “North Korean People’s Army,” 122.

political character, by mastering military arts. And since its inception, it has been boundlessly faithful to the Party, the fatherland and the people.<sup>20</sup>

### *Fusion: 1961–Present*

By the Third Party Congress, in 1961, Kim Il Sung's power and authority were entrenched. From that time to now, the structure of KWP-KPA relations has remained basically unchanged. The party and the military have been increasingly integrated. Kim Il Sung's monolithic control over the party and the military and the goals he set were instrumental in accelerating and consolidating the fusion of relations.

At the end of the Fourth Party Congress, in September 1961, Kim Il Sung held all three important posts—party chairman, head of the cabinet, and commander in chief. He surrounded himself with the Kapsan group. Using his power, he set two political tasks—consolidation in North Korea and transformation in the South:

Building socialism in the northern half of the Republic is a part of the Korean revolution and the Korean revolution is a link in the whole chain of the world revolution. Our people are striving to accelerate socialist construction to the maximum in the northern half of the Republic and at the same time, to force U.S. imperialism out of South Korea and unify the fatherland, and are exhorting the world for peace and socialism, national independence and socialism.<sup>21</sup>

Until South Korea is “liberated,” North Korea's tasks will remain unfinished. North Korea, therefore, must continue to work toward this goal. Pursuing the two different tasks at the same time, however, has proved to be difficult because the transformation task has grown increasingly unrealizable in the South. The Three Revolution campaigns, in this context, can be viewed as an attempt to maintain the facade of a state of mobilization.

*Chuch'e*'s relevance to party-military relations is in foreign policy. The core element is to maintain an independent line. This has been possible mainly because of Sino-Soviet conflicts since the late 1950s. Domestically, *chuch'e* appeals to nationalistic sentiments. For Kim Il Sung himself, it is a strategy of externalizing domestic politics and increasing his personal power by manipulating foreign policy. Nationalism and autonomy are also compatible with the ethos of the military. *Chuch'e* increases the importance of self-defense.

This congruence in ethos has been reinforced by satisfying the military's interests, as is reflected in the military's share in North Korean budgets. Fluctuations notwithstanding, the average share of military spending in the

<sup>20</sup>Nodong Shinmun, Feb. 8, 1962, quoted in Chung, “North Korean People's Army,” 123.

<sup>21</sup>Young-Soon Yim, “North Korean Strategic Doctrine in the East Asian Regional System,” *Korea and World Affairs* 5, no. 1 (Summer 1981): 197.

GNP has been 15–20 percent.<sup>22</sup> Despite his emphasis on the political role of the army, Kim also stresses that the People's Army should be armed with up-to-date weapons and technical equipment and that military science should be developed rapidly to meet the demands of modern warfare.<sup>23</sup> Further, the North Korean military enjoys privileges in housing, rations, and entertainment.<sup>24</sup>

Fusion has been visible in the military's representation in the central organs of the party. At the First Party Congress, the military and persons with military backgrounds constituted 23 percent of the Politburo, and since then this has increased, peaking at 60 percent at the Second Party Conference of the Fourth Party Congress; it was 35 percent after the Sixth Party Congress. There have been frequent appointments of the military to civilian posts.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the high command of the military constitutes an important segment of the top leadership.

The North Korean army has been heavily involved in social and economic activities. Two patterns emerge: One is to launch a campaign similar to that in the civilian sector; the Red Flag movement in 1960 paralleled the Chollima Work Team movement in civilian circles. The other is to participate in social and production activities, such as harvesting and construction. It is not unusual, of course, for the army to be engaged in such activities. What is significant is the extent and consistency of this involvement.

The background of such realities can be found in Kim's military doctrine. Its goal is to realize national liberation. This will be achieved through People's War and protracted struggle. The army has two important roles to play: One is to defend the country, the other to achieve Liberation of the entire country. For the latter, Kim urges the KPA to become a cadre army that knows how to generate popular support for political tasks:

The People's Army should serve the fatherland and the people. And the whole people should love and aid the People's Army; and the army men and the people should further display the traditional spirit of unity of the army and the people and in case of emergency, closely unite into one as true revolutionary comrades and fight with single-hearted resolution to safeguard our fatherland and our gains of socialism, sharing life and death, sweet and bitter.<sup>26</sup>

The Four Military lines adopted in 1966 became the backbone of Kim Il Sung's

<sup>22</sup>National Unification Board of Korea, *Pukhan Kyongje Tonggyejip* (Compilation of statistical data of North Korea) (Seoul, 1986), 160–61.

<sup>23</sup>*Kim Il-Sung Sonjip* 6: 287.

<sup>24</sup>Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pt. 2, 977–78.

<sup>25</sup>Lee Suk-Ho, "Party-Military Relations," 283.

<sup>26</sup>Kim Il Sung, Let Us Embody More Thoroughly the Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance, and Self-Defence in All Fields of State Activity (n.n.: New World Liberation Front, 1970), 70, quoted in Young-Soon Yim, "North Korean Strategic Doctrine," 183.

operational principles. They are “arming the whole people,” “fortification of the whole country,” “training of cadre soldiers,” and “modernization of the armed forces.”

This means penetration of the military into civilian life. Kim urges the KPA to assist local party organs in executing assigned tasks, to participate in party meetings, and to propagate party policies among the masses. In a manner strongly reminiscent of Mao’s mass line, Kim stressed that “genuine revolutionary armies must not only fight well against the enemies; they should know how to conduct political work with the masses. Anti-Japanese partisans were brave soldiers when they fought against the enemy, but when they were with the masses, they were able political workers.”<sup>27</sup>

In terms of the command structure, Kim Il Sung emphasizes that officer-soldier relations should be based on persuasion and cooperation, not on command and coercion. However, he has not gone so far as to abolish rank insignia. Nor has he advocated that officers’ service be of short duration, or experimented with extreme egalitarianism. On the contrary, great stress is placed on respect for superiors and an ironclad discipline within the ranks.<sup>28</sup> Kim Il Sung’s military strategy is to combine the concept of regular war with that of People’s War. This reflects two needs: confrontation with the South and maintenance of revolutionary zeal in the North.

As the fusion process continued, there were changes in the party’s control mechanism. In 1969, probably to strengthen control over the military after the purges of major military figures, a political committeemen system was added to the old structure. The Secretariat of the CC was authorized to select secretaries, or political committeemen, and send them down to the Ministry of Defense and below. Control over personnel was transferred from the Military Affairs Committee to the Secretariat. The Socialist Working Youth League has been organized in the military above the battalion level; its function is to control nonparty members under party leadership. Thus, Kim Il Sung established a complex control network. In this context, it is not surprising to see that 20–30 percent of the soldiers in the army are party members (in special units, 60–70 percent). It seems that the high ratio of party members to the whole population is not unrelated to the party’s penetration into the military.<sup>29</sup>

In conclusion, the KWP’s control over the KPA has the following characteristics: First, the dependence of the control mechanism on Kim Il Sung is enormous; Kim Il Sung holds all major supreme power positions. Second, fusion of the military with the party is based on co-optation of high-ranking officers into the party organs; integration of the lower military structure into civilian sectors; tight control mechanisms over the military; congruence of

<sup>27</sup>Kim Il-Sung *Sonjip* 3: 511.

<sup>28</sup>Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, 978.

<sup>29</sup>*Bukhan Kaeyo* (Seoul, 1984), 21.

ethos; and satisfying the military's organizational interests and as well as the personal, interests of its members. Third, Kim Il Sung, through these mechanisms, politicized the military high command, making high-ranking officers more politicians than advocates of the military's separate institutional interests. At the same time, control over the command structure is tight. Some conflicts between the party and the military must exist, but on balance it seems that there is more congruence than conflict.

The political influence of the military under such circumstances seems high at first glance, in view of the militaristic policies and orientations of the regime. If one makes a distinction between military factor in the total system and the specific military sector, to be sure, the military factor looms large in the North Korean political system.<sup>30</sup> This does not mean, however, that the military sector itself exercises much control over policies or setting basic goals. The party under Kim Il Sung sets all the priorities; these have been ordered in a manner satisfying to the military. The initiatives of the military are inconsequential. Its potential influence is great, but it is preempted by the party and seldom translates into actual influence.

Fused party-military relations are intrinsically unstable. There is no clear line between what is military and what is political because this is decided by the top leader. The military under such conditions may inadvertently encroach upon the prerogatives of the top leader in interpreting issues.

Because of this lack of demarcation, differences in opinion can be viewed as challenges to the leader's authority as a whole. The purges of Kim Chang-Bong and others are a case in point. Apparently there were differences in opinion between Kim Il Sung and Kim Chang-Bong and others on the weapons system to be developed and on doctrinal issues: They were criticized for not having implemented Kim Il Sung's instructions on developing a weapons system suitable for Korean topography. It was also alleged that they had opposed creating a Worker-Farmer Red Militia. They were further accused of forming a narrow clique that opposed party lines. This was also an example of a spillover of military issues into the political arena, especially since Kim used the incident to preempt a challenge to his authority due to the failure of his policies toward the South at that time.<sup>31</sup>

### **China: Unstable Fusion**

Party-military relations in China have undergone turbulent ups and downs since 1949.<sup>32</sup> Until the death of Mao Zedong, party-military relations can be

<sup>30</sup>On the distinction between military sector and military factor, see Seweryn Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 300.

<sup>31</sup>Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, 971.

<sup>32</sup>For a brief summary of the development of civil-military relations in China, see Parris H. Chang, "Political Roles of the People's Liberation Army: An Overview," *Sino-Soviet Affairs* 10, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 135–57. For a more detailed analysis of an earlier period, see Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps, 1949–1964*, Harvard East Asian Monographs (Cambridge, 1971).

characterized as fused. The factors that had affected the relations were the pre-1949 legacy (fusion), Mao's vision of political and economic order, and the international setting.

China's military emerged from the final victory in the revolution fused with the party, and this made it difficult for the military to disengage itself from politics. Once the CCP took power, consolidation had to be launched to build a new socialist order. Unlike the revolutionary struggle, consolidation required a redefinition of the fused party-military relations.

Different strategies for building a new order have alternated since 1949, depending on the swings of the power pendulum. Mao's strategies and visions were in constant conflict with moderate views. The core of Mao's vision was radical egalitarianism; relying on the experiences of revolutionary struggles, he rejected elitist orientation, bureaucratization, and professional privilege. Moreover, Mao made exceptions to his principles, including the military.

During the First Five-Year Plan period, China was under Soviet influence. The Soviet planning system and centralized management system were introduced. Professionals and the intelligentsia were given incentives. Mao did not like such developments. The PLA did launch modernization programs during this period. More professionalism, for example, discipline, technical training, and technological advancement, were emphasized. By 1958, the PLA had changed from a largely guerrilla force of volunteers to a conscript army.

From 1957 on, the Sino-Soviet conflict became more visible and intense. Mao launched the Great Leap Forward (GLF), which was a radical departure from the Soviet model: It aimed at rapid, balanced growth in agriculture and industry. The management system became more decentralized, the incentive system more egalitarian. The effect of the GLF on the military was to reverse modernization programs started earlier. The military's response was negative, as seen in Marshal Peng Dehuai's challenge to Mao's policies at the Lushan Plenum in 1959. The upshot of the incident was Peng's dismissal as minister of defense. However, Mao became increasingly defensive as a result of the pressure on him to reverse the GLF's basic programs. After the Lushan Plenum, party control over the military was further strengthened.

From 1965 on, Mao's position in the party became more precarious. He tried to use the Red Guards to confront his opponents in the party in the initial stage of the Cultural Revolution. But the failure of such attempts led him to draw the PLA into fighting against the party. After Mao's death, the military played a great role in the succession, suppressing radical groups including the Gang of Four.

In the Maoists' strategic thinking, technical superiority is less important than securing support from the masses through indoctrination and mobilization. They dislike a hierarchical command structure. Rather, they are inclined toward collective leadership and decentralized structure. The army should have close contact with the people and participate in economic and other civilian activities. The Maoist orientation is the opposite of that of a modern professional army. Even the rank system was disbanded in 1965.

At the top of the party's control mechanism over the military is the Military Affairs Committee, which is under the CC of the CCP. The party committee and the political department implement party policies in conjunction with the party committee of a given unit. In addition, political commissars are sent to supervise and control. Writing about the years before 1980, Lee Suk-Ho stated, "reflecting fusion since the revolutionary period, the military representation in the top power structure is strong; On the average, 31 percent of the Politburo members and 37 percent of the CC members were from the military."<sup>33</sup>

Since 1949, however, it has been difficult to maintain the original fusion between the party and the military. First, as shown above, there have been constant conflicts between Maoist and non-Maoist patterns of development. Second, China has had to play a regional power role and has advanced the claim of being a world power. As China started to develop nuclear weapons, strategic and defense issues became very complex. Third, the Chinese army has a decentralized structure (a field army tradition) with a different regional and historical background. Fourth, Mao's vision of an ideal army is, in general, in conflict with military ethos and interests.

This, however, does not mean that the military disobeyed Mao. Soldiers of the old generation believed in Mao and regarded their ties with him as more important than pursuing their own interests. The lack of unity of civilian authorities and within the military meant that factionalism was a logical outcome. Under such circumstances, control over the military became dependent on Mao's personal authority. Thus, divisions within the party and the military made party-military relations unstable.

Space limitation does not permit a recapitulation of the events of the Cultural Revolution. Several points in the context of party-military relations will be advanced. First, one is struck by the ease with which the military became involved in politics as a result of power struggles among party elites. Such an easy involvement is a clear indication of fusion, whereby the military elites are readily available for political purposes.

Second, fusion facilitated the expansion of military power at the top and at local levels. That the military had been engaged in civilian activities and the interlocking relations with the civilian structure made it possible for the military to expand its power rapidly, especially when the civilian government structure was impaired.

Third, unlike the unity at the top, the military's regional responses to the central directives varied by area. For example, PLA leaders in Heilongjiang, Shanxi, Shandong, and Gueizhou provinces aided local Maoists in seizing power from existing authorities and in establishing revolutionary committees. But in many provinces, the attitudes of the PLA leaders were unclear at best. In some areas, the PLA acted against Maoist groups that they had been

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<sup>33</sup>Lee Suk-Ho, "Party-Military Relations," 296.

called upon to support.<sup>34</sup>

Fourth, and related to the third, the PLA showed a rather conservative orientation and a strong interest in law and order. Against the Maoist politico-ideological ideal of building a new power structure following the example of the Paris Commune, the military defended the establishment. When ordered to support the leftists in 1969, most leaders were more inclined to restrain the revolutionaries and to align with local party officials. Given the extraordinary circumstances, however, it is not clear whether this is unique to China or could be replicated elsewhere.

Finally, the resilience of the military power is remarkable. During and after the Cultural Revolution (CR), the military and the PLA leaders became the nucleus of the provincial power structure, engaged in rebuilding provincial party organizations. They became an important part of the provincial party hierarchy. After Mao's death, the PLA exercised an important role in the succession period.

### *Party-Military Relations under Deng Xiaoping: Differentiation*

Since the death of Mao, there has been a significant change in the regime's posture. The Four Modernizations have been advanced. New economic policies, such as the family responsibility system, reorganization of management through decentralization, and introduction of the market mechanism and open-door policy to induce foreign capital, have been forcefully pursued. Such shifts in policy orientation assume a redefinition of party-society relations, allowing more inputs from society and relative autonomy of various sectors.

Party-military relations must be redefined accordingly. The thrust of changes in the relations has been to depoliticize and to disengage. To depoliticize involves several tasks: reorientation of old conservative military leaders, purges of military leaders in government and party, and through these measures, weakening of the military's opposition to economic reforms. In short, Deng has pursued a policy of "sending the PLA back to the barracks."

Because the military modernization was given the last priority, the state budget allocated to defense has decreased to 6–8 percent of GNP (it was 11.5 percent in the 1970s). This is a clear indication that defense modernization has not been sought at the expense of other sectors of the economy. Deng has announced the program of a reduction of 1 million soldiers.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, defense spending has been concentrated in developing China's strategic offensive forces.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Jürgen Domes, "The Role of the Military in the Formation of Revolutionary Committees, 1967–1968," *China Quarterly* 44, no. 10–12 (1970): 142–45.

<sup>35</sup>U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, *China's Economy Looks toward the Year 2000* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), 139.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 155.

Further, in view of the slow growth of military modernization, education programs for improving the professional skills of the officer corps have been implemented. New officers are now recruited primarily from among college graduates. The rank system has been revived as part of building a regular army.

Changes in the way in which the military interacts with society and the economy are also visible. Under Mao, the PLA fulfilled many functions, for example, combat, production brigade, and work team (political work). Deng has been trying to neutralize the PLA, primarily emphasizing the combat and production brigade roles.<sup>37</sup>

Doctrinal changes have also been visible. The implications for doctrinal changes of emphasis on strategic weapons and improvement in the capability of conventional forces are obvious. According to Zhang Aiping, the defense minister:

The principle of war is to achieve the greatest victory at smallest expense. To achieve this, we should depend not only on political factors but also on the correct strategy and tactics of the war's commanders, the sophisticated nature of our military equipment, the quality of our personnel who use the equipment.<sup>38</sup>

Deng has managed the military opposition to his reforms quite skillfully. There are several explanations for this success. Deng Xiaoping is a respected old communist leader. This is analogous to Mao's relationship with the PLA. Another factor is a debate on professionalism in the PLA since 1949 that has caused divisions within the military. Deng can manipulate and make deals with the elements in the PLA who stand for professionalism. Finally, after the CR, the explicit and implicit consensus among the elites, on the one hand, and between the elites and the masses, on the other, that China is an underdeveloped country must have made it easier for Deng to convince the military leaders and press them for change.<sup>39</sup>

### **Vietnam: Stable Fusion**

Party-military relations in Vietnam are as fused as those in China and North Korea. However, they have slightly different features derived from unique past experiences. Like the party in China, the Vietnamese Workers' Party was organized by a band of revolutionaries. The People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) was formed under the Workers' Party as a small guerrilla

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 137–39.

<sup>38</sup>"Several Questions Concerning the Modernization of National Defence," Hongqi, no. 5, Mar. 1983, in FBIS-China, No. 053, K 2.

<sup>39</sup>However, this does not preclude the possibility that the political influence of the Chinese military may become strong again in the future if serious troubles erupt militarily or politically. The tradition of a fused relationship between the military and the party may not disappear for some time to come.

force in 1949. At the beginning, its main concern was political struggle because of its small size. The party officials essentially led the guerrilla activities and, thus, were not distinguishable from the military.

Although the initial stage of the PAVN was similar to that of the PLA, the nature, length, and environment of struggles brought about differences between them. First, the PAVN, since the resistance to Japanese forces, had to face alien forces superior in numbers and equipment. The topography and size of Vietnam were such that "trading time for land" was not possible even in guerrilla operations. Because of such constraints, there was not much time for debate on the red-expert dichotomy or on the dictum of "politics in command." There were only pragmatic adjustments to changing situations.

From these situations emerged a belief that "men and weapons, human factors and technology, guerrilla and regular wars could be combined with a synthesis bringing about greater power than any selective approach could produce."<sup>40</sup> Conflicts were attenuated through long experience that cultivated a spirit of accommodation in Vietnam's civil-military relations.

A combination of red and expert was facilitated by two important factors: First, there was no Mao Zedong or Kim Il Sung. Ho Chi-minh never sought to be a single power wielder; he promoted collectivism. Thus, his role was more of a political broker or Politburo referee.<sup>41</sup> The principle of collective decision-making has been rather well practiced in Vietnam. Further, Ho Chi-Minh was not a military strategist and did not claim authority on strategic issues. It was General N. V. Giap who was a mastermind of military strategy. Second, the continued war preoccupied the military with purely military tasks. The war situation, moreover, allowed the military to get enough of what they needed in manpower and equipment at the expense of other sectors of society.

How do these facts bear on civil-military relations? In this situation, it is less likely that military and doctrinal issues will become political. Military issues are not likely to be an important source of authority in Vietnam. Nor is it likely that the top leader will feel at ease drawing the military into politics because no one exercises sufficient power and authority either to mobilize or to control the military.

In the process of long-term struggles, party-military relations have evolved into a relatively harmonious fusion that is workable under normal circumstances. However, this compatibility has faced serious challenge since

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<sup>40</sup>William Turley, "Origins and Development of Communist Military Leadership in Vietnam," *Armed Forces and Society* 3, no. 2 (Feb. 1977): 235. On the party-military relations in Vietnam, see Douglas Pike, *PAVN* (People's Army of Vietnam) (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1986), chaps. 3, 5; and William Turley, "Civil-Military Relations in North Vietnam," *Asian Survey* (Dec. 1969), and "The Vietnamese Army," in *Communist Armies in Politics*, ed. Jonathan R. Adelman (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982).

<sup>41</sup>Douglas Pike, "Political Institutionalization in Vietnam," in Robert A. Scalapino, *Political Institutionalization in Asia* (Berkeley, Calif.: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1986), 48.

the Liberation. The tasks have been enormous: economic development, waging the war in Cambodia, and facing threats from China. These tasks have greatly increased Vietnam's dependency on the Soviet Union. The unification achieved after prolonged struggles left the Vietnamese economy in shambles. Vietnam, at the end of the war, found itself one of the most underdeveloped countries in the world.

Since Liberation, the efforts to build a regular army and to modernize the forces have been conducted with relative ease probably due to the doctrinal consensus that had existed before. Yet the military involvement of Vietnam in neighboring states has posed serious conflicts with the civilian economy in resource allocation, although Soviet aid has absorbed the military burden to a considerable extent.

The Vietnamese power structure may face serious political problems because of the complex tasks confronting it and the failure thus far to achieve success on any front. However, the political role of the military may not be extensive. While Vietnam's military generals are partly politicians at the central level, at the lower level, differentiation is occurring. Under these circumstances, it is unlikely that the military will drive the political machine.<sup>42</sup>

### Comparative Comments

North Korea, China, and Vietnam do share fused party-military relations in which the political influence of the military is contained primarily by integrating the military into the party structure. Vietnam and China had fused relations before the communists took power. In contrast, fused party-military relations in North Korea have evolved over time in the process of building socialism. In China, the relations have been the least stable. Vietnam and North Korea have shown stable fusion, but they differ in dependence on the top leader in maintaining the relations. The political influence of the KPA has seldom been manifested and thus remains potential.

As has been emphasized, unity of the central elite seems to have an important bearing on the level of overt political influence of the military, as the difference between China under Mao after 1965 and North Korea under Kim Il Sung demonstrates. Also important is the task orientation of a regime, as seen in the shift of party-military relations in China under Deng Xiaoping. Military doctrinal purity, as advocated by Mao, seems to increase potential sources of conflict; doctrinal pragmatism in Vietnam and North Korea have been conducive to containing the military's challenge.

To look at the issue from the military side, the military's contribution to the revolution, size of the military, and degree of decentralization and

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<sup>42</sup>One cannot preclude the possibility in Vietnam too that when the war ends, the drastic reallocation of resources against the military and demobilization of the forces may invite the military's political intervention.

regional base may affect the potential for military influence (China versus Vietnam and North Korea).

The political influence of the military on policy outcomes can be divided into two types: basically accepting the regime, and counterregime challenge. Fused party-military relations sensitize the military politically simply by its presence at the top level of power. It is therefore not surprising that counterregime challenge has been rare. None occurred in the three countries except during the CR in China. Even then, the military did not take the initiative.

### **Conclusion: The KPA in the Near Future**

The Korean People's Army has been almost perfectly controlled by Kim Il Sung's strategies. The other side of the coin is that the control has depended on Kim Il Sung. The potential influence of the military seems extensive. The crucial question with regard to the future of the North Korean political system is, how can one estimate the potential political influence after the death of Kim Il Sung or after a redefinition of the political task with the takeover of power by Kim Jong Il?

This study suggests that the political influence of the military will depend on the level of power and authority of Kim Jong Il. Up to now, Young Kim seems to have built his position securely in the party and on the Military Affairs Committee. Kim Jong Il's succession has been backed by the high command, for example, O Chin-U and O Keuk-ryol. The succession has enhanced the military's political influence.

After Kim Jong Il comes to power, the military influence and moves will be determined by the extent to which political tasks are redefined. If there is a high level of congruence in ethos, interests, and tasks, there will probably not be much change in the military's orientation as long as the basic features of the system remain the same. However, if there is a fundamental redefinition, for example, a breakthrough in North-South talks, the military is likely to respond conservatively.

Even then, the military may not counter the regime for the following reasons: First, the KPA and other socialist military forces do not have a precedent of a successful intervention. Second, and related to the first, the KPA has been under severe surveillance (e.g., reports through three lines, three days before basic military moves are made, to Kim Jong Il). Third, generational changes have taken place in the military, from revolutionary to managerial groups, in addition to new military recruitment by people close to Young Kim (Mankyongdae graduates). Fourth, through fusion and control, the high command is more political than military in outlook, and further, the high command in a situation of fused party-military relations may not be well connected with the field command structure. Finally, in general, the military's interests have been well served under Kim Il Sung.

However, factors that may facilitate a military counterregime challenge

are that the military has not enjoyed institutional autonomy under Kim Il Sung, and thus, after he is gone, could be aggressive; there has not been much factionalism that would make coordination difficult; and the military has been extensively engaged in civilian activities, which may give it confidence in managing civilian affairs.

These are structural, sociological, and historical factors. In addition, situational factors, for example, the way Kim Il Sung passes away or changes in the international environment, may be equally crucial in determining whether the potential influence of the military turns into reality.

**Part Six**  
**The Economies**

## 11. The Economies of China, North Korea, and Vietnam: A Comparative Study

ROBERT F. DERNBERGER

A few years ago, I undertook a study comparing the economic systems of China, North Korea, and Vietnam for another conference organized by Professors Scalapino, Seizaburo Sato, and Jusuf Wanandi, focusing on the process of economic reform underway in each of those Asian socialist countries.<sup>1</sup> Several arguments from the literature by both political scientists and economists were cited to show that there is a widely held belief on the inevitability of systemic reform in the traditional Soviet-style economies. The main concern of the general observer, however, is not what is inevitable in the long run but what are the factors that enable us to be more precise in determining when such an inevitable development is likely to take place. In my earlier analysis, I came to the conclusion that economic necessity seemed to be the determinant, that is, the inefficiencies and wastes of the traditional Soviet-style economy accumulate until the political leadership is “forced” to change the economic system.

This interpretation was consistent with the observed status of the economic reform program in each of the three Asian socialist economies at that time. The Vietnamese were being faced with an economic crisis and were, therefore, forced to adopt the significant economic reforms they were then implementing. The Chinese, although being “pressured” to introduce economic reforms, were achieving a sufficient economic cushion as a result of the initial reforms they had introduced, so that the outcome of the economic reform debates remained uncertain; the Chinese economy was likely to remain a mixed economy, retaining some policies and institutions from the past, along with new policies and institutions that would introduce important elements of systemic reform. The North Koreans enjoyed a standard of living and per capita production that allowed the conservative defenders of the Soviet-style economy to fend off the forces of economic reform. Developments in these three Asian socialist economies since my earlier study lead me to modify my earlier hypothesis in an attempt to explain the present status

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<sup>1</sup>Robert F. Dernberger, “The State-Planned, Centralized System: China, North Korea, Vietnam,” in Robert A. Scalapino, Seizaburo Sato, and Jusuf Wanandi, eds., *Asian Economic Development—Present and Future* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1985), 13–42.

and probable fate of the economic reform programs in these three Asian socialist countries.

There are several problems with my earlier hypothesis about the inevitability of socialist reforms. First, for example, no precise definition was offered of when the inefficiencies and wastes, which are to be found in any economy, would become "severe enough" to force the political leadership in these countries to introduce systemic change. Many Marxists believe their theory allows them to predict the downfall of the capitalist system—as a result of the ever severer economic crises in capitalist countries—but their record in accurately applying that theory is scarcely impressive. We may believe in the inevitability of the downfall of the Soviet-style economic system, but we should strive for a more operational means of determining when the predicted systemic change is likely to occur.

A second problem has to do with alternative hypotheses that can help explain the progress in economic reform taking place in the three Asian socialist economies. For example, it has been argued that South Korea and Taiwan adopted the "export promotion" policy that led to their remarkably successful record of economic growth only when they had been "forced to" by the failure of their earlier policies of import substitution.<sup>2</sup> However, there are those who point out that economic problems and crises constitute the environment to which policymakers always are reacting and that the more severe those problems and crises, the greater the need to react. Whether those reactions are adjustments to the existing economic system and policies or major changes in economic strategy or economic system obviously depends upon whether or not significant changes within the political system or policymaking process, which are a prerequisite for systemic changes in the economic realm, occur.<sup>3</sup> China, Vietnam, and North Korea suffer from inefficiencies and wastes from their Soviet-style economies that would seem to require major changes in economic policies and institutions, but the type and degree of change will be determined, to a large extent, by the changes within the political system and policymaking process taking place in each country. Simply, the outcome of the economic reform programs in the three Asian socialist economies is likely to be determined not only by both the economic problems facing, and political changes within, the leadership but also by the interaction of economic and political developments.

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<sup>2</sup>This was the implicit, if not explicit, argument in the three papers, on Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore, presented by Shirley W. Y. Kuo, Him Ki-Hwan and Jungho Yao, and Pang Eng-Fong, respectively, at the Conference on Patterns of Growth and Structural Change of Asia's NICs and Near-NICs in the Context of Economic Interdependence, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, Apr. 3–8, 1983.

<sup>3</sup>See Stephan Haggard, "The Political Economy of Stabilization and Adjustment" (Notes prepared for the National Bureau for Economic Research Working Group on LDC Debt, n.d., mimeo); also, "Korea from Import-Substitution to Export-led Growth," chap. 3 in a manuscript being completed on the process of economic policy formation in the NICs (*ibid.*, n.d., mimeo).

My earlier study came to the following conclusions: Vietnam's economy was said to be in terrible shape, making systemic economic reform imperative; China's economy was said to have improved sufficiently to allow the Chinese to "muddle through" with their mixed system; the North Koreans were claimed to enjoy the highest standard of living, having achieved the rank of lower-middle-income country, according to the World Bank,<sup>4</sup> and therefore to be unlikely to seriously pursue a program of economic reform. These conclusions were based on limited data and those data were largely obtained from secondary sources. The purpose of the present study is not to defend or to reformulate my earlier hypothesis; nor to engage in a debate on whether it is economic or political conditions that will be most important in determining the future. My purpose here is more limited, but important nonetheless; on the basis of more recent economic data that has become available in the past few years, can we provide a better or more solid and thorough comparative analysis of economic conditions in the three Asian socialist economies?<sup>5</sup>

Vietnam is obviously suffering serious economic problems, but just how serious are they? The Chinese have achieved an improvement in their economic conditions as a result of the economic reform program, but just how much improvement has taken place? In view of our limited quantitative

<sup>4</sup>See World Bank, *World Development Report, 1986* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 180–81.

<sup>5</sup>A few basic sources were frequently used throughout this study and can be noted here. For China, State Statistical Bureau, People's Republic of China, *Statistical Yearbook of China, 1986* (Hong Kong: Economic Information and Agency, 1986). Accuracy, consistency, and coverage remain problems that must be of concern to anyone who uses the statistics from this source, as is true for the economic statistics published by any developing economy. Nonetheless, the *Statistical Yearbook of China, 1986*, marks a "coming of age" for Chinese economic statistics, an improvement over the situation in previous years.

My periodic review of the available Chinese sources of information on the Chinese economy provided me with rather detailed Chinese studies, based on original sources, of both the Vietnamese and the North Korean economies. The 227-page study, *The Vietnamese Economy*, was prepared by Director Guo Ming and his colleagues at the Institute of International Relations in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, bordering on Vietnam, and published by the Guangxi Zhuang Teachers College, in Jan. 1986, in Chinese. English translation was prepared by June Yang at the East-West Center, Hawaii, in the course of my research for this study. A very good economic analysis of developments in the Vietnamese economy, based upon the available statistics, is Tetsusaburo Kimura, "Vietnam—Ten Years of Economic Struggle," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 10 (Oct. 1986): 1039–55.

Economic studies of the North Korean economy are a virtual statistical wasteland, and the sources available and used in this study are no exception. Li Xiangwe, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, was the main author of a 153-page study, *Korea's Socialist Economic Construction* (in Chinese), which indicates that the Chinese academics suffer from the same lack of economic statistics for the North Korean economy as their colleagues in the West (Beijing: Social Sciences Publishing House of China, 1983). English translation was prepared by June Yang, East-West Center. The most recent source used for this study was Teruo Komaki, "Economic Trends in North Korea and the Third Seven-Year Plan," *China Newsletter*, no. 70 (Sept.–Oct. 1987): 12–15. This source reports that "since 1980, figures for gross industrial output have been announced only for 1980 and 1982, but have been withheld in other years" (p. 13).

knowledge of the North Korean economy, is it true that economic conditions in North Korea are significantly better than in China? These are basic questions and deserve our attention before making predictions about the fates of the economic reform programs in the three Asian socialist countries.

This quantitative, comparative analysis is organized into three parts: size, structure, and performance. The conclusion does not summarize the findings of the analysis, but returns to reflect upon the main theme of my earlier study—a comparative evaluation of the current status and future prospects of the reform movements in the three Asian socialist economies.

No attempt is made to present the details of the sources and methods used for obtaining each of the estimates presented in the tables; statistics in the tables are presented to illustrate the argument being made, are believed to be accurate enough for that purpose, and are believed to originate from official statistical reports released by each of the three Asian socialist countries. Where possible, data for the most recent year available were used; almost all data refer to “the 1980s.”

There are many serious problems with the national income, GNP, and per capita income estimates presented for each of the three Asian socialist countries.<sup>6</sup> Despite these, I do not believe that the use of these statistics in my arguments and comparative analyses biases the conclusions or that the expenditure of more time and effort to derive more accurate estimates would be terribly profitable or lead to sufficiently different estimates. This is why I have accepted and decided to use the estimates in the sources readily available and not to make the derivation of the estimates used a major focus of the study.

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<sup>6</sup>For example, the per capita GNP figure for North Korea in table 1 places North Korea in the category of lower-middle-income countries, where it is listed by the World Bank's *World Development Report, 1986*. According to Li Xiangwe, *Korea's Socialist Economic Construction*, per capita national income in North Korea in 1980 was US\$1,920 (reported in US\$ in original source). This would place North Korea in the upper-middle-income category as defined by the World Bank.

According to Tetsusaburo Kimura, “Vietnam—Ten Years of Economic Struggle,” Vietnam's national income was US\$5.6 billion in 1983, with a per capita income of US\$99 (p. 1040). This same source quotes the following estimates of per capita income in Vietnam made by others: “roughly US\$195” in 1983 or “two-thirds that of China” (*Economist*, using IMF data); US\$125 or “less than a fifth that in neighboring Thailand” (*Time*); between US\$125 and US\$200 (Bob Sector, *Los Angeles Times*); or about US\$160 (William Branigan, *Washington Post*).

Despite the depreciation of the dollar against hard currencies, the overvaluation of the yuan was recognized somewhat by its depreciation against the dollar in 1985. In 1984, the average buying and selling price (Bank of China) for US\$100 was 232.7 yuan; in 1985, it was 293.67 yuan. Although still overvalued, this represented a 26.2 percent depreciation of the yuan in 1985. Thus, even if China's national income were to have increased by 26.2 percent in 1985, it would have remained constant if valued in current dollars. This is why many published reports in the U.S. for China's national income give a higher value for 1984 than I give for 1985. Until exchange rates stabilize and the adjustments in China's foreign exchange rate remove the overvaluation of the yuan, changes in the exchange rate will continue to cause problems.

## Size

Although the differences in size among these three economies may be obvious, there are two important features of this question that are relevant to our ultimate purpose. On the one hand, are these size differences such that we are really comparing oranges and apples? On the other hand, why is size an important variable in our comparison even though the differences are great? As for the first concern, regardless of their differences in size, all three countries have similar cultural histories (the Sinic tradition), are confronting the rather traditional economic problems faced by most developing economies, have adopted the same Soviet-style economy to cope with those problems in the recent past, and are now contemplating the introduction of, or have already begun to introduce, economic reforms to cope with the economic problems that have been commonly experienced by countries having a Soviet-style economic system. We may be comparing apples and oranges, inasmuch as all economies are different in many respects, but as far as the basic elements of the problems being analyzed in this paper, these economies are all members of the same family.

As for the second concern, what difference does size make? Before answering this question, we should specify the differences in size among these three economies. Whether we use land area or population, the results are the same: Vietnam is about three times as large as North Korea; China is fifty (population) to eighty (land area) times as large (see table 1). If we use level of development as our comparative measure, North Korea is three times as urbanized as either China or Vietnam (but still has fewer urban residents in absolute numbers); Vietnam's GNP is about half that of North Korea, and that of China is about seventeen times as large; Vietnam's foreign trade is also about half that of North Korea, and China's is seventeen times as large; but in terms of per capita income, North Korea easily ranks as a lower-middle-income country (weighted average per capita income for these countries in 1982 was US\$840), China ranks near the midpoint of the low-income countries (US\$280), and Vietnam is among the poorest countries in the world.

How do these differences in size influence the options facing the policy-makers in each of these three Asian socialist countries? Time and space do not permit a comprehensive and detailed treatment of this subject, but three major "economies" of scale and two major "diseconomies" of scale can be identified to show clearly that size is important in evaluating the economic strategy and policy options in these three countries.

First, from a purely economic point of view, economists have traditionally accepted Adam Smith's argument that specialization and division of labor are major sources of growth, their extent being determined by the size of the market. With modern technology, the specialization of labor is also facilitated by innovations in production techniques, so that the optimum size ("cheap-

**Table 1**  
Size

Comparative Indicators	DPRK	DRV	PRC
Area (1,000 sq km)	121.9	329.0	9,600.0
Cultivated area (% of total)	15.0	15.0	10.1
Cultivated area (1,000 ha)	1828.9	4,935.0	96,960.0
Population (mil)	20.6	61.2	1,045.3
Urban population (% of total)	60.0	19.0	20.3
Labor force (% of total)	57.0	55.0	64.0
Agr labor force (mil)	5.0	19.6	311.9
Cultivated area per capita <sup>a</sup> of agr labor force (ha)	0.366	0.252	0.311
Grain output (mil tons) <sup>b</sup>	9.0	19.0	379.1
Grain output/unit of cultivated area (tons/ha)	4.9	0.6	3.9
NY (billion US\$)	—	8.5	232.3
GNP (billion US\$)	16.2	—	268.3
Per capita national income, except for North Korea, which is per capita GNP (US\$)	862	152	222
Foreign trade (exports + imports, billion US\$)	3.7	2.1	69.6
Ratio of foreign trade to national income or GNP	0.225	0.248	0.300
Military manpower (mil)	840	1,560	2,930

SOURCES: *The Concise Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ed. (in Chinese) (Beijing: Chinese Encyclopaedia Publishers, 1985–86), 1 (art. on “North Korea”): 580–82; Guo Ming et al., *The Vietnamese Economy* (in Chinese) (Nanning: Guangxi Zhuang Teachers College, 1986); Li Xiangwe et al., *Korea's Socialist Economic Construction* (Beijing: Social Sciences Publishing House of China, 1983); annual issues in the 1980s of the *Asia Yearbook* (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review); World Bank, *World Development Report, 1986* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Vu Tuan Anh, “The Process of Industrialization and the Modification of the National Economic Structure,” *Vietnam Social Sciences*, no. 1–2 (1986): 61–76; Tetsusaburo Kimura, “Vietnam—Ten Years of Economic Struggle,” *Asian Survey* 26, no. 10 (Oct. 1986): 1039–55; Teruo Komaki, “Economic Trends in North Korea and the Third Seven-Year Plan,” *China Newsletter*, no. 70 (Sept.–Oct. 1987): 12–15.

<sup>a</sup>According to Kimura (p. 1045), cultivated area in Vietnam was 6.01 million hectares in 1978, the agricultural labor force was 13 million, and therefore, the cultivated area per capita of the agricultural labor force was 0.460 hectares. This does not contradict the lower estimate for cultivated area and higher estimate for agricultural labor force in the 1980s in table 1 because the cultivated area reportedly was reduced; a large share of the arable land, as much as one-half, was left lying idle.

<sup>b</sup>According to Teruo Komaki (pp. 13–14), grain output in North Korea in 1984 was 10 million tons, and the target for grain output in the Third Seven-Year Plan, which began in 1987, is 15 million tons. According to Kimura (p. 1047), total “food production” in Vietnam in 1984 was 173 million tons.

est cost”) of production tends to require a large market. Certainly, the Chinese policymakers have an advantage in that the domestic market is large enough to support the optimum scale of production for any industry as industrialization proceeds.

Second, the larger the country, the more likely its resource endowment

will include the range and quantity of resources needed for industrialization. All three of the Asian socialist economies are relatively well endowed with natural resources, but China is at a tremendous advantage in confronting the problems of economic development because of its greater abundance of resources.

A third advantage of size, especially in reference to these three Asian socialist economies, is the ability to bear the costs of military expenditures; each of these countries is adopting foreign policy goals or has defense needs imposed upon it that require a credible military capability, and this takes resources—a great many resources. Furthermore, Vietnam's army is twice the size of North Korea's, even though its national income is only half that of the DPRK. China, however, maintains an army only twice as large as Vietnam's with a national income thirty times as large. The economic burden of the military on the smaller economies is significant, especially for Vietnam. Defense expenditures amounted to 45 percent of total budget expenditures in Vietnam in 1981 and 31 percent of total budget expenditures in North Korea in 1985.<sup>7</sup> In the Chinese budget, however, defense expenditures were only 10 percent of total budget expenditures in 1985.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, on the positive side of the ledger—the “economies” of scale—the Chinese policymakers seem to enjoy a tremendous advantage over their counterparts in Vietnam and North Korea. One way for Vietnam and North Korea to compensate for their smaller scale, of course, is to extend their markets and gain access to more resources through foreign trade.<sup>9</sup> All three countries have begun to increase their foreign trade over the past decade; total foreign trade now varies between 22 and 30 percent of national income (or GNP). As a result, all three countries have incurred a rising foreign debt. Here again there are advantages of scale, and China's debt burden, relative to the level of domestic economic activity, is much less than those of the smaller economies. In addition, with a larger domestic economy and richer endowment of natural resources, the Chinese have been better able to expand their exports and achieve a balanced foreign trade than the smaller economies (see table 3, in the section on performance in this study).

In summary, China enjoys significant advantage over the other two

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<sup>7</sup>Guo Ming, *Vietnamese Economy*, 273; *Asian Yearbook*, 1986 (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1987), 8. This latter source also reports that military expenditures were 23.8 percent of North Korea's GNP.

<sup>8</sup>*Statistical Yearbook of China*, 1986, 509, 516.

<sup>9</sup>Simon Kuznets makes an even stronger argument, based on his comprehensive and detailed comparative, statistical analysis of the process of economic development, published as ten supplements to *Economic Development and Cultural Change* over a period of ten years. According to Kuznets, “It follows that the smaller countries must rely far more heavily on foreign trade than the larger countries,” and his statistical analysis “lends further support to the inference that small countries can attain economic growth *only* through heavy reliance on foreign trade, . . . whereas the larger countries can attain economic growth with much lower foreign trade proportions, so that reliance on proportionally large material flows to and from the rest of the world is not a necessary condition, although it may occur” (emphasis in original text).

economies in their common attempts to achieve economic development because of its much larger size. It enjoys “economies of scale” from its much larger domestic market and variety and supply of natural resources. The large scale of the economy also makes the burden of military expenditures less heavy than in the smaller economies of North Korea and Vietnam. To compensate for the smaller size of their economies, these smaller countries can rely on greater foreign trade. Thus, the burden of military expenditures and foreign trade problems should be much more serious for the Vietnamese and North Korean policymakers than for the Chinese, and foreign trade and military considerations will dominate policymakers’ thinking and influence allocation of resources much more in the “smaller” economies than in China.

Just as economists have traditionally pointed out the existence of “economies” of scale, they have also identified “diseconomies” of scale. To illustrate the importance or magnitude of the costs as an economy grows, think of a physical object increasing its dimensions in arithmetical proportions over time. As the external dimensions increase arithmetically, the volume and weight increase exponentially. Or to cite a practical example, it is one thing for policymakers to solve a 5 percent unemployment problem in a labor force of 20 million scattered in economic centers all within fifty miles of each other, but something entirely different to cope with the same problem in a labor force of 200 million scattered in economic centers throughout the land surface of China. Although China is rich in resources, transporting these resources to where the centers of production are can be more costly than the production of the resources. Thus, the problem of scale exerts a strong influence upon the allocation of resources.

Students of China’s economic and political history have long argued that the mere problem of scale is of major concern to Chinese policymakers. The decline of the Chinese government’s ability to rule and to sustain the prosperity of the Chinese economy in centuries past is attributed to the sheer problem of size; China simply grew too large to be manageable by its existing political system.<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, it is necessary only to

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(*Modern Economic Growth: Rate, Structure, and Spread* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966], 302).

<sup>10</sup>For a telling example of how Chinese society continued to “govern itself” after the state’s capacity to administer the economy from the center had fallen to a weak and almost nonexistent level and control over many areas had been lost, by the end of the Qing and in the early years of the republic, see Robert Alan Hackman, “The Politics of Regional Development: Water Conservancy in Central Kiangsu Province, China, 1850–1911” (Ph.D. diss., Department of History, University of Michigan, 1979). Without help or direction from higher levels of the administration, the local elite organized and carried out the water control measures necessary in central Kiangsu to maintain agricultural production after the Yellow River shifted to a new bed north of the Shantu Massif in the 1850s, just as if they were still working as the representatives of the central government, which was too weak to act. Despite this problem of size, the communist government tried to adopt the Soviet-style economic system, which relies upon an administrative and control system for economic activities far greater than that envisaged by any traditional Chinese government throughout China’s long history.

mention the problems of transportation, communications, and control and coordination—essential elements in any modern economy.

A different aspect of this problem of scale, one that affects smaller economies as well as China, has to do with changes in the factor proportions in an economy as its size increases. Because of the geographical size of the economy, as the population grows (without sufficient increases in technology), the factor proportions can change so that the ratio of peasant labor to cultivated area increases and decreasing returns create a serious problem in feeding the population. Although only 10 percent of China's area is cultivated, this is still fifty times as much as North Korea. Population growth, however, has left China with a rural population a hundred times as large as that of North Korea; that is, a land to labor ratio that is twice as labor intensive as that in North Korea's agriculture, and an output of grain per capita of total population that is about half that of Korea. Thus, the problem of feeding the population and of transforming agricultural production in China (i.e., introducing mechanical, chemical, and biological innovations) is much greater for the Chinese policymakers than for the North Koreans.

Vietnam has been left out of the above comparison because its agricultural problem does not really arise from population growth in relation to the fixed amount of cultivatable land. In table 1, the cultivated land area per capita of rural population would appear to be worse in Vietnam than in China, but that result hides the fact that the arable land in Vietnam is estimated to be twice the area actually cultivated. Thus, Vietnam's potential land to labor ratio is more similar to the labor intensity of North Korea than to that of China, even though the actual land to labor ratio is worse than that in China. Furthermore, Vietnam's grain production per capita of rural population is below that in China (see table 2). The agricultural problem is even more pressing for policymakers in Vietnam than for those in China, but the solution in Vietnam is a matter of restoring traditional yields, not of reacting to the problem of having allowed the available cultivated land per capita to decline to a low level as a result of an increase in the peasant population (a problem of size).

The results of our comparative analysis of these three economies on the basis of the size variables alone leads us to predict that the Chinese policymakers will be pressured by infrastructure and management problems due to the geographical size of their economy and by the agricultural problem due to the size of the population in relation to the available cultivatable land. Policymakers in Vietnam and North Korea will be pressured by three problems due to their relatively small size: foreign trade, the burdens of military expenditures and foreign debt. These considerations should help explain differences in the policy and strategy choices in the three Asian socialist economies.

### **Structure**

Policymakers in these three countries have been adopting and imple-

menting economic policies and strategies to cope with their economic development problems in the past few years and their success thus far should be reflected in the structure of these economies. Economists have derived hypotheses relating the structure of an economy seeking to determine how far along that economy is in the attempt to solve developmental problems.<sup>11</sup> The traditional or normal pattern of sectoral relationships for a "typical" economy at a particular level of per capita income can be used as the standard of comparison in our analysis of the economic structure in the three Asian socialist economies. It is readily recognized, of course, that socialist countries will deviate from the normal pattern of economic growth because of their economic systems, strategies, and policies. Yet, it is argued that these deviations from the norm can only be temporary and will create tensions and bottlenecks in the process of economic development, inevitably causing those economies to introduce institutional, strategic, and policy reforms, so as to return to the traditional and more effective pattern and path of economic growth.<sup>12</sup>

The World Bank annually compiles economic statistics for 127 of the world's economies and organizes the results according to the countries' rank in per capita income. Per capita income for the 29 low-income countries for which statistics were available in 1984 varied from a low of \$110 to a high of \$380; the median per capita income for the low-income countries was \$260, and the weighted average was also \$260.<sup>13</sup> With the exchange rates of 1984, China was ranked somewhat above the average. Statistics for Vietnam were not included, but it would rank among the four or five poorest countries in the low-income group. Statistics for North Korea also were not included, but it was listed as a lower-middle-income country by the World Bank, along with 38 other countries. The lowest income per capita for this category is \$450 and the highest is \$1570; the median per capita income is \$860, and the weighted average per capita income is \$740. Thus, according to the estimates in table 1, North Korea would lie near the midpoint of the lower-middle-income grouping of countries.

Vietnam and China most resemble those countries at similar levels of development in the share of their population living in urban areas and the share of the labor force working in agriculture: the urban population is 19 percent of total population in Vietnam and 20 percent in China versus 23

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<sup>11</sup>For more detailed discussion and references to the works of economists who have been the major contributors to this argument, see Dernberger, "State-Planned, Centralized System," 28, and n. 24.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. Whether this argument is valid or not, the normal pattern of structural relationships and the changes in those relationships can be used for a comparative analysis of the economic structures of the three Asian socialist economies and as a means for relating that analysis to the economic policy and strategy choices now being made in those countries.

<sup>13</sup>Statistics in this and the following paragraph are from *World Development Report, 1986*, tables for "World Development Indicators" in the Annex to the main report, and from tables 1 and 2, this study.

percent in the typical low-income economy; 71.8 percent of the labor force is employed in agriculture in Vietnam and 62.5 percent in China as against 70 percent in the typical low-income country. North Korea more closely resembles an upper-middle-income country than a lower-middle-income country in urbanization; lower-middle-income countries have an urban share of total population of 65 percent, and North Korea a share of 60 percent. This reflects, to some extent, the greater capital intensity of North Korean agriculture (more land and machinery a worker) than in the "typical" lower-middle-income economy, the share of the labor force employed in agriculture being 43 percent in North Korea and 56 percent in the "typical" lower-middle-income country.

Much more discernible and informative is the structure and level of output in the three Asian socialist economies. Because of the economic strategies and policies they pursued in the past, the service sectors (commerce, banking, transportation, construction, education, etc.) have been neglected in favor of the goods-producing sectors (agricultural and industry); agricultural and industrial output together account for 71 percent of national income in the low-income economies, but for more than 75 percent in Vietnam and more than 80 percent in China (see table 2).<sup>14</sup> All three economies have favored the industrial sectors in the allocation of investment in the past, following a Stalinist "big push" development policy.<sup>15</sup> This has had the greatest effect in North Korea: The "typical" lower-middle-income economy has a value of industrial output that is 50 percent higher than agricultural output; in North Korea, the ratio is three to one. In addition, North Korea's per capita output of industrial products is double or more than that of China.

The Stalinist "big push" development strategy in China had raised industry's share of national income from 20 percent in 1952 to 40 percent in the mid-1980s. Nonetheless, agriculture's share of national income was just as large as industry's in the 1980s, the same as in the "typical" low-income economy. Vietnam's agricultural sector, however, accounts for a share of national income that is almost 50 percent larger than that of industry. This was not because of neglect of industry in the allocation of investment, however. Rather, it resulted from failure of investments in industry to achieve

<sup>14</sup>Statistics for the services sector are not available for North Korea.

<sup>15</sup>Accumulation was 30.8 percent of national income in China in 1981–85, and investment in fixed assets accounted for 79.2 percent of accumulation over the same period. *Statistical Yearbook of China, 1986*, 49, 54. Detailed statistics for investment are not available for North Korea and Vietnam, but according to the estimates published in the tables for "Regional Performance Figures" in *Asia Yearbook, 1983* (pp. 6–7), gross capital-formation was 38 percent of GNP in North Korea in 1981. The estimate for Vietnam in 1981 was 14 percent, but according to Guo Ming, *Vietnamese Economy* (p. 85), total basic construction during the Third Five-Year Plan period (1981–85) was to be 43.3 percent less than the total during the Second Five-Year Plan period (1976–80). According to Tetsusaburo Kimura, "the total accumulation rate, even including that outside the state financial system, is under 20%" in Vietnam ("Vietnam—Ten Years of Economic Struggle," 1053).

**Table 2**  
Structure

Indicators	DPRK	DRV	PRC
Shares of NY or GNP (%)			
Agriculture	24.0	42.5	41.4
Industry	76.0	32.8	41.5
Construction		4.4	5.5
Commerce		12.9	8.1
Transportation		(7.4)	3.5
Share of labor force (%)			
Agriculture	43.0	71.8	62.5
Industry	30.0	14.3	16.7
Services	27.0	13.9	20.8
Per capita output			
Electricity (kwh)	1,187	83	393
Coal (kg)	1,978	83	834
Steel (kg)	158	1	45
Chemical fertilizer (kg)	108	3	13
Cement (kg)	288	22	140
Textiles (m)	29	6	14
Grain (kg)	647	310	363
Paper (kg)		1	9
Sugar (kg)		7	4
Foreign trade			
Exports (US\$ per capita)	75.24	10.62	26.17
Imports (US\$ per capita)	101.94	23.86	40.42
Balance (US\$ per capita)	-26.70	-13.24	-14.25
Exports/Imports	0.74	0.45	0.65

SOURCES: See table 1.

progress in Vietnam's industrialization. The share of industry in Vietnam's national income is about one-third; its share is more than one-third in the "typical" low-income economy. Moreover, the per capita output of most industrial products in Vietnam is 50 percent or more below their level in China; the share of the labor force employed in the industrial sector is about the same in both countries.

Because of the failure of its industrialization program, 70–90 percent of Vietnam's producer goods are supplied by imports;<sup>16</sup> the foreign exchange earnings from exports cover less than half the cost of imports (see table 2). Thus, although Vietnam's foreign trade participation rate is greater than that of the "typical" low-income economy (18 percent), this is not a result of the normal process of growth but of a crisis—the need to keep the economy functioning by imports financed by foreign aid, loans, and short-term debt.

As a result of China's change in policy and increase in foreign trade, its foreign trade as a share of national income and per capita also exceeds that for

<sup>16</sup>Guo Ming, *Vietnamese Economy*, 231–32.

the "typical" low-income economy (especially striking in view of the size of China's economy); but this stems from economic policy and strategy choices, not from a domestic economic crisis. Although China's import demand also exceeds foreign exchange earning from exports by a considerable margin and the Chinese are recipients of large foreign loans and short-term credits, the Chinese hold foreign exchange reserves, their foreign debt burden is not a serious problem, and they are able to constrain the growth of imports with less effect on the domestic economy than in Vietnam.<sup>17</sup>

North Korea has a significantly higher per capita volume of foreign trade than either China or Vietnam, and exports finance a significantly larger share of imports. Yet, North Korea's foreign trade participation ratio (22.5 percent) is almost half that of the "typical" lower-middle-income economy. Furthermore, the growth of North Korea's foreign trade is severely constrained by North Korea's export earnings. Thus, foreign debt is a much more serious problem for the policymakers in both Vietnam and North Korea than in China.

This brief macrocomparative analysis of the economic structure of the three Asian socialist economies, like that of their size, provides important clues on what are likely to be the major concerns of the policymakers in these countries, the options that are available, and their likely choices. North Korea, in view of the level of urbanization, share of the labor force employed in industry, ratio of industrial output to agricultural output, per capita output, and per capita foreign trade, appears to have benefited most from the adoption and implementation of the Soviet-style economic system and Stalinist development strategy of the past, displaying macrostatistics that indicate it belongs well up in the ranks of the middle-income countries.

The major exception, of course, is its foreign trade participation ratio, not only below that of the other three Asian socialist countries but also well below that of the "typical" lower-middle-income country. Furthermore, with one out of every four dollars of imports having to be financed by foreign loans and credits, the earlier argument, based on size alone, is reinforced; a major concern of the North Korean policymakers must be to open their economy to greater foreign trade participation.

Of the three Asian socialist economies, the macrostatistics for the structure of the Chinese economy, in view of its per capita income, look the most normal or "typical" for a developing economy. Earlier neglect of the services sector is a problem that must be solved by the economic policymakers and, without foreign aid or a sizable growth in foreign debt, the policymakers must solve the problem of increasing export earnings or limit the increase in China's participation in the world economy. Other than that, as a result of the

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<sup>17</sup>As can be seen from the statistics for 1985 in table 3, the relaxation in import controls led to a jump in imports, especially of consumer's durables (including automobiles). This did cause some panic among the Chinese leadership and a warning from the World Bank over the growing debt incurred to finance these imports. (See nn. 27, 28.)

economic reforms thus far, the Chinese economy appears to be moving up the ranks of the developing countries in a much more normal manner than the other Asian socialist economies or than China in the prereform period, that is, before 1979.

The statistics for the structure of the Vietnamese economy identify the plight of the economic policymakers: the poorly developed services sector, the failure of the industrial sector to attain the normal share of national income even for a low-income country, and the inability to finance the low level of imports necessary to fill the gaps between supply and demand on the domestic market. In short, the economic policymakers in Vietnam are crisis managers. The comparative analysis of Vietnam's economic structure indicates that the two major crisis areas they must deal with are the need to increase industrial production and the need to increase exports.

### Performance

All three Asian socialist countries are beset by the traditional problems of inefficiency and waste associated with the Soviet-style economy that have accumulated over time. These problems are best revealed by the microstatistics for economic performance; the available macrostatistics in tables 3 and 4

**Table 3**  
Economic Performance

Indicators	DPRK	DRV	PRC
Growth GNP or NY <sup>a</sup> (%) <sup>b</sup>			
1970-79	7.3		
1976-80		1.50	6.00
1981-85	4.3		9.70
1986	4.0		7.40
Growth agriculture (%)			
1974-79	5.2		
1976-80		1.70	2.20
1981-85			9.90
Growth industry (%)			
1970-79	15.9		
1976-80		2.40	8.50
1981-85			9.20
Foreign debt (billion US \$)			
1985-86	1.8	6.17	15.83 <sup>c</sup>

SOURCES: See table 1, with exception of foreign debt.

<sup>a</sup>National income.

<sup>b</sup>Average annual rates of growth during periods stipulated.

<sup>c</sup>Chinese estimate reported in Louise do Rosario, "In the Big League," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Mar. 26, 1987, 53. IMF estimate is US \$19.88 billion, and World Bank estimate is US \$20.60 billion.

**Table 4**  
**Foreign Trade Performance**  
**(billion US \$)**

Year	X <sup>a</sup>	M <sup>b</sup>	Balance	X	M	Balance	X	M	Balance
1978	1.30	1.15	+0.15	0.48	1.16	-0.68	9.75	10.89	-1.14
1979	1.49	1.60	-0.11	0.42	1.20	-0.78	13.66	15.67	-2.01
1980	1.99	2.11	-0.12	0.39	0.94	-0.55	18.27	19.55	-1.28
1981	1.55	2.10	-0.55	0.37	1.08	-0.71	22.01	22.01	0
1982	1.50	1.80	-0.30	0.59	1.43	-0.84	22.35	19.28	+3.07
1983	0.96	1.30	-0.34	0.65	1.55	-0.90	22.23	21.39	-0.84
1984	1.03	1.20	-0.17				26.14	27.41	-1.27
1985							27.34	42.25	-14.91
Cumulative			-1.44			-4.46			-18.38

SOURCES: See table 1.

<sup>a</sup>Exports.

<sup>b</sup>Imports.

only serve to indicate the extent of the problem, and reveal the consequences of the attempt to solve the problems by acquiring modern technology and needed inputs through greater foreign trade participation and dependency. The Soviet-style economy was designed and adopted for the purpose of mobilizing resources for investment in the producer goods industries and has a record of high rates of savings and investment and growth in industry. Yet, the centralized, planned, and administrative economic decision-making and control in the Soviet-style economy lead to poor results in the variety and quality of output, lagging technological innovation, bottlenecks and shortages, slow growth in productivity and standard of living, et cetera.<sup>18</sup> Eventually, the inefficiencies and wastes build up to the point at which the high rates of investment and growth are no longer sustainable because of agricultural shortages, bottlenecks in production and construction, poor motivation of both labor and management, and rising real costs for each unit of output. All three of the Asian socialist economies were beset by these legacies of the Soviet-style economy in the 1970s.

These problems, of course, are most severe in Vietnam, and were especially so when the orthodox communist leadership attempted to immediately replace the market system with the traditional Soviet economic model in the South following their victory in the civil war. Because of the economic environment in which the Vietnamese were trying to introduce the traditional socialist economic system and development strategy, the result was a disaster. Agricultural growth fell short of population growth, and industrial growth was no larger than population growth, despite the “big push” development strategy. The state sector of the economy was able to function only because of the large dose of foreign aid provided by the Soviet Union. The black market, or private sector, however, flourished. Faced with the threatened complete collapse of the state sector, the attempt to abolish the private sector was abandoned. The Fifth Party Congress in the spring of 1982 resulted in a compromise that allowed for economic reforms—price incentives, private markets, private farming within a socialist “framework”—as temporary expedients, still proposing that the “socialist transformation” of the economy in the South be completed by the mid-1980s.

The effect of this period of “forced” reform and liberalization in the early 1980s was interpreted as favorable by most outside observers, that is, on the

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<sup>18</sup>A very good theoretical treatment of these problems, by a Hungarian economist, is Janos Kornai, *Economics of Shortage* (New York: North Holland Publishers, 1980). Also, for a very good assessment of the difficulty in trying to correct these problems by economic reforms and of how halfway measures can fail to resolve the fundamental problems, see his “The Hungarian Reform Process: Visions, Hopes, and Reality,” *Journal of Comparative Economic Literature* 24, no. 4 (Dec. 1986): 1687–1737.

basis of reported increases in grain output and in the output of key industrial products. The rate of growth in 1983 was believed to be as high as 6 percent and there was even a reduction in the budget deficit in that year.<sup>19</sup> Yet, according to a Chinese source, productivity continued to decline and production costs increased, energy shortages became serious, and investment in infrastructure declined in absolute value.<sup>20</sup> A more optimistic interpretation of the results of the economic reforms is provided by Tetsusaburo Kimura, who cites official statistics to show a 6.1 percent annual rate of growth of national income in 1981–84, estimating that labor productivity (output/employment) increased by 2.3 percent during this period, after declining by 0.8 percent a year in 1976–80.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, dependence upon foreign aid continued to increase as the growth of exports failed to keep pace with the growth of imports, and Vietnam's cumulative foreign debt continued to grow.

What was worse, from the conservatives' point of view, was that the state planned sector was losing out to the private sector. Whereas in 1980 the market sector had controlled 20 percent of domestic trade, by 1982 its share had increased to 40 percent.<sup>22</sup> Despite the higher prices that existed on the "free" markets, the inability of the state to provide key commodities meant that even state enterprises engaged in transactions in the market sector. The general shortage of goods also led to inflation and currency devaluation.

The lesson of Vietnam's experience during this period, as for China during the same time, is that reforms restoring farming to the individual household, coupled with higher prices to the producer, are easy to implement and derive quick results. Thus, given its natural endowment of land and climate, the Vietnamese economy has been able to survive as a result of the successful agricultural reforms.<sup>23</sup> The advocates of more orthodox and traditional socialist economic policies, however, were able to prevent a more fundamental reform of the economic system as a means for curing the serious economic ills of the Vietnamese economy.

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<sup>19</sup>"Vietnam: Economy/Infrastructure," *Asia Yearbook, 1985* (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1985), 267.

<sup>20</sup>All of these arguments were included in the concluding section of the chap. on industry, "Problems in Industrial Production," in Guo Ming, *Vietnamese Economy*, 200–205.

<sup>21</sup>Tetsusaburo Kimura, "Vietnam—Ten Years of Economic Struggle," 1043, 1050.

<sup>22</sup>Guo Ming, *Vietnamese Economy*, 219.

<sup>23</sup>North and South Vietnam were unified under one government in 1975; in 1976–80, industrial output increased by 54.3 percent and agricultural output increased by 21.7 percent. In 1980–84, however, agriculture increased by 98.9 percent but industry increased by only 34.7 percent. Vu Tuan Anh, "The Process of Industrialization and the Modification of the National Economic Structure," *Vietnam Social Sciences*, nos. 1, 2 (1986): 72. (The author cites his original source as *Statistics of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1930–1984*, which is also a source used by Tetsusaburo Kimura in "Vietnam—Ten Years of Economic Struggle.")

Finally, however, Le Duan, the secretary-general of the party, who emerged as the unquestioned political leader in Vietnam in the 1980s, helped swing support in favor of the reformers in 1984. His support was reflected in the decisions of the Eighth Plenum of the party in June. Central planning and administrative control of the economy were to be replaced by a less centralized system of administration with greater initiative and decision making assigned to the enterprise managers. Salaries and wages were to reflect work effort in order to create an incentive system, and food subsidies for government and party workers were abolished.

Unfortunately, these initial moves in the direction of market socialism were accompanied by currency reform, undoubtedly supported by the conservatives as a means to gain greater control over the growing profits and liquid assets of the private sector. Ten units of the old currency were to be exchanged for one unit of the new, with a limit on the amount of currency that could be converted. Introduced to coincide with the introduction of the new wage system but without printing enough new money to exchange for the old, and with news of the conversion leaked widely before it took place, the conversion was a disaster. The rate of inflation increased dramatically, as did the hoarding of commodities. The removal of food subsidies in favor of marketed food supplies could not have come at a worse time, and the government was forced to reintroduce rationing. In short, the optimism over the rise of the reformers to positions of power in Vietnam soon evaporated, and the promising improvements in the economy in the early 1980s were replaced by reports of stagnation, rampant inflation, and growing international debt.<sup>24</sup>

In the midst of pessimistic reports in the press and by visitors about the state of the economy in 1986, the political leadership of Vietnam reacted in a traditional way—claiming that the general principles of the 1985 reform policies were correct but that their implementation by local cadres was to blame, and sacking virtually all the economic ministers. Thus, the need for economic reform in the Vietnamese economy was as great in the mid-1980s as it had been five years earlier. To use the words of Vietnam's former foreign minister, Nguyen Co Thach, the state of the economy was "very bad, but not worse."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>See John H. Esterline, "Vietnam in 1986," *Asian Survey* 27 (Jan. 1987):92–103.

<sup>25</sup>Developments in Vietnam in 1988, i.e., after this essay was edited for publication, have definitely become worse—especially the inflation and food shortages. Some Western observers are puzzled over the apparent lack of vigorous attention or dedicated resolve devoted to the immediate solution of what is really an economic crisis by the Vietnamese leadership—reformers and conservatives alike. During my visit to Vietnam in January 1988, I met with some very able and knowledgeable economists. However, their discussion of the reforms to be adopted and implemented for solving Vietnam's economic crisis was little more than a mixture of very realistic, but hopelessly short of what is needed, marginal changes, on the one hand, and

The Chinese began to engage in economic strategy and institutional change after the Third Plenum at the end of 1978. Although far from smooth, and following a pattern of moving forward with reforms, then retreat, retrenchment, and resort to traditional practices, once begun, the Chinese process of economic reform under the Deng and Zhao leadership has never been abandoned and, at the end of a decade of reform, has accumulated an impressive list of policy, strategy, and institutional changes. Much remains to be done before the Chinese can claim that they have achieved a new socialist economic model with Chinese characteristics, and a rather formidable state, planned, and administered sector remains in place. Most important, the future of the reform movement is far from certain. For the present, however, consensus has been reached that economic reforms will be pursued for the sake of achieving China's economic modernization, although disagreement remains over the specific features of the reforms to be introduced and the pace at which they will be introduced.

Consensus in support for the reform movement was probably obtained as a result of the effect of the economic reforms on China's economic performance. A detailed and accurate assessment of the changes in the Chinese economy over the past decade to apportion the share attributable to the changes in policies and institutions as against the share due to changes in other factors is far too complicated to be presented here.<sup>26</sup> The Chinese leadership (and many other observers) are quick to claim that the reform program alone is responsible for the observed increases in output and standard of living. However, the important point to be made is that although not the sole explanation, the economic reforms certainly can claim *a large share* of the credit. Furthermore, when compared with the results in Vietnam

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grandiose programs of reform that were completely unrealistic, i.e., no chance of being adopted, little chance of being implemented if adopted, or little chance of solving the fundamental problem if adopted and implemented, on the other hand. My own assessment of the Vietnamese economy would be to argue that it was a very bad situation that had not only become much worse but had now become a hopeless mess.

<sup>26</sup>One attempt to use econometric techniques for this type of analysis comes to the following conclusion: "The productivity growth caused by the shifting from the production team system to the household responsibility system accounted for about 45 percent of the output growth [in agriculture] between 1980 and 1983. The variation in weather explained about 5 percent of the output growth. The other 50 percent growth in the output between 1980 and 1983 should be accredited to the growth in inputs, especially the rapid growth in the purchased nonfarm inputs, namely fertilizer and machinery." Another interesting finding from this study was that the increase in productivity declined over time because the contract responsibility system was introduced in those collectives with the poorest yields first (i.e., where the possible gains were the greatest) and was spread to the more productive areas later on. Justin Yifu Lin, "Measuring the Impacts of the Household Responsibility System on China's Agricultural Production" (University of Chicago, n.d.), mimeo. In a later paper, yet to be published, Dr. Lin has revised his earlier estimates to show that the institutional and policy changes were responsible for 60 percent of the increase in agricultural production.

and North Korea, the change in economic performance in China appears so dramatic that there is a lot of credit to go around.

As the statistics in tables 3 and 4 clearly indicate, the greatest effect of the economic reforms has been in the agricultural sector, where those reforms have gone the furthest, to create household farming reacting to market forces, that is, to replace the planned sector with a market economy. The individual producer must still cope with many administrative constraints, but the decentralization of decision making and the creation of market incentives have resulted in significant increases in output over the past decade. These increases go far to account for the significant increases in per capita income, the standard of living, the reduction in China's reliance on imports of agricultural products, et cetera—that is, for improved economic conditions throughout the economy as a whole.

Similar attempts to decentralize decision making, to increase material incentives, and to move from administered plans to “economic levers” (prices, taxes, etc.) have been far less successful in the state sector of the economy. Moreover, the reforms have resulted in a loss of control over the economy by the central authorities due to the loss of direct administrative operation of local units in the state sector and the rapid growth in cooperative and private enterprises. Thus, the central authorities have become preoccupied with the macroeconomic problems of inflation, unemployment, budget deficits, and disequilibrium in the balance of payments. Simply, the Chinese leadership still faces the need to solve the problem of achieving the proper balance between central control and local entrepreneurial initiative that is the model of the “mixed” economy or the “socialist economy with Chinese characteristics” that they seek. Nonetheless, the record of the past decade indicates a turning point in China's economic evolution, and the current leadership is firmly committed to a program of economic reforms in the attempt to eliminate the worst inefficiencies and wastes of the traditional economic system and policies of the past.

Whatever the results of these efforts in the long run, within our comparative analysis of the economies of the three Asian socialist countries, the Chinese reform attempts must be given high marks. Although still plagued with economic problems, China's economic reform program has changed the pattern of economic performance in China, and the growth in output, incomes, housing, voluntary savings, variety and quality of products, new technology, et cetera has established a record over the past decade that appears most promising for the future, especially when compared with the situation in Vietnam.

For example, the statistics in tables 3 and 4 show that as a result of opening their economies to a greater foreign trade dependency, the Chinese, North Koreans, and Vietnamese each suffered large import surpluses in the balance of merchandise trade, leading to sizable foreign debt. Like other traditional

Soviet-style economies, these economies are not competitive in the world market (except, of course, for primary and processed primary products), and the demand for imports greatly exceeds their export capacity. In Vietnam and North Korea, these problems created a serious disequilibrium in the balance of payments, with loan defaults, and the need to rely on unilateral grants and aid. The statistics in tables 3 and 4 show the uncontrolled growth of imports and foreign debt that resulted during similar periods of relaxation in the controls over local units engaged in foreign borrowing and trade in China. There is no doubt that these developments scared the Chinese leadership. Unlike the Vietnamese and North Koreans, however, the Chinese reacted quickly to regain control by reimposing some central controls to ration foreign exchange while maintaining a significant cushion of foreign exchange in reserve and by limiting borrowing abroad to keep the foreign debt burden within prudent limits.<sup>27</sup> In 1986, exports increased by 13.1 percent, and imports were held at the same level as in 1985.<sup>28</sup>

Limited statistics are available for North Korea. The Second Seven-Year Plan (1978–84) was claimed to have achieved an 8.8 percent annual increase in national income, and the plan was reported to have been “completed” successfully.<sup>29</sup> The years 1985 and 1986 were a period of transitions before a new plan was ready in April of 1987, and the targets in this new plan (the Third Seven-Year Plan, 1987–93) are modest by the standards of the past.<sup>30</sup> Agricultural growth is said to be lagging (grain output increasing by only 1.5 million tons in 1978–84). Also, there are reports of shortages of energy (oil) and raw materials, excess capacity in industry, inability to pay foreign debts, et cetera, which support the claim by one observer that “the [North Korean]

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<sup>27</sup>China's foreign debt doubled in 1985, but especially worrisome was the increase in short-term debt (Bank of China borrowings on the interbank loan market), which quadrupled in 1985. Rather than let this growth of imports and foreign debt get out of hand, “Peking's immediate response to the situation is a further swing towards recentralization, leading to even greater controls on already hard-pressed national foreign-exchange expenditures and on external borrowing by all levels of government.” Louise do Rosario, “In the Big League,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Mar. 26, 1987, 53.

<sup>28</sup>This still left an import surplus of US\$12 billion and a further increase in China's foreign debt (estimated to be close to US\$25 billion at the end of 1986). State Statistical Bureau, People's Republic of China, “Communique on the Statistics of 1986 Economic and Social Development,” *Beijing Review*, Mar. 2, 1987, 24–25.

<sup>29</sup>Susumu Awanohara, “Predictions and Realities,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 7, 1987, 115. Quotes and information in the rest of this paragraph are from this source and the source cited in n. 30.

<sup>30</sup>According to Teruo Komaki, “Although the goals and objectives set forth in the plan are generally conservative when compared with the previous seven-year plan, a closer look at the ‘10 Major Targets’ and other individual items reveals that it will be no easy task to attain the desired results” (“Economic Trends in North Korea,” 12).

economy has stagnated since the early 1980s." Finally, although there can be little doubt that per capita levels of output in North Korea remain above those of either China or Vietnam, that success should not be translated without question into higher levels of consumption or well-being for the population; about 2 million tons of rice a year are exported, and very large military expenditures are included in the budget. Thus, the higher per capita level of output can be consistent with the reports of widespread shortages and pervasive rationing of foodstuffs.

Nonetheless, the North Korean leadership and economy remain perhaps the most orthodox in the socialist world, even including the Soviet Union. The Third Seven-Year Plan does place special emphasis upon the need to boost exports and increase foreign trade, but the new plan repeats the emphasis upon heavy industry and industrial projects in investment and reaffirms the desire to move from cooperative farming to state farms in the agricultural sector. Judging from the materials made public, the North Koreans—much more than the Chinese or the Vietnamese—retain the traditional practice of arguing in ideological terms and slogans, emphasizing targets instead of reporting results.

In short, although statistics to support the assertion are lacking, it seems that the typical Soviet-style economy and Stalinist development strategy "malaise" may have finally caught up with the North Korean economy, that its margin of surplus is being eroded, and that the technology gap between the North Korean economy and the developed economies is widening. Thus, the economic performance over the past decade would appear to be an inducement for reforms in the North Korean economy. Pressures for reform, however, still appear insufficient to induce a response among the North Korean leadership that is similar to the reform programs already introduced or contemplated by the Chinese and Vietnamese.

## **Conclusion**

The comparative analysis of the economies of the three Asian socialist countries in this study clearly indicates the need to modify the conclusions of my earlier study: that economic necessity alone determined the effort that would be exerted in adopting and implementing economic reforms and also the likelihood of the success of those efforts. Thus, reflecting the seriousness of the economic problems faced in each of the three countries, I had argued that economic reforms were likely to lead to true systemic change in Vietnam, were likely to be mixed and have an uncertain future in China, and were likely to be limited and less threatening to the traditional economic system and development strategy in North Korea.

The present study has attempted to examine closely the statistics now available for the size, structure, and performance of these three economies in a comparative analysis. Despite its higher per capita levels of output, stagna-

tion in North Korea's economic progress is creating strong pressure in favor of economic reforms, especially the need to open the economy to greater participation in the world economy. Also, despite the significant improvement in economic conditions in China, the Chinese remain committed to economic reform and China's participation in the world economy has increased well beyond the limits considered normal for a country of its size and level of economic development. Finally, although the economic situation in Vietnam has gone from bad to worse, attempts at economic reforms and the results of those attempts have been mixed at best. In other words, economic necessity does not hold up very well as a sole determinant of economic policy and institutional change in the contemporary experience of these three socialist economies in Asia.

The economic environment of the policymaker obviously is an important consideration in his thinking and actions, especially in periods of economic crisis. Yet, the makeup, interests, and relationships of the policy-making elite and changes in each of these are also of great importance. It is unlikely that the particular grouping of policymakers in North Korea would react in the same way as the leaders in Beijing or in Hanoi to a given economic problem. It is in regard to the interaction of economic and political factors that the lessons of the past few years have been most instructive. In Vietnam, the conservative ideologues of the revolutionary generation were able to continue their call for the socialist transformation of the economy and to maintain the bureaucratic centralism of the traditional system, despite the magnitude of Vietnam's economic problems after 1975. Later, the dismal failure of the ill-advised and badly administered financial reforms led to a reversal for the reformers, some of whom were made scapegoats for the failure. Also, the failure of Vietnamese attempts to increase trade ties with noncommunist countries led to a growing foreign debt burden, debt cancellations, and a growing dependency upon the Soviet Union. Yet, the drastic need for reform remained and has continued to grow ever greater.

The prospects for economic reform in Vietnam were given their greatest boost by political developments in late 1986 and in 1987. The inevitable biological process of death, more than economic crises, has worked to force a generational change in the Vietnamese leadership. Because of Vietnam's serious economic problems, the new party leader, Nguyen Van Linh, a strong advocate of more pragmatic policies, including increased material incentives and economic accountability (i.e., the need to make profits) for government-owned enterprises, is said to have come to power in a "groundswell of public criticism about the party leadership's handling of the economy."<sup>31</sup> Equally important, there has been a noticeable move to younger cadres with success-

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<sup>31</sup>Murray Hiebert, "The Capitalist Road," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 7, 1987, 101.

ful experience in coping with economic problems at the local level, not by adopting resolutions or giving speeches filled with ideological rhetoric.<sup>32</sup> This is the new group of cadres referred to in the Western press as provincial authorities who have been elevated to important national positions as a result of the Party Congress in 1987. Although reform policies have yet to be formulated, adopted, and implemented, and the resolution of Vietnam's serious foreign policy problems may be a precondition for successful economic reforms, the generational change in leadership is expected to make a significant difference, and the future of the economic reform program in Vietnam has become more promising.

Unfortunately, the complete failure of the economic reform faction and the economists in Vietnam to cope with Vietnam's economic problems in the past few years has seriously eroded their prestige and support. Thus, several members of the reform faction have lost their positions due to their inability to stem the worsening economic situation. A conservative candidate (Do Muoi, the man responsible for the socialist transition of the South after 1975) rather than the more favored reform candidate, Vo Van Kiet, was selected as the new premier at the National Assembly meeting in June 1988. Nonetheless, the new premier was quick to acknowledge the need for economic reforms. The major problem faced by the reformers is not political but their need to come up with policy proposals that will work and to find cadres with the necessary skills to implement them.

Although the improvement in economic conditions in China, partly as a result of the economic reforms, has been significantly greater than the improvement in either Vietnam or North Korea, the reforms have created serious problems in macromanagement of the economy for the Chinese leadership, that is, inflation, budget deficits, disequilibrium in the balance of payments, and unemployment. Not only do the Chinese lack experience in dealing with these problems, but also the only sure ways they know and have traditionally used to avoid them are central control and bureaucratic administration of the economy. Despite relying on these traditional means from time to time when the macroeconomic problems become critical, the Chinese leadership has been remarkably faithful to pursuing economic reform.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Especially important, in contrast with the older generation of ideologues, is the radical change in attitude toward the capitalists and the private sector. Linh told a French journalist that private and individual sectors are "playing a useful role" and that earlier attempts to do away with them "proved unrealistic and harmful," and the Central Committee has called for an end to discriminatory treatment of the private capitalists. Hiebert, "The Capitalist Road," 102.

<sup>33</sup>This does not ignore the lack of enthusiasm for, or even resistance to, the economic reform by members of the administrative bureaucracy and various interest groups throughout the economy at all levels. The point being made is that the political leadership has not backed down in the

This commitment was challenged early in 1987 when Deng Xiaoping's attempt to manage the generational transfer of power suffered a setback and Hu Yaobang was forced to resign as head of the party in the face of strong opposition by the conservative faction among the leadership. Nonetheless, the coalition among the leadership in support of the economic reform program, despite obvious disagreements over its extent and speed, remains intact. The generational transition of leadership at the Thirteenth Party Congress appears to continue the coalition rather than mark a clear victory for one group. Most senior or veteran leaders were "retired," but the two who kept important positions were Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun—the leaders of the two reform factions. As for the five-man new Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, two clearly represent those who wish to modify the traditional system to make it work better, not scrap it in favor of market socialism, that is, Yao Yilin and Li Peng. Zhao Ziyang is an excellent compromise leader of the coalition and now heads the party as its secretary-general; Li Peng has taken his position as head of the government and is serving as acting premier until the National Congress meets to confirm his appointment. All these leaders desire economic reform, disagreeing only over its extent and pace, and the range of views they hold is probably the most narrow of any coalition leadership group since 1949.

Thus, despite the reduction of the need for economic reform, political developments in China can be interpreted as very favorable for the future of the economic reforms. The developments over the past few years, more than in any other socialist country, reveal the interdependence of economics and politics in the determination of economic policy and institutional change.<sup>34</sup> This political will or support for the economic reform program, however, must be sustained by continued observable and favorable economic results produced by the economic reforms, a factor which reduces the probability of their success.

The role of politics is also important in explaining the lack of any significant signs of economic reform in North Korea, despite the stagnation of the economy during the 1980s. Kim Il Sung dominates North Korean politics. His handpicked successor is his son, said to be close to the younger

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face of this resistance (the inertia and self-serving to be found in any administrative bureaucracy), and the advocates have built up sizable support for the reforms within the administrative bureaucracy, in various interest groups within the government, and within the population at large.

<sup>34</sup>Exogenous shocks can also play an important role in the future of the economic reforms in the three Asian socialist economies. Obviously, if the older generation of revolutionary ideologues had not died off in Vietnam, the prospects for the economic reforms in Vietnam would be less hopeful than they are. If Deng Xiaoping had died four or five years ago, in his absence the economic reform group in China undoubtedly would have encountered difficulty in obtaining a consensus in support of the economic reforms among the leadership.

generation of technocrats (not necessarily reformers, of course). Whether or not the generational transition turns out to be a positive force for economic reform will depend upon the younger generation's desire for, and success in, reducing tensions in the political relations between North and South Korea. The recent changes in the leadership obviously were not forced by generational change; they are interpreted by some as a demotion of the son and his technocrat colleagues held responsible for the economic policy failures during the 1980s, especially since 1983. In any event, Kim Il Sung has become very active as the head of state and party in the past year or so, and those he chose to be the new premier and first deputy premier are veteran economic administrators who are identified as supporting a "big push" style of industrialization and the mass mobilization of labor effort in crash programs.<sup>35</sup> So far, however, that new leadership group has not reversed the second attempt to implement a more open economic policy, and conditions in the North Korean economy obviously support the need for such a policy.

A major purpose of the present study has been to reexamine the evidence that has become available since my earlier study of the economic environment and economic developments in the three Asian socialist economies. That evidence indicates that the economic situation in Vietnam has grown worse, the economic situation in North Korea remains far from a crisis but has turned sour, and China's record of economic change over the past few years has been impressive. Yet, the reforms in Vietnam have progressed slowly, those in North Korea remain very limited, and those in China show the greatest promise of economic reform throughout the socialist world.<sup>36</sup>

These results show that economic causes alone cannot explain why and when economic reform programs are introduced, or predict their success; political developments and the interaction between economic and political factors must be included as explanatory causes. When political variables are included, the future chances of successful economic reforms still look best in Vietnam and worst for North Korea. The outcome in all three countries—

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<sup>35</sup>In Dec. 1986, Li Gun Mo replaced Kang Song San as premier. Kang is identified with the failed "open" policy introduced in 1984. Hong Song Nam replaced Yon Hyong Muk as first deputy premier. Hong was the head of national planing, i.e., a key element in the operation of a traditional Soviet-style economy.

<sup>36</sup>This statement is debatable. Hungary has done away with "formal" material-balance planning in favor of a more market socialist approach in the determination of current output levels; China has clearly opted to retain material-balance planning for some commodities in order to retain central control over the level of output and allocation of key commodities. Yet, I am implicitly accepting the argument made by Kornai and others that factory managers still work for the ministries in Hungary, and that "informal" decision making among members of the Central Committee, the ministries, and factory managers still places considerable control over the level and allocation of industrial production in the hands of the central political authorities rather than of "market" forces. See Janos Kornai, "Hungarian Reform Process," 1687–1737.

including China—remains uncertain. Yet, although the level of economic necessity may make economic reforms less urgent in China than in Vietnam and North Korea, political developments in China appear to be adding to their chances of success.

## 12. A Comparative Study of the Socialist Economic Systems of China and North Korea

SUCK-KYO AHN

### “Ideal” and “Real” Socialism

The primary concern of Marx was to explain the development of history, especially the transformation of capitalism into socialism. In this regard, his theoretical propositions can be summarized as follows:

1. History follows its iron law of development, beginning from *Urgesellschaft* and culminating in *Kommunismus*. Each stage of historical development is characterized by an involving contradiction between the productive classes as the production process unfolds. Under capitalism, productivity develops to a high level, but this process is accompanied by increasing antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which gives rise to a revolution led by the latter. Capitalism, then, is transformed into a more progressive mode of production, that is, socialism.
2. The productive system corresponds to the stage of historical development. The productive relationship represents the basic structure, the *reale Basis*, of a society, on which the political and legal superstructure is set up.<sup>1</sup>

However, socialism has experienced a rather different mode of development. So far as proposition 1 is concerned, historical movement did not follow the iron law prophesied by Marx. The transformation of capitalism to socialism took place at a low stage of economic development. In some countries, like China, even a semifeudal structure was dominant at the time. Therefore, the political superstructure in actual socialist conditions is not merely a passive reflection of the basic structure, as argued in proposition 2, but assumes a pervasive role in the socialist countries. The political elites of the newly socialist countries were confronted with two economic tasks: one was the transformation of the capitalistic relation of production into the socialist public ownership structure, the other the development of an eco-

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<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin: MEW, 1859) 13: 18–19.

conomic management system conducive to development of the productive force.

In view of the divergence between *sollen* and *sein* of historical development, it might be hypothesized that ideological and political disputes between conservative and pragmatic camps about the solution of economic problems are built into real socialism. Was it not Lenin who propagated the “primacy of politics over economy”?

This problem could have been reduced to one of technical implementation if the first socialist leaders had been provided with a manual on the political and economic management of socialism, but such a ready-made concept does not exist. Marx did not intend to draw a blueprint for socialism. Rather, his primary concern was to explore the malaise of the capitalistic mode of production. His prescription for socialism was, thus, confined to simple formulas, such as public ownership of the means of production and dictatorship of the proletariat in the transition period.

These are some of the reasons that socialist countries, from the Soviet Union under Lenin to Deng’s China, have tried to develop and introduce their own economic models that reflect their concrete historical and socio-economic situations.

Keeping this in mind, I will try in this essay to compare the economic systems of China and North Korea. For this purpose, we need a frame of reference. Following the conventional approach, I will use the following three categories:

- Ownership structure of the means of production
- Allocative mechanism of resources
- Motivation structure and incentive systems of economic agents

Each is presented in historical perspective, followed by an examination of the economic policies used to deal with challenges.

### **Ownership Structure of the Means of Production**

Not only Marx but also the advocates of the capitalistic system, from Adam Smith to Hayek or Friedman, considered the ownership structure of the means of production to be decisive in defining the economic system. According to Friedman, private ownership of productive capital is the precondition for economic freedom, a metaeconomic value on whose base the free market system is ethically justified. A diametrically contrary view is presented by Marx. Marxists argue that private ownership is the source of class antagonism and the weapon of exploitation.

All socialist countries, following the Marxist prescription, have laid the utmost priority on the socialist transformation of the capitalistic relation of production. During the pre-1949 period, this process was retarded in China, mainly for two reasons. The first had to do with a pragmatic stance that China

had adopted in seeking to encourage and mobilize the “national bourgeoisie” for economic development. The second was historically conditioned. The Chinese leadership’s priority was to solve the contradiction between imperialist power, headed by Japan, and Chinese nationalism. Thus, the solution of the internal contradiction between feudal lord and peasant was of only secondary importance.<sup>2</sup>

After 1949, Mao Zedong speeded up the socialist transformation of ownership. According to the Chinese authorities, the socialist transformation was finished in 1956; however, the process went through several stages. Between 1949 and 1952, the People’s Government confiscated the assets of the bureaucrat monopoly capitalists of the Guomindang, including 2,858 industrial enterprises with over 250,000 employees. In the agricultural sector, mutual-aid teams were organized. These were combined to form the semisocialist, elementary agricultural producer cooperatives and ultimately the People’s Commune, on a greater scale. By 1956, 96.3 percent of China’s 120 million agricultural households were organized into cooperatives, and “the socialist transformation of agriculture under individual economy had basically been finished.”<sup>3</sup> This process of agricultural cooperativization was paralleled by the cooperativization of handicrafts. By the end of 1956, over 6 million handicraftsmen—92 percent of the total—had joined together to form over a hundred thousand handicraft producer cooperatives. The major banks, railways, and shipping companies came under state control too.

Following these changes in the relation of production, the Chinese Communist Party held its Eighth National Congress and mapped out the path for the country’s development. The congress declared that the socialist system had been basically established and that the principal contradiction was no longer the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie but rather that between the people’s demand for rapid economic and cultural development and the existing state of the economy and culture, which fell short of the people’s needs. The chief task was, thus, to concentrate all efforts on developing the productive forces.

However, such a pragmatic policy could not be pursued consistently. The Great Leap Forward and the movement for the establishment of rural people’s communes were rashly initiated in 1958. These “left errors” of a “communist wind,” together with natural calamities, caused serious economic difficulties between 1959 and 1961 as is well known. Increasingly serious left deviations culminated in the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, which spread havoc throughout the country. Through this second left error, the policy of readjustment and consolidation decided on by the Central Committee of the party in the winter of 1960 could not be consistently pursued.

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<sup>2</sup>John G. Gurley, *China’s Economy and Maoist Strategy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 36.

<sup>3</sup>Xu Dixin, *China’s Search for Economic Growth* (Beijing: New World Press, 1982), 7.

A series of socioeconomic and political factors caused such repeated left errors. One was Mao's ideological stance. In his theory of permanent revolution, conceptual categories such as class, antagonism, or contradiction are broadly defined; they are not merely problems emanating from the physical relation of production but also problems of human consciousness. Accordingly, permanent revolution aims at socialist transformation of human consciousness. Indeed, some statements in the press at that time conveyed the impression that achieving the correct proletarian-revolutionary work style was more important than raising the volume of output. The transformation of man from an individual to a collective being through massive behavioral engineering and psychological management had, by and large, taken precedence over statistically measurable growth of output. "The Maoist blueprint for a new society, including Mao's vision of China's future economic system, hinges on the emergence of the new socialist man, the most important of all the 'socialist newborn things.'"<sup>4</sup>

Deng Xiaoping is, however, too realistic to believe in Mao's version of such a new species of human being. Further, Mao's method of socialist transformation of the means of production became an object of intense criticism:

We became too impatient in carrying out the transformation of the relation of production and unrealistically stepped up the pace of transfer to public ownership. For example, we rashly transformed collective ownership into ownership by the whole people, and hastily negated the role of the individual economy in cities and towns. In 1952 there were 8.83 million self-employed laborers in cities and towns; this number declined to 1.04 million in 1957 and by 1975 only 240,000 self-employed laborers were left.<sup>5</sup>

Basic reforms of the relation of production, based on such philosophy, have been conducted since the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. They can be summarized as follows: First, in the agricultural sector, the People's Commune is resolved and individual ownership is permitted to a limited extent. On the whole, the collective sector, including the industrial sector, assumes an increasing role, and the importance of the state sector decreases. Second, legal aspects of the relation of production have changed too. Especially in collective enterprises, the means of production is de jure in public ownership, but individual enterprises are permitted some disposable autonomy over the means of production. For example, profit remittance to the state is replaced by profit tax and enterprises are endowed with disposable autonomy over above-quota production. This process of divergence between disposable right (*verfügungsrecht*) and property right (*eigentumsrecht*) is similar to that of

<sup>4</sup>Jan S. Prybyla, *The Chinese Economy*, 2d ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981), 174–75.

<sup>5</sup>Ma Hong.

capitalistic enterprises, in which disposable right has been increasingly delegated to managers and property right is in the hands of shareholders.

Judging from these reforms, a conclusion might be justified that the socialism in China based on public ownership is experiencing a substantial qualitative change. Whether such a change will be limited during the transition period to a mature socialism, as the Chinese authorities insist, remains to be seen.

In comparison with other socialist countries, the socialist transformation of the means of production in North Korea has been conducted rigorously. The responsible organ was the North Korean People's Committee, organized in February 1946. As important "democratic reforms," this organ launched land reform and nationalized industrial enterprises. On the principle that "land belongs to the household that ploughs it," 52 percent of the total arable land was confiscated and distributed to households before the end of 1949. However, according to the Land Reform Law (Article 10), it was prohibited for households to sell, mortgage, or rent the land distributed by the state. The land reform was considered a necessary step to abolish the feudal ownership structure and a transitory measure for the establishment of agricultural cooperatives.

Nationalization of industries began in August 1946 and accelerated in the following years. The sector of private capital decreased from 23.3 percent of total industries in 1946 to 7.8 percent in 1949; the socialist sector increased to 90.7 percent in the latter year.

While the socialist transformation of ownership in the industrial sector was completed in a relatively short period; the process in the agricultural sector was further advanced after the Korean War. Three forms of cooperative were introduced after 1954. The first was based on private ownership of the means of production; only when necessary was difficult work conducted jointly. This kind of labor organization existed only for a short transition period. In the second, individual ownership of the means of production was permitted, but the means of production were jointly used. Distribution of output was conducted according not only to the quantity of labor but also to the share of productive assets—including land—contributed by individual households. This was regarded as a semisocialist mode of agricultural production. In the third, the means of production belong to the cooperative. Distribution is according to quantity and quality of labor. This form is similar to the Kholchoz in the Soviet Union.

Collectivization in the agricultural sector was completed in a relatively short period after the Korean War (see table 1). The second form of agricultural cooperative, which accounted for 21 percent in 1954, was

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<sup>6</sup>Nam Sik Kim, *The Possibility of Change in the North Korean Economic Management System during the 1980s* (in Korean), Research Institute for International Affairs Policy Study, 1 (Seoul, 1983), 25.

completely transformed into the third form of organization in 1958. Until 1957 the cooperatives were organized on the village level, but after 1958, the size of cooperatives was expanded to a level that coincided with the smallest administrative unit, the *rie*. It was then possible for the party to influence management of the cooperatives; the chief of the People's Committee of the *rie* was at the same time director of the managerial board of the cooperative.

Socialization of productive capital in the industrial sector, which had proceeded well during the prewar period, was continued after the war. In the distribution sector, individual services remained important for longer. For example, the share of retail sales from shops under state and collective control was only 26.5 percent in 1949 (see table 2). However, in both industry and commerce, the socialist transformation of ownership was completed by 1958, as it was in the agricultural sector.

So far as the basic production system is concerned, there is no evidence of reform in North Korea such as that in China and Eastern European countries. Rather, there are signs of contrary movement. North Korean authorities consider transformation of the present public ownership into a people's ownership structure in the agricultural sector an important future task. This measure is to be introduced at the level of the *gun* administrative unit—it comprises about twenty cooperatives—on an experimental basis. In this regard, North Korea is going the orthodox socialist way.

### Allocative Mechanism of Resources

Wilczynski systematized four models with regard to mechanism of resource allocation in socialist countries: bureaucratic centralized model, planometric centralized model, selectively decentralized model, and market-oriented model.<sup>7</sup> In reality these models exist not in a pure but in a mixed form. The question to be raised, thus, is what are the dominant criteria?

In the past, the system of economic management in China was highly centralized and relied primarily on the administrative method of management. It basically came from the Soviet Union during the later period of

**Table 1**  
Agricultural Cooperatives in North Korea

	Total	% 2d Form	% 3d Form
1954	10,098	21.0	78.5
1955	12,132	7.8	92.2
1956	15,825	2.5	97.5
1957	16,032	1.2	98.8
1958	3,843	0	100.0

SOURCE: Institute for Communist Studies, *General Data on North Korea* (in Korean) (Seoul, 1968), 340.

<sup>7</sup>J. Wilczynski, *The Economics of Socialism* (London, 1970), 23–24.

**Table 2**  
**Value of Retail Sales in North Korea**  
**(In Percentages)**

	1946	1949	1953	1956	1957	1958
State collective units	3.5	26.5	69.5	87.3	87.9	100
Individual retail shops	96.5	73.5	30.5	12.7	12.1	0

SOURCE: Nam Sik Kim, *The Possibility of Change in the North Korean Economic Management System during the 1980s* (in Korean), Research Institute for International Affairs Policy Study, 1 (Seoul, 1983), 27.

Stalin's leadership. As is generally accepted, the Stalinist model of economic management was broadly practiced in other socialist countries, including North Korea, too.

During the 1950s, this bureaucratic centralized model seemed effective in developing productive forces. The annual growth rate in agricultural output value was 4.5 percent during the First Five-Year Plan period (1953–57) in China; the annual growth rate in industrial output value was 18 percent during the same period. In the following years, until the mid-1970s, the annual growth rate in industrial output value declined sharply to 9.1 percent; that of output value in the agricultural sector remained virtually the same.

Statistical data reveal that the overall efficiency of the highly centralized economic system in China decreased in the beginning of the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> For example, the proportion of taxes and profits in the value of output in state-run industrial enterprises dropped from 30 percent during the First Five-Year Plan period to less than 20 percent during the Fourth Five-Year Plan period. Also, in the use of accumulated funds and investment, the ratio of accumulation to output and that of output have long remained unsteady and have tended to decline, resulting in an upward trend in investment coefficient. For instance, during the Fourth Five-Year Plan period, the investment needed to get the same result increased to 3.76 yuan, an increase of over 100 percent. The average annual growth rate of China's national income was 8.9 percent during the First Five-Year Plan period but dropped sharply to 5.6 percent during the Fourth Five-Year Plan period.

The other problem of the Stalinist method of economic management arises from the one-sided emphasis on high accumulation at the expense of basic consumption. The accumulation rate during the First Five-Year Plan period was only slightly over 20 percent, but it exceeded 30 percent during the 1958–60 period and during the 1970s. Because of the excessively high rate of accumulation, the consumption level, in relative terms, necessarily declined. This problem was worsened by undue emphasis on heavy industry

<sup>8</sup>Liu Guoguang, *Some Important Problems in China's Strategy for Economic Development*, Social Sciences in China, Beijing, 4, 1984, 51–52.

at the expense of agriculture and light industry. During the First Five-Year Plan period, investments in heavy industry made up 38.7 percent of total investments, which already seemed to be excessive. But the investment share of heavy industry continued to increase from 1958 to 1978, to 52.8 percent. Clearly, there has been the “erroneous tendency of ‘production for the sake of production.’”<sup>9</sup>

Was it not Marx who stressed that “without consumption there is no production, since production would then be purposeless”?<sup>10</sup> Marx noted further: “Consumption definitely limits it [constant capital], since constant capital is never produced for its own sake but solely because more of it is needed in those spheres of production whose products go into individual consumption.”<sup>11</sup>

Using this economic rationale, Deng Xiaoping proclaimed that the solution of “the contradiction between production capacity and people’s demand” was the most important economic task in China. Accordingly, there have been substantial changes in the mechanism of resource allocation since 1978: Economic sectors controlled by the “imperative” state plan have been continually reduced. Today, only basic or strategic industries are subject to such a mandatory state plan. At the same time, the “indicative” planning method has been broadly adopted, especially in collective enterprises. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the share of the collective enterprises in output and employment has steadily increased. Hand in hand with such measures, the market mechanism assumes a more and more important role. Nowadays, price reform is considered to be the precondition for the success of overall economic reform. “In its effort to modernize, China is faced with the double task of reforming both its economic structure and its economic system. But attempts to do this are restricted by the nation’s irrational pricing system. If this is left unchanged, China’s economic modernization would be seriously handicapped. Price reform is, therefore, vital to the growth of the national economy and to the reform of China’s economic structure.”<sup>12</sup>

Nowadays, three kinds of pricing method are used in China: planned pricing, floating prices, and market prices. The first method of pricing is adopted for a planned production quota of a commodity; the other two are effective for above-quota production or sideline products in the agricultural sector. “Of the three, the last pattern conforms best to the nation’s long-term plan for economic reform. The final goal of the economic reform is to establish a system based on market regulation.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ma Hong, 81.

<sup>10</sup>Karl Marx, “Preface to Critique of Political Economy,” *Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, Chinese ed., vol. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Karl Marx, *Capital* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1957), 3: 299–300.

<sup>12</sup>Liu Guoguang, “Price Reform Essential to Growth,” *Beijing Review*, 33 (Aug. 18, 1986): 14.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 16.

As in China during the 1950s, North Korea adopted a highly centralized economic system, and the system seemed to be effective in mobilizing production factors during the 1950s. The Three-Year Plan (1954–56) saw the beginning of rapid industrialization; the value of gross industrial output grew at an average of 42 percent per annum. Under the following Five-Year Plan (nominally 1957–61 but officially completed in 1960), the annual growth rate of the gross industrial output value was 36 percent; but the rapid growth did not last, and it declined sharply to 13 percent in the 1960s.

Perhaps in anticipation of the change, the Labor Party declared the establishment of a “functioning socialist management system” the most urgent national economic task. In the agricultural sector, the merger of the existing cooperatives was encouraged. They were reorganized on the *gun* level. In 1962, the Gun Managerial Committee was established and replaced the existing People’s Committee. Through such an organizational change, bureaucratic control over the agricultural cooperatives could be supplemented by managerial efficiency criteria.

A similar change took place in the industrial sector after the introduction of the so-called *Tae an* Work System. With this, the previous one-man directory system was replaced by a collective management system, jointly conducted by representatives from the party committee of the factory concerned, engineers, and representatives of the workers. This committee was endowed with some autonomy in the planning of production. But such a group management system is different from that of China, where individual enterprises can exercise a wide range of autonomy in decision making.

In the following years, there have been tentative steps toward economic reform. For example, since the seventh session of the Fifth Party Plenum, in September 1973, individual enterprises have been permitted to use an autonomous accounting system “in the framework of the unified state plan.” It was argued that “North Korea is yet in such a relatively low stage of economic development that the demands of the people cannot be adequately satisfied, and further, because of the economic stages of the previous society, a commodity economy based on the rule of value still exists.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus far, the parametric role of economic levers, such as commodity price, interest rate, and wage, remains negligible. During the first half of the 1980s, some signs of change were registered. In late 1985, economic ministries were streamlined into a smaller number of commissions, indicating the increasing role of technocrats. Meanwhile, Chinese sources (confirmed unofficially by Soviet ones) have reported measures to increase coordination between related enterprises—seemingly on the model of East Germany’s *Kombinats*—and to increase their autonomy in matters ranging from input sourcing to profit retention and worker bonuses.<sup>15</sup> The effect of these changes remains as yet unclear.

<sup>14</sup>Nam Sik Kim, *Possibility of Change*, 81.

<sup>15</sup>Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Profile: China–North Korea* (London, 1986), 49.

The North Korean economy is obviously confronted with increasing difficulties. The First Seven-Year Plan (1961–67) was officially extended by three years, probably because of unforeseen military expenditures. The Six-Year Plan (1971–76) was followed in 1977 by a “year of adjustment,” suggesting that not all targets had been reached. That the Second Seven-Year Plan (1978–84), although nominally fulfilled on schedule, was followed by two “buffer” years suggests continuing shortfalls, as well as fierce debates about what the priorities for the new plan should be. Considering this economic difficulty, a cautious optimism that North Korea might experiment with reform measures in the future may be justified.

### **Motivation Structure and Incentive Systems**

As to the roles of various kinds of work incentives and motivation structures during the periods of transition from capitalism to socialism and from socialism to communism, the following behavioral concept<sup>16</sup> has been suggested:

—Under the capitalist mode of production, man’s nature is quiescent, that is, it requires exogenous prods or impulses to impel it to productive activity; these take the form of individual material incentives and disincentives, setting in motion man’s rational self-interest. “The quiescence is presumably due to man’s alienation from himself and society—that self-estrangement Marx speaks of.”<sup>17</sup>

—Under socialism, natural quiescence is not fully eradicated. The influence of the old mode on man’s attitude toward work remains strong at the beginning of the socialist stage but, under proper management, diminishes over time. For some time under socialism, therefore, men have to be impelled to work by means of material appeals to their self-interest. In the next stage, resorting to group material incentives becomes more important.

—As socialism matures into communism, exogenous impulses wither away. Thus, at the end of the road, man’s nature is totally collectivized and internally energized. His former quiescence and need for external stimuli to action turn into endogenous fervor (“mass enthusiasm”) propelling him to exert himself unstintingly for the community. In Marx’s words, communism is “the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; . . . the complete return of man to himself as a social being—a return become conscious and accomplished within the entire wealth of previous development.”<sup>18</sup>

In both China and North Korea, the incentive systems have hardly

<sup>16</sup>Prybyla, *The Chinese Economy*, 144–46.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 146.

followed this behavioral concept. The forms of incentive system were not only influenced by the degree of economic development but also by, in Marxist terminology, the superstructure or political consciousness. The system of work incentives is demonstrated in table 3.

In China, overfulfillment of the work norm specified in the production plan was frequently rewarded by extra pay before the Cultural Revolution. However, during the Cultural Revolution and until 1977, overquota performance was expected as a matter of socialist consciousness. Until Mao's death, the ostensible general trend, except for 1961–65, had been in the direction of moral, collective, cooperative incentives that eventually were counted on to generate endogenous mass fervor and, thus, make external stimuli superfluous. After 1977, differentiated material incentives directed at individuals and groups came back into vogue. Through the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work," Deng's China opposes egalitarianism in matters of income distribution.

Political and ideological indoctrination plays a far more important role in motivating and maximizing individual or group performance in North Korea than in other socialist countries. As in China under Mao, the authorities propagate the message that "we have to rebuild the human being through a permanent revolution in man's consciousness, only through which true revolution and socialist economic development will be possible."<sup>19</sup> There is ample evidence of extreme ideological indoctrination, beginning with the Red Letter of Kim Il Sung, in 1958, to the Small Group movement for Three Great Revolutions launched in February 1973.

**Table 3**  
Work Incentives in China

	Material	Moral	Individual	Collective
1949–52	X		X	
1953–57	X		X	
1958–60		X		X
1961–65	X		X	
1966–70 <sup>a</sup>		X		X
1970–76 <sup>b</sup>	◊ X ◊		◊ X ◊	
1976–77 <sup>c</sup>	◊ X		◊ X	
1978–80	X		X	

SOURCE: Jan S. Prybyla, *The Chinese Economy*, 2d ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981) 148.

<sup>a</sup>Once the "Liuist" opposition to socialized moral incentives had been overcome during the Cultural Revolution.

<sup>b</sup> ◊◊ Dominant trend. ◊ Subsidiary trend noticeable after 1971.

<sup>c</sup> ◊ Dominant trend.

<sup>19</sup>*Rodong Sinmun*, Apr. 15, 1982.

Though the primary concern is with such human engineering, there have been complex but seemingly effective systems of group material incentives. Like China previously, North Korea suffers from an acute shortage of consumer goods. Priority given to heavy industry arguably establishes a sound base for light industry and agriculture in the long run but has nonetheless resulted in lags in these sectors. As a remedy, more "side work teams" have been formed in factories and cooperative farms—units comprising perhaps three or four households who may in practice carry responsibility for an allocated section of cooperative land, and for the instruments of production. A similar system of incentives has been expanded in the industrial sector. Article 39 of the Socialist Labor Law, which has been in effect since April 1978, states that income of workers shall consist of a basic wage and a premium. No systematic research on the extent and effect of this system is yet available.

### Conclusion

Through economic reform, the living standard of the Chinese people has increased to a level unprecedented in China's previous history. Overall good economic performances have been recorded in the agricultural and industrial sectors. Agriculture's share of national income increased from 39 percent in 1980 to 44 percent in 1985. This reflects not only the effects of the reforms on output but also the growing number of individual enterprises—often collective—situated in the countryside, whose output was classified under agriculture until 1985. Living standards, measured in per capita output, have improved greatly since 1980. The net annual per capita income of peasants has risen from an average of Rmb 191 in 1980 to Rmb 397 in 1985, a real increase of 90 percent. The per capita disposable income of "staff and workers"—urban-based employees of state enterprises—has risen by a real 22.3 percent over the same period, from Rmb 762 in 1980 to Rmb 1,142 in 1985. Urban incomes have not risen as fast as rural ones, but the urban standard of living is much higher.

These performances have been accompanied by some negative side effects, such as inflation, trade deficits, and deteriorating income distribution. One basic problem of the economic reform relates to the noneconomic superstructure of the society—that is, contamination by "bourgeois liberalism." Since the end of 1986, the conservative camp has been making a counterattack on the pragmatists, culminating in the resignation of General Secretary Hu Yaobang.

Where are the conservatives from? Were they not systematically replaced by the pragmatists and technocrats during the past ten years? Perhaps not. Already in 1979, it was predicted: "The pernicious influence of the ultraleftist line will not become a street mouse without any place to hide just because leading comrades have stepped out to say a few words, or because the press

has published a few articles. Instead, it will take shelter in some people's minds, and when the right time comes, it will pop up in disguise and continue with its menace."<sup>20</sup> The present appears to be the right time.

But judging from the available information, including repeated statements by Deng Xiaoping, China will proceed with its reform policies. Perhaps a general thesis might be justified that in the present stage of economic development, social preference will favor development of the productive forces rather than orthodox socialist ideology. Experiences in other socialist countries show that a degree of trade-off between the orthodox socialist economic model and efficient allocation of resources exists, though maximum material welfare may not be the sole objective function of the society. Such a trade-off poses severe problems of choice, especially in a transition stage from an extensive growth strategy to an intensive one.

In this regard, North Korea has not much time to lose for decision making. To solve the basic contradiction between supply capacity and the people's demand, it has few options, as has been the case in other socialist countries; it must either resort to the orthodox line of extensive growth or switch to intensive growth—that is, use the “relative surplus value,” but at the cost of orthodox socialist ideology. This is the high cost of economic reform. But, because North Korea has an acute shortage of labor, the pursuit of extensive growth necessitates that man-hours of work must be extended, a strategy that will surely have its limits. This is the reason, perhaps too simple, that I believe that North Korea will experiment with new remedies, other than the orthodox socialist prescription.

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<sup>20</sup>*Renmin Ribao* commentary, Beijing Radio, July 31, 1979, cited in Prybyla, *The Chinese Economy*, 293.

**Part Seven**  
**Guerrilla Communism in Asia**  
**in the Late 1980s**

# 13. North Korea's Insurgency in Historical and Comparative Perspective

BYONG MOO HWANG

Insurgency can be defined as subversive political activity, civil rebellion, revolt, or insurrection against a duly constituted government or an occupying power, wherein irregular forces are formed and engage in actions, which may include guerrilla warfare, that are designed to weaken and overthrow the government or occupying power.<sup>1</sup> Based on the successes in China and Indochina, and from the negative experiences in Malaysia, Greece, and the Philippines, scholars interested in communist insurgency and counterinsurgency list seven conditions for the successful outcome of insurgency in developing countries: popular support, organization (revolutionary party), leadership, national appeal, ability to sustain protracted war, breakdown or severe incapacity of the opposing regime, and external assistance.<sup>2</sup> All these are similar to the three magic weapons of the revolution, namely, the vanguard party, the united front, and the armed struggle, proclaimed by Mao Zedong.

In view of these conditions, it is safe to argue that the main features of the communist insurgent strategies in South Korea in both the pre- and the post-Korean War periods are not far from those of China and Vietnam. But it is also true that there have been indigenous North Korean elements in the South's insurgent movement. The purpose of this essay is threefold, to answer the following questions: What are the primary characteristics of North Korea's past and current insurgent strategy? To what degree did the North Koreans borrow the experience of earlier Marxist-Leninist revolutions—the Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban? What have the North Koreans learned from the Korean War and other events that took place in South Korea, resulting in additions to the insurgent art? Finally, the factors that were responsible for the failure of the communist insurgency, and some important features of the counterinsurgency by the South Korean government, will be analyzed.

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<sup>1</sup>This definition is offered by the U.S. Department of the Army. See Sam C. Sarkesian, ed., *Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1975), 6.

<sup>2</sup>J. L. S. Girling, *People's War* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), 11–14; and Bared E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts, *Insurgency in the Modern World* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), 5–26.

### **Communist Insurgency in the Pre-Korean War Period**

The communist insurgent movement in South Korea in the period between August 1945 and June 1950 appeared to follow a pattern similar to the communist revolutionary movements in Southeast Asian countries and to evolve with the general features of the three stages of communist revolutionary war.<sup>3</sup> The first stage (August 1945–early 1948) might be called the stage to mobilize the masses for the communist revolutionary cause. In this stage, the communists rebuilt the Communist Party, set up its front organizations, and attempted to infiltrate the important government agencies of South Korea, including the army and the police. They widely employed the combined forms of struggle, legal and illegal, economic and political, and non-violent and violent, for mass mobilization. In the meantime, they formed the united front from above with noncommunist parties. The second stage (early 1948–June 1950) was that of armed struggle in which organized guerrilla warfare was coupled with political struggle, and the attempt was made to transform it into regular warfare. The third stage (June 1950–July 1953) was a military offensive in which priority was placed on military activity in order to win the war.

The reason that we should recognize the phase of North Korea's conventional attack in June 1950 as the onset of the third stage of the communist revolutionary movement is that the communist movement in South Korea cannot be seen separately from North Korea's overall strategy to communize the Southern part, and that the Northern invasion of the South was closely linked to civil strife in South Korea before the outbreak of the war.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that as in South Vietnam and China, conventional military offensives were likely to be launched by the regular armed forces into which the weak guerrilla forces had transformed themselves. But Korea was very different. Indeed, an all-out conventional attack was conducted by the regular army units from the so-called revolutionary base of North Korea. At the time that the North Korean invasion took place, on June 25, 1950, the guerrilla forces in the South had been virtually destroyed and the South Korean Workers' Party organization had been crumbling under successive waves of arrests initiated by the South Korean authorities. This situation was very different from those in Vietnam and China, where the communist regular units were moving to superiority when the red armies launched the strategic offensive for a total victory.

<sup>3</sup>For an excellent discussion of the three stages of communist revolutionary war on the part of Mao, Vo Nguyen Giap, see Charles W. Thayer, *Guerrilla* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 69–80.

<sup>4</sup>Dong-Won Lim, *Communist Revolutionary War and Counterinsurgency* (Seoul: Yang Seo Kak, 1967), 211–12; and John Merrill, "Internal Warfare in Korea, 1948–1950: The Local Setting of the Korean War," in Bruce Cumings, ed., *Child of Conflicts: The Korean American Relationship, 1943–1953* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), 157–62.

### *Mass Mobilization*

In mid-September 1945, soon after the Japanese surrender, the communists rebuilt the Korean Communist Party under the leadership of Pak Hŏn-Yŏng amid factional struggles and began to set forth the initial communist line on Korean revolution. The Korean Communist Party was determined to regard a two-stage revolution as necessary, and to consider the first stage of the revolution as that of bourgeois democracy, which would pave the way for the socialist revolution. In achieving a bourgeois democratic revolution in Korea, the party's primary tasks were to liquidate elements of Japanese imperialism that remained in Korean society, to achieve the complete independence of the Korean people, to eliminate all remnants of feudalism with an emphasis on a land reform program under which all of the landlords' holdings would be confiscated and distributed to the tillers, and to establish a revolutionary democratic people's government that would value the interests of the working people.<sup>5</sup> For the communists, the Korean Communist Party should be a vanguard of the revolution and consider the working class, allied with the peasants, to be the leading force for the revolution, and the intellectuals, lower middle class, and the conscientious nationalistic capitalists to be the supplementary forces.

Before rebuilding the party, the communists, together with a large number of patriots released from Japanese prison cells, proclaimed the Korean People's Republic and started to organize people's committees in local areas that later fell under the dominant influence of communism. The communists attempted to use both the Korean People's Republic and the people's committees for the purpose of having governmental authority in competition with the Korean Provisional Government that the rightist nationalists established and of infiltrating the masses and consolidating their ground among the population.

The Korean Communist Party also began to set up its front organizations, such as the National Council of Korean Labor Unions, the All-Nation Peasant Union, the Women's Union, and the Korean Youth and Student Leagues. The National Council of Korean Labor Unions (Chŏn P'yŏng) and the All-Nation Peasant Federation (Nongmin Chohap) became, among others, important arms of the Communist Party for mass mobilization. According to communist accounts, more than five hundred thousand laborers joined Chŏn P'yŏng by November 1945, and 3 million peasants affiliated with the communist-led National Peasant Union by December 1945. Along with the use of united front tactics from below, the Communist Party was successful in inaugurating the so-called Democratic National Front of South Korea on the basis of a united front from above in February 1946. Twenty-nine political parties and social

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<sup>5</sup>Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-sik Lee, *Communism in Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pt. 1, 241–48.

organizations that the communists won over reportedly joined the Democratic National Front.<sup>6</sup> The communists in the southern part appeared to use the national front not only for united action with the left political groups and for weakening political circles on the right but also for discrediting the American Military Government and arousing opposition to the Americans in the South.

There had been numerous examples of the regime's providing good water in which the communist insurgents in the South could swim. Popular grievances rose over economic problems such as grain collection and rice rations that were partly caused by the American Military Government's rice policies and over inflation, unemployment, and in particular, conditions of land tenancy, in which the Military Government had no interest, even though land reform was being implemented in the North. There were also popular grievances over the corruption of bureaucrats and the arbitrary and cruel methods of the police force, which was built along Japanese lines and included many who had served under the Japanese.<sup>7</sup>

In September 1946, the communists began to shift their line to wage large-scale struggles employing the methods of mass demonstrations, sabotage, strikes, and uprisings. Pak Hŏn-Yŏng issued a Directive on New Tactics in July 1946 and ordered the party to unfold an active offensive struggle against the rightist leaders and the Military Government. Soon after the issuance of the directive, in September 1946, a general strike took place in which eight thousand railroad workers walked off their jobs in Seoul. Within a few days, work stoppages had spread to printers, electrical workers, workers in telegraph offices, postal employees, and workers in other industries. In Seoul alone, some 295 enterprises were struck and thirty thousand workers and sixteen thousand students reportedly participated.<sup>8</sup> This September general strike unexpectedly generated the so-called Yŏngnam (the two provinces of Kyŏngsang) uprisings of October 1946 that soon spread over seventy-three cities and provinces, including Seoul, Kaesong, Yŏnan, and Kwangju, during the three months up to January 1947. The Military Government proclaimed martial law and employed its forces successfully to suppress the rebels. The costs of the uprisings were staggering. The total number of officials, rioters, and civilians who died is not known, but it may have reached one thousand, including two hundred policemen killed.<sup>9</sup>

However, these uprisings represented inchoate violence of workers and peasants mainly because the Korean communists failed to mold the raw

<sup>6</sup>Lim, *Communist Revolutionary War*, 214; and Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, 281–82.

<sup>7</sup>George M. McCune, *Korea Today* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 240–42; and Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 371–79.

<sup>8</sup>Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 352–56.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 380–81.

worker and peasant power into organized politics. Also even one faction in the Korean Communist Party made the criticism that the violence was “a scheme of the so-called ultraleftists” equivalent to “the error of the earlier Li Lisan line of the Central Committee of the Korean Communist Party.”<sup>10</sup> The Communist leaders in authority, however, chose to draw positive tactical implications from the uprisings. In an article entitled “October People’s Resistance,” dated November 13, 1946, Pak Hŏn-Yŏng characterized some implications and lessons of the uprisings as follows:

1. The October Resistance provided historical evidence in demonstrating a tremendous people’s potential for revolution.
2. The Resistance proved that the main enemy of the Korean people was the right-wing reactionary cliques including the international reactionary running dogs and the pro-Japanese elements.
3. The Resistance also proved the Korean working class has become a genuine and sole leader for “Korean independence and democracy,” for waging uncompromised struggle against the right reactionary elements as well as for fighting for the causes of “improved living conditions of the people, land reform, and nationalized industries.”
4. The Korean peasants proved to be important revolutionary forces allied with the working class, that should be supported by them for a successful struggle against the rightist forces; the intellectuals and student groups energetically supported the working class, and became the reliable forces of struggle.
5. The Resistance clearly demonstrated that the correct line of struggle was not in a compromise with but in a fighting against the right reactionaries; the communists should realize that the effect of the left and right coalition on the correct communist line proved to be harmful and should become aware of the fact that the middle forces collaborating with the right reactionary elements are pseudo-democratic forces and reactionary elements.
6. The Korean Communist Party as a leading organ for mass mobilization should absorb two left parties, and be renamed as South Korean Workers’ Party so as to gain wider support among the people in a developing country.<sup>11</sup>

Such developments did materialize on November 23, 1946.

In addition, the communists learned from the uprisings that a Leninist concept of combining economic and political struggles as well as interconnecting legal and illegal struggles had become relevant to class struggle in

<sup>10</sup>This criticism was raised by the Changan faction of the Communist Party, see Pak Hŏn-Yŏng, “October People’s Resistance,” in Kim Nam-sik and Shim Chi-yŏn, eds., *Pak Hŏn-Yŏng noson pip’an* (Critique on Pak Hon-Yong’s line) (Seoul: Saekai, 1986), 450.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 431–52, especially 450–52, 435–40.

South Korea. Needless to say, during the uprising the demonstrators and rebels acted under the slogan of economic struggle, "increased rice rations," as well as under the political slogans of "land and labor laws like those in the North" and "political organs like the People's Committees."<sup>12</sup> The violence was political in the sense that it was not unleashed indiscriminately but directed on the basis of selective terrorism at hated officials, many of whom had been responsible for brutalities against Koreans during the colonial era and the first year of Liberation.<sup>13</sup>

### *Armed Struggle Line*

In 1948, the communists turned to the armed struggle line in their determined efforts to block the emergence of a separate government in the South and later to overthrow the government of the Republic of Korea. A number of domestic and international reasons for the tactical change can be illustrated. First, the establishment of the United Nations Temporary Commission in the South and the decision to hold separate elections led the communists to believe that they would be unable to oppose schemes to establish a separate government in the South either by promotion of South-North negotiations or by the united front from above, collaborating with noncommunist political parties. Second, in mid-1948, the North Korean Workers' Party began to gain hegemony in the Korean communist movement, to control the South Korean Workers' Party, and to guide actively the communist movement in the South.

The North Korean Workers' Party was being controlled by the so-called foreign faction, represented by Kim Il Sung, Kim Ch'aek, and Ch'oe Yong-gŏn, who were acquainted with Maoist guerrilla tactics because they had all participated in guerrilla warfare against the Japanese forces in China in the 1930s.<sup>14</sup> There is evidence that the communists in the South had been educated and trained as guerrillas on the basis of Mao's model of People's War. For instance, the Kangdong Political Institute, in Kangdong, a suburb of Pyongyang, had been in charge of guerrilla training since the summer of 1947. At this institute, the early military writings of Mao Zedong, including "Strategic Problems of the Chinese Revolution," "Strategic Problems of Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Warfare," and "On Protracted War" were used as reading materials for the communist trainees.<sup>15</sup>

Third, internationally the Soviet Union encouraged and directed local communists in Asia to turn to a new offensive, promoting the armed struggle line. At the end of 1947, Zhdanov made an important speech at the opening conference of the Cominform that stressed, among other things, communist support for national liberation movements. The theme was again discussed at

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 357.

<sup>14</sup>Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, pt. 2, 920-21.

<sup>15</sup>Lim, *Communist Revolutionary War*, 231.

the Youth Conference of the countries of Southeast Asia, convened in February 1948 in Calcutta. Within six months of these conferences, insurrections started in Burma, Malaysia, and Indonesia.<sup>16</sup> From September 1947 on, the Chinese Communist Party also had been staging a general offensive against the Guomindang's forces led by Chiang Kai-shek.

In 1948, two rebellions in South Korea contributed to creation of communist-led guerrilla bases. Of the three guerrilla bases established in 1948, two were formed immediately after the Chejudo rebellion and the Yösu mutiny. The communists staged the April 3 riot in Chejudo in opposition to the May 10 general elections and commenced military operations under the guidance of Kim Tal-sam, the party leader of the island, in collaboration with Lieutenant Moon Sang-kil, who infiltrated the Ninth Regiment of the South Korean Constabulary. After the rebellion, more than 500 armed rebels went to Halla Mountain and continued to engage in guerrilla warfare until they were finally destroyed around the end of November 1952.

A second guerrilla base, in the Chiri and Paekwun mountains, was established soon after an army mutiny erupted in late October 1948, when leftist soldiers of the Fourteenth Regiment in Yösu and Sunch'ön rebelled at the instigation of about forty soldiers. Some 1,000 rebels went into hiding in these mountains. The guerrilla base in Chirisan encompassed the mountainous areas of the two Chölla provinces and the Southern Kyöngsang Province, which offered ideal conditions for guerrilla operations. For this reason, this base became virtually a command base for the rest of the communist guerrilla units operating in the South.<sup>17</sup>

The third base was established in the Odae Mountains, close to the 38th parallel. Unlike those in other areas, the guerrillas in this area came mainly from the North. Because of geographic proximity, the Odaesan base was named the "liberated mountain" by the communists, and continued to play a significant role as a forward base to send guerrillas to the South, a supply base for weapons, and a liaison base through which the communists in the North communicated with and commanded guerrillas.<sup>18</sup> Of the three roles, Odaesan became most widely known as an infiltration route. In the period between October 1948 and March 1950, North Korea attempted to send a total of 2,400 guerrillas to the South on ten occasions. About 1,840 of them were successful in infiltrating the Odaesan base on five of those occasions.<sup>19</sup>

Just before an all-out offensive called the September Offensive, the guerrillas in South Korea organized the so-called three People's Guerrilla Corps. The first People's Guerrilla Corps was composed of 360 men who had

<sup>16</sup>Max Beloff, *Soviet Policy in the Far East: 1944-1951* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 208-9.

<sup>17</sup>Chum-Kon Kim, *The Korean War: 1950-1953* (Seoul: Kwangmyöng Publishing Co., 1973), 144-45.

<sup>18</sup>Lim, *Communist Revolutionary War*, 232-33.

<sup>19</sup>Chonsa P'yöngch'an Uniwonhoe, ed., *Hankuk Chönchaengsa* (The history of the Korean War) (Seoul, 1967), 1:498-500.

mainly infiltrated from the North with Yi Ho-je as commander. The third corps of 600 guerrillas of the Kim Tal-sam Unit infiltrated from the North into the Taebaeksan and Ilwölsan areas; the second corps was organized in the Chirisan area under the command of Ch'oy Hyön. The precise number of the main forces of the armed guerrillas is not known. According to the South Korean Army authority, it might have reached 760 members in mid-1949, but it is clear that this number excluded local guerrillas and their sympathizers. North Korea claimed that the total number of guerrillas mobilized was 23,000 in June 1949, 30,000 in July, and 44,300 in August, and rapidly increased to 77,300 during the September Offensive.<sup>20</sup>

The September Offensive was staged as an outright attack with emphasis on Chölla and Kyöngsang provinces on September 9, 1949, the first anniversary of the establishment of the North Korean regime. The tactics the communists adopted was "citadel attack," designed to storm military headquarters or administrative centers with one blow rather than stage the sporadic and small-scale guerrilla struggles of the past. By October, the guerrillas were able either to attack several counties in the Chölla provinces or to threaten the two cities of Chinju and Kwangju.<sup>21</sup> In a surge of activity, Communist guerrillas and agents began to expand their base areas, confiscating land from wealthy peasants and distributing it to proleft peasants. Kim Il Sung was apparently excited about the surge of armed struggles and the guerrilla insurgency in South Korea, saying that "the people's guerrilla struggle which had been unfolded against the traitorous Syngman Rhee . . . must be more extensively waged everywhere in the southern half."<sup>22</sup>

However, the South Korean government took highly effective counterinsurgency measures to break the infrastructure of the South Korean Workers' Party, to undercut popular support for guerrillas, and militarily to search for and destroy the guerrilla bands. From mid-1949 on, the slogans of "land reform" and "withdraw American armed forces" were no longer effective for communist mass mobilization, mainly because the land reform law was put into practice after June 1949 and the remains of American combat forces were finally withdrawn in June 1949. The people's committees at the city and province level in South Korea also proved too weak for mass mobilization because of structural weakness, lacking a cell-based Marxist-Leninist hierarchy. In addition, well-developed bureaucratic organizations, such as the national police and the American-supported opposition, forced the communists in the South to operate in a hostile official environment.<sup>23</sup>

The South Korean authorities used an amnesty program and successfully

<sup>20</sup>Lim, *Communist Revolutionary War*, 240–44; and Kim, *Korean War*, 145–46.

<sup>21</sup>Kim, *Korean War*, 147.

<sup>22</sup>The Report at the 2d Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee, Korean Workers' Party (KWP), Dec. 15, 1949, in Kim Il Sung, *Let Us Promote World Revolution* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1969), 30.

<sup>23</sup>Cummings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 349–50.

induced over forty thousand defections in early December 1949, increased by two hundred thousand members at the outbreak of the Korean War, who were organized under the National Guidance Alliance. The alliance helped to uncover South Korean Workers' Party sympathizers and assisted the police in maintaining surveillance of former communists. Thanks to activity of the alliance, Kim Sam-nyong and Yi Chu-ha, the two top-ranking leaders of the party who had remained in Seoul and actually controlled the party, were arrested in Seoul in late March 1950. Widespread defections, as well as the arrests of the two de facto leaders of the party, obviously made the communist organization in the South crumble, disrupted its communications, and rendered it incapable of taking coordinated action, even when the Korean War broke out.<sup>24</sup>

Counter guerrilla operations were conducted combining police and military activities. The first stage was to isolate the guerrillas from the local party cells by destroying the cells in the guerrilla warfare zones. This action was coupled with highly effective measures to deprive the insurgents of goods, shelter, information, and manpower by moving the rural population in areas of guerrilla activity to villages under police control. The evacuated areas were regarded as "free fire zones" where anyone remaining was assumed to be connected to the guerrillas. The second stage was to blockade the base areas in order to prevent the guerrillas from moving freely and to stop reinforcements from reaching them. In the final stage, government forces employed a classic strategy of search and destroy by conducting sweeps of the isolated base areas one by one.

Counter guerrilla operations were so successful that the number of guerrilla forces was reduced to less than three hundred by June 1950.<sup>25</sup> Those were widely dispersed in the mountain areas, avoided encounters with the Republic of Korea (ROK) forces, and conducted foraging raids to secure food and supplies only for survival. It is likely that those guerrillas were unable to launch joint operations with the invading regular armies from the North when the Korean War started, even though Kim Il Sung hoped that North Korea's attack on South Korea would touch off a popular explosion within the South that could transform itself into guerrilla warfare.<sup>26</sup>

### **Communist Insurgency in the Post-Korean War Era**

The failure of North Korea's strategy to communize the southern part by an all-out military offensive in the Korean War brought about restraints and obstacles to its conduct of subversive activities in South Korea for a number

<sup>24</sup>Merrill, "Internal Warfare in Korea," 154.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.; and *Hankuk Chŏnchaengsa*, 503.

<sup>26</sup>For discussion of the Kims' misperception of the potential capabilities of the southern communists before the outbreak of the war, see Byong-Moo Hwang, "Misperception and the Causes of the Korean War" (Paper presented to the 11th Colloquy of the International Commission of Military History, Seoul, Aug. 17-24, 1986), 18-24.

of years. The war generated strong anticommunist feelings among the people in the South, and thus the communists could not expect to gain the popular support in the South that they had had before the war. The communists and their sympathizers were completely exposed, during the war, to the Korean authorities. Most of them were either killed or fled to the North. As a result, North Korea lost strongholds and manpower for subversive activities in the South and had to wait to rebuild a communist party and its front organizations in the South. Along with the damage suffered from the war, conflict within the elite of the Korean Workers' Party led to purges of high-ranking leaders of southern origin, such as Pak Hon-yŏng, deterring resumption of North Korea's insurgency in South Korea.

### *Emphasis on Revolutionary Party Building and a United Front*

Not until the middle of the 1960s did North Korea's subversive strategy begin to take on practical significance in the overall plan for a People's Democratic Revolution in South Korea. In a report to the Fourth Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, convened on September 11, 1961, and in his other reports, Kim Il Sung put North Korea's strategy of communizing the whole of Korea in a framework of three stages of People's Democratic Revolution. Most important is the first stage, in which the North Koreans should aim at making a purely democratic revolution in South Korea. If this democratic revolution succeeds, North Korea will adopt the second stage to transform the new government into a pro-North one, eliminating all nonsocialist elements through the united front. In the third, final stage of the revolution, the North Korean government will absorb the Southern government, which will be merely a puppet of the North.<sup>27</sup>

In the first stage, because it is not in a position to directly foster communist revolutionary forces in the South, North Korea should merely pursue a policy of supporting and agitating the South Koreans, especially the noncommunists who oppose the government because it has not restored full democracy. In the process of mass struggle for democracy, the communists in South Korea can take advantage of civil disorder. This approach will produce communist "supported and captured insurgency." The main targets to be destroyed should be American imperialism and the reactionary government in collusion with it. In this respect, the first stage of People's Democratic Revolution combines opposition to American imperialism with a struggle against the landlords, compradors, and the reactionary bureaucrats who collaborate with the American imperialists.

Nevertheless, North Korea perceives that the revolution in the South will inevitably be prolonged, reasoning that the presence of American forces and the absence of a revolutionary Marxist party in the South will constitute two major obstacles. Therefore, in February 1964, North Korea determined to

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<sup>27</sup>Sang-woo Rhee, *Security and Unification of Korea* (Seoul: Sogang University Press, 1983), 105–9.

strengthen what might be called the “three revolutionary forces,” on the fronts of North Korea, South Korea, and the international arena.

First, strengthening the revolutionary base of North Korea politically, economically, and militarily means that North Korea can serve as a training and infiltration base and can offer its revolutionary assistance to the South when revolutionary conditions are ripe. Second, to foster the revolutionary situation in South Korea, North Korea should exert every effort to create a Marxist-Leninist party to guide the struggle against the so-called American imperialists and reactionary government; to organize its front organizations; to form a broad anti-American united front embracing the workers, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, youth, students, and the national bourgeoisie; and to wage mass struggle using all methods, legal and illegal, violent and nonviolent. Third, strengthening the international revolutionary forces means that North Korea should join in international solidarity with the revolutionary forces of the world and organize the anti-imperialist joint struggle that will attack American imperialism from all sides and finally weaken American forces in the Third World and isolate the United States.<sup>28</sup>

In the early 1960s, North Korea continued to consider the presence of the insurgent communist party as the primary task for strengthening the revolutionary capabilities in the South. Drawing on the lessons of the April 19, 1960, uprising in the South, Kim Il Sung is said to have noted that the failure to turn the antigovernment struggle of the South Korean people into a revolutionary struggle was principally due to the absence of a revolutionary party in the South to lead the toiling classes.<sup>29</sup> As viewed from P'yongyang, the tactics of building an underground party were aimed at organizing the main forces of the revolution, and the united front tactics stressed fostering the auxiliary forces of the revolution, whose main role should be to mobilize the masses for the revolution. The two tactics were interconnected, playing the two basic roles for implementing revolutionary activities in the South.

Since then, there have been a number of cases in which North Korea has intensified its effort to create a clandestine insurgent party in the South. A case in point was the Revolutionary Party for Unification (RPU; T'ongil Hyökmyöng dang), which was founded as an underground communist organ by South Korean intellectuals under the guidance of a North Korean agent in March 1964, and smashed by the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency in August 1968. The RPU not only represented the communist underground movement in South Korea for the first time since the end of the Korean War, but also set up various front organizations that could act as a breakwater in safeguarding the underground party and conduct revolutionary activities in the South.

The key figures in the RPU had received operational funds from the

<sup>28</sup>Byung Chul Koh, “Unification Policy and North-South Relations,” in Robert A. Scalapino and Jun-Yop Kim, eds., *North Korea Today* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1983), 272–78.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

Korean Workers' Party, run the tavern that served as a cover for political activities, and edited the monthly magazine *Ch'öng-maek* (Blue Vein), which was widely used to soften anticommunist sentiment among intellectuals. The RPU was so successful that it built nine front organizations, with familiar names such as the National Liberation Front and the Fatherland Liberation Front, including the Society for the Study of the New Culture, the Buddhist Youth Society and the Tonghak Research Institute. These front organizations tried to win over young students and disaffected intellectuals to embrace "the masses of all strata" forming a united anti-American national salvation front under the guidance of the party, and to intervene in and guide antigovernment demonstrations in the mid-1960s.<sup>30</sup>

Even after the RPU was shattered, North Korea continued to exert every effort to rebuild the former RPU and to keep the myth alive that it still existed in the South as a revolutionary movement. Judging from South Korean sources, in the period between September 1969 and August 1979, North Korea attempted on ten occasions to rebuild the RPU by sending its agents to South Korea. More than 140 participants initially unmasked by South Korean authorities were involved in the underground activities to rebuild the RPU, as key agents and their connections, by trying to infiltrate all strata of society and all mass organizations in the South.<sup>31</sup> The number looks small in terms of both the lengthy period of eleven years and the fact that few of them were found later to be key communist agents.

These communist activities were coupled with political-psychological warfare conducted by North Korea against South Korea through various propaganda means. In August 1969 after Kim Chong-t'ae, the general secretary of the RPU, was executed, North Korea proclaimed a program and manifesto of the RPU, claiming that the RPU still existed as an underground organization in the South. In July 1970, the communists also resumed publication of *Hyökmjöng Chosön*, the party organ, and the monthly magazine *Ch'öng-maek*. But more important, from June 1970 on, North Korea has operated the Voice of T'onghyökdang, a radio station in the city of Haeju, close to the 38th parallel, run directly by the United Front Department under the KWP's Secretariat of Southern Operation. The Voice has aired (1) critiques on the political and economic situation in South Korea, (2) authoritative interpretations of the tactics of revolutionary struggle for the communist agents who might hide underground in the South, (3) praise of Kim Il Sung's leadership and his cult of personality, and (4) emphasis on support for communism, especially by disaffected elements.<sup>32</sup>

Along with those propaganda campaigns, North Korea has intensified anti-South Korean activities under the name of the RPU. In inter-Korean

<sup>30</sup>Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, pt. 1, 648–51.

<sup>31</sup>Pukhan Yönkuso, ed., *Pukhan ch'ongnam* (Seoul, 1983), 1616–17.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 1618.

relations, North Korea demanded that the South Korean authorities recognize the RPU as a legal organization, whose representative should participate in the South-North dialogue in the 1970s. In the late 1970s, North Korea organized anti-ROK activities abroad under the name of the RPU. On several occasions, North Korea dispatched representatives of the RPU to important international conferences and led them to criticize the South Korean system. In April 1980, the communists in Pyongyang guided the key figures among procommunist Korean residents in Japan to establish a branch of the RPU.

The rationale behind these activities must be understood in the context of Kim Il Sung's strategy for subverting the South. First, by airing the presence of the RPU, Pyongyang obviously aimed at misleading the South Korean people, softening their strong anticommunist feelings, and thus encouraging the masses to join its united front. Second, North Korea tried either to provide a camouflage for northern infiltration or to prepare a justification for its intervention, which would be asked for by the RPU at the time the North considered the decisive moment had come for the revolution in the South.<sup>33</sup>

In mid-1985, North Korea hinted of flexibility in its tactics, which it employed in the past in order to mislead public opinion within the South and to attack the South Korean government abroad under the label of the RPU. In the Central Committee Plenary Session of the KWP, convened on July 17, 1985, North Korea proclaimed that the RPU was renamed the "Front for the Korean Nation and Democracy" and that the manifesto and program of the RPU were also revised. On August 8, 1985, the voice of the RPU was designated the "Voice of National Salvation." At the same time, North Korea issued the so-called Independence Declaration of the Korean Nation under the name of the Front, in which it proposed a program for the "establishment of an independent government of the Korean nation," the realization of democratic politics, the "buildup of the nation's independent economy," and the "realization of peaceful and independent unification." In this declaration, North Korea intended to avoid using the radical term "revolution," which was replaced with the words "nation" and "democracy."<sup>34</sup>

It is plausible that in view of the increased demand for democratic development made by the South Korean people, terms like "democracy" and "national salvation" are more attractive slogans for young students and disaffected intellectuals in South Korea than "revolution." It seems probable that by disguising itself as the mouthpiece of spontaneous forces supporting mass struggle in the South, the Front for the Korean Nation and Democracy has been attempting to increase its effectiveness in undermining the South Korean government, dividing public sentiment in Korean society, and finally, creating favorable conditions for a communist-led revolution.

Since the 1960s, the primary target for communists in seeking to win

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 1618–20.

<sup>34</sup>Pukhan Yonkuso, ed., *Pukhan ch'ongnam, 1983–1985* (Seoul, 1986), 93.

adherents to the united front has become the young students and intellectuals. South Korea is an understandable case. North Korea quickly learned that most of the antigovernment movements, such as the April 1960 uprising, the June 3, 1965, disturbances, and the anti-Yusin demonstrations of the early 1970s, were led, not by workers and peasants, but by students and intellectuals. The communists appeared to believe that the antigovernment riots carried out regularly by the students on the college campuses might either generate an antidemocratic reaction and procommunist movements or trigger a revolution, which could eventually provide an opportunity for the regular forces of the North to launch an all-out attack on the South. In the period between 1960 and mid-1982, there were forty significant communist espionage plots in the South that were detected by the South Korean authorities. The targeted people that the communists sought help from were found to be intellectuals and students, workers and poor fishermen, religious figures, and politicians and government officials, including military officers, in descending order. More than 45 percent of the communist agents' activities were aimed at winning over the intellectuals and students, 30 percent the workers and poor fishermen, 20 percent the religious figures and bank clerks, and the rest the politicians and government officials.<sup>35</sup>

#### *New Version of a Guerrilla Movement*

From the perspective of their revolutionary doctrine, it is clear that the communists have emphasized all forms of mass struggle as a means of achieving the revolutionary task in the southern part of Korea. Kim Il Sung considered the violent struggle of the masses a special form of political struggle, and that the most revolutionary form of political struggle was to seize political power from an established government. By violent struggle, the North Koreans mean armed struggles comprising sabotage, terror, riots, uprisings, guerrilla warfare, as well as full-fledged war. Communists refer to guerrilla warfare as the most promising form of revolutionary struggle, in which the guerrillas continue to strengthen their revolutionary capabilities, waging endless attacks on the enemy in a protracted armed struggle, and ultimately destroy the "reactionary forces" and establish a revolutionary government. Complex yet typical is Kim Il Sung's understanding of the role of guerrilla forces in revolutionary war, the method of waging guerrilla warfare, and the time when guerrilla warfare should be launched.

His views are in defiance of the Maoist concept of guerrilla warfare. Despite Mao's emphasis on the objective revolutionary conditions as a preliminary stage of guerrilla warfare, Kim has assumed that it is not always necessary to wait for all of the revolutionary conditions to be fulfilled, and that these can be created by the insurrectionist base itself. In the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau and the Central Military Committee of the

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<sup>35</sup>*Pukhan ch'ongnam*, 1983, 1643–63.

KWP in early 1965, Kim is reported to have stressed that the successful struggle in Vietnam was successful as a result of conventional armed attacks on the enemy, and thus, North Korea should decisively accelerate its struggle with a large offensive.<sup>36</sup> In an article written on October 8, 1968, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the death of Che Guevara in battle, Kim also noted:

The revolution in each country should be carried out to suit the specific realities in which the objective revolutionary situation is created. This, however, by no means signifies that the revolution can develop or ripen of itself. The revolution can always be advanced and brought to maturity only through an active and hard struggle of the revolutionaries. If an active struggle is neglected, only waiting for a favorable situation to arise by reason of the arduousness of the revolution, revolutionary forces can not be fostered.<sup>37</sup>

It is no accident that the 1968 subversive activities waged by the armed guerrillas were closely linked to Kim's public announcements. Two forms of guerrilla movement can be identified in North Korea's subversive strategy. The first type was illustrated by the events of January 1968, when thirty-one armed guerrillas conducted an abortive raid on the presidential mansion in Seoul. Their mission was to assassinate President Pak, meaning that it was confined to a commando raid on the specific target rather than an effort to mobilize the masses and to wage guerrilla warfare in the South. The second type of guerrilla movement focused on politically oriented activities. Within a week, from late October to early November 1968, about 170 armed guerrillas infiltrated into the northeast coastal region of the South on several occasions, and attempted to carry out subversive activities, with an emphasis on politics. First, the guerrilla bands tried to force residents in the villages to establish people's committees, as well as to induce and force them to join the Korean Workers' Party. Second, they distributed operational money, even counterfeit paper, to the residents. Finally, a fifteen-person guerrilla band attempted to build an armed guerrilla stronghold occupying a small village in the mountainous area.<sup>38</sup>

In terms of the motives of the North Koreans,<sup>39</sup> a clear distinction can be drawn between the two types of incidents. For the North Koreans, the commando raid may represent the most politically effective form of insurgency tactics, to paralyze the top leadership in South Korea, to create psychological panic among South Koreans about security, and to discredit governmental authority in South Korea. Furthermore, Pyongyang may expect

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 1630.

<sup>37</sup>Kim, *Let Us Promote World Revolution*, 262.

<sup>38</sup>*Pukhan ch'ongnam*, 1983, 1648–49.

<sup>39</sup>For other motives for the two incidents, see Sung-joo Han, "North Korea's Security Policy and Military Strategy," in Scalapino and Kim, *North Korea Today*, 155–57.

that through terrorism, the current top leaders could be run over and create a regime more conciliatory toward the North, led by democratic figures in the South.

Indeed, the Rangoon bombing incident, which took place in October 1983 and resulted in the death of seventeen top-ranking officials of the South Korean government, including four cabinet members, can be understood in the context of the North Koreans' commando raids abroad. The 1968 commando raid on the presidential mansion and the Rangoon bombing incident are congruent in the sense that both are state-supported terrorist activities and selected as target the unarmed top leadership of South Korea, with the primary goal of paralyzing a central core of the government power rather than mobilizing the masses. On the other hand, the guerrilla infiltration appeared to be a limited probe to determine whether the peasants could be exploited and mobilized for the communist revolutionary cause. It matters not that the missions proved total failures, ironically aroused strong anticommunist sentiments among the South Koreans, and motivated the South Korean authorities to create the home guard reserve forces for self-defense in the rear areas in the late 1960s.

### *Institutionalization of Irregular Warfare*

Since the armistice ending the Korean War, a guerrilla legacy, especially a light infantry tradition, has been institutionalized in Kim Il Sung's concept of revolutionary war, as well as in North Korea's military structure. The experiences and lessons drawn both from the so-called anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare waged by Kim and his associates in the 1930s and the Korean War appear to have led him to emphasize a combination of irregular warfare and regular warfare. In December 1950, having examined the major military lessons of the Korean War, Kim Il Sung pointed out that the absence of irregular military units on the part of North Korea could cause it to fail to form a second line behind the enemy; he is quoted as having stressed: "Had we had merely three light infantry regiments operating in the Munkyŏng mountain range, we could have pushed the enemy to Pusan during the national liberation war."<sup>40</sup>

In the mid-1960s, therefore, North Korea began to pursue an all-out policy of maximizing its irregular warfare capabilities. Special units, such as the 124th Army Unit, the 198th, and the 907th, appear to have been created in the late 1960s. The October 1968 infiltration incidents were known to have been carried out by agents of the 124th Army Unit. In 1971, under the supervision of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, North Korea activated the Eighth Special Army Corps, the main function of which was to command all special units, including the two brigades attached to the Corps. At the same time, two light infantry brigades for irregular warfare were added to each of

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<sup>40</sup>*Pukhan ch'ongnam*, 1983, 1459.

the regular army corps of North Korea deployed along the Demilitarized Zone. The number of light infantry brigades under the Eighth Special Army Corps was increased to five in 1974 and to twelve in 1980. Since 1975, North Korea had also created two amphibious brigades under the Eighth Special Army Corps. But soon after the Rangoon bombing incident of October 1983, the Eighth Special Army Corps was renamed the Bureau of Light Infantry Guidance, and the command line of most of the irregular warfare units was rearranged under the Bureau of Reconnaissance and the regular army corps. In 1987, the number of irregular warfare brigades under the Bureau of Light Infantry Guidance and the Bureau of Reconnaissance may have reached twenty, totaling a hundred thousand, or representing one-seventh of the entire North Korean ground forces.<sup>41</sup>

Along with the buildup of irregular warfare units, North Korea has begun to increase transportation facilities to send its agents, commandos, and guerrillas on a large scale to the South. North Korea is believed to be capable of dropping six thousand commandos at once from 278 AN-2 airplanes and 240 other airplanes. North Korea is also able to unload thirty thousand personnel from 499 landing craft, 14 landing craft auxiliaries, and midget submarines. In addition, twenty-one thousand men can infiltrate into the DMZ through seven tunnels, which are believed to remain undetected.<sup>42</sup>

It is widely known that North Korean commandos have been trained to resort to whatever means necessary to carry out infiltrations and surprise attack, to assault ROK government agencies and military installations and headquarters, to neutralize air bases and anti-aircraft bases, to block mobilization of men and material, and to cut off logistics support inside the South. They have been trained to rally sympathetic elements and to assassinate key figures in the South. Each commando is capable of marching at least 120 kilometers a night and of negotiating any river in South Korea with ease. They have also received realistic training in attacking and destroying a duplicate of the Blue House, the South Korean presidential residence, that was built in Koksan in central North Korea.

It is necessary to discuss the role of the irregular warfare units in the context of a revolutionary war by North Korea to communize the South. First of all, the irregular warfare units will function as auxiliary forces to support regular warfare units when North Korea decides to intervene in South Korea with armed forces, their objective to hasten victory. For this purpose, light infantry brigades will infiltrate rear areas of South Korea to form a second front, turning the entire country into a battlefield in the initial stage of war. This general offensive is overwhelmingly military activity, to which political activity will be subordinated. The aim is to assist in the occupation of both Seoul and all of South Korea as speedily as possible.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 1556; and IISS, *Military Balance* (1985–86) (London), 127; (1986–87), 159.

<sup>42</sup>*Pukhan ch'ongnam*, 1983, 1560, 1562.

Second, each of the special units can also carry out a separate military operation in penetrating vulnerable points of the South Korean defense lines to confuse the South's military units, making surprise attacks on command posts early in a war and communication facilities, and in securing strategic terrain and transportation centers in an attempt to block the sending of fresh troops and supplies to the combat zones.

Third, along with agents of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP), the special warfare units aim at combining political and military activities. They can act as political agents in mobilizing procommunist elements and sympathizers, organizing violent struggles to throw South Korean society into chaos, and expanding the procommunist underground forces.

In the meantime, they can transform themselves into guerrillas able to conduct irregular warfare in South Korea for more than a month without support from their home bases in North Korea. Finally, they can act as commandos to conduct the special missions to destroy government offices and facilities and industrial plants, as well as terrorists, mainly to assassinate key figures in the South.

All this suggests that the basic aims of the irregular warfare units are to play a critical role in preparing for the communization of the entire peninsula in peacetime, and to make it easy to occupy the southern part of Korea in the initial stage of a war caused by Northern intervention. Kim Il Sung is reported to be prepared to intervene in a Southern crisis, stressing that "if revolution takes place in South Korea, we, as one and the same nation, will not just look at it with folded arms but will strongly support the South Korean people."<sup>43</sup>

### *Support of Foreign Insurgent Movements*

From the 1960s on, North Korea has expended substantial effort to support subversive and terrorist activities and export revolution abroad, especially to the Third World countries. Like other terrorist states, such as Libya, South Yemen, Cuba, and Iran, North Korea today is branded as a member of the international association of terrorist states. For this reason and others, North Korea has enjoyed advantages over autonomous free-lance groups in employing this method of unconventional warfare.<sup>44</sup> North Korea is capable of operating with the full knowledge and cooperation of its diplomatic missions in the target country and of easily obtaining and storing weapons and explosives by abuses of diplomatic immunity. North Korea can offer intensive training in guerrilla tactics, weapons, and explosives in camps within her own borders and provide substantial funds to leftist-led insurgent movements and terrorism. Pyongyang can also provide the necessary sanctu-

<sup>43</sup>Kim's speech at a banquet hosted by Deng Xiaoping on Apr. 18, 1975, in *Peking Review* 17 (Apr. 25, 1975): 11-14.

<sup>44</sup>For discussion of the features of state-sponsored terrorism, see Paul Wilkinson, "State-sponsored International Terrorism," *World Today*, July 1984, 292-98.

ary and protection for insurgent elements and terrorists after their mission has been completed.

From the late 1960s to early 1983, North Korea was found to have participated either directly or indirectly in attempts to support antigovernment subversive activities in forty-one countries, including the Central African Republic in September 1970 and Sri Lanka in April 1971, which resulted in the closure of its embassies in these two countries. It has now become common knowledge that North Korea is a training center for international terrorists and subversives. Between 1969 and 1983, the number reached some five thousand from thirty-five countries, and includes personnel from the Palestine Liberation Organization, the People's Liberation Army of Guatemala, and the Thai Communist Party. In the meantime, Pyongyang sent two thousand specialists abroad for training purposes, especially to various Latin American countries that have unstable political conditions.

North Korea is operating at least fifteen special camps for training guerrillas in Pyongyang and Kandong county in southern P'yŏngan province. The camps are known to be under the supervision of the Reconnaissance Bureau of the Defense Ministry. In the camps, either a 3- or a 6-month intensive program or a 1½-year program is offered with emphasis on politics, radio communication, and tactics of rural and urban guerrilla warfare. North Korea's main goal in guerrilla training is to make foreign personnel pro-North Korean. For instance, in the politics classes, the North Korean instructors continue to emphasize Kim Il Sung's *chuch'e* idea and to extol Kim as a leader of the Korean nation as well as of the world revolution. In addition, North Korea has also sent arms and funds to antigovernment groups in some forty-four countries, including Venezuela, Brazil, India, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, and Burma, between the late 1960s and 1983.<sup>45</sup>

In analyzing North Korea's support of antigovernment subversive movements abroad, certain characteristics can be noted. First, its consistent and protracted efforts suggest that North Korea continues up to the present the program to foster international revolutionary forces in numerous countries of the Third World. North Korean leaders repeatedly claim in their speeches that the American imperialist appears to be strong but becomes impotent when the peoples of many countries attack it from all sides. This argument has proved to be not merely rhetoric but evidenced in deeds. Second, the target countries for the insurgent movements supported by North Korea are predominantly those within Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. North Korea tends to stress military assistance on a governmental level to the pro-North Korean states and pursue a dual-track policy to the conservative, pro-Western governments and the insurgent groups against those governments

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<sup>45</sup>"The Current Trend of North Korea's Terrorism Abroad," *Japan Military Review*, Aug. 1982, 70-79; and Young C. Kim, "North Korea and the Third World," in Robert A. Scalapino and Hongkoo Lee, eds., *North Korea in a Regional and Global Context* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), 338-40.

(see table 1). Third, the increase of the states with which North Korea officially established diplomatic relations between 1972 and 1975 was coupled with a surge in military assistance to those states, and in support to antigovernment groups (see figure 1). It is evident that North Korea can pursue a policy of improving state-to-state relations with certain countries and simultaneously establish connections with easy access to antigovernment groups in those states. Finally, although North Korea's diplomatic relations with countries in the Third World were severed on several occasions mainly because of its dual-track policy in the countries concerned, there is no hint so far that it has reduced its ties with antigovernment insurgents in favor of strengthening governmental ties.

### Conclusion

Examination of communist insurgency in South Korea suggests five major sources for communist strategy and tactics in the revolutionary movement: Leninist, Maoist, Vietnamist, Guevaraist, and indigenous North Korean.

From Leninism came the notion of the primacy of a revolutionary party based on the vanguard role of the working class and peasantry, class alliance, and the central importance of the combined use of different forms of violent struggle. Maoist doctrine provided such elements as the importance of the combination of irregular warfare with regular warfare, a broad united front operated on the basis of unity and struggle under party leadership, and the importance of supporting national liberation movements abroad. Vietnamese doctrine and tactics offered the notions of the role of the northern revolutionary base in fostering and assisting the southern revolutionary movement, the emphasis on selective terrorism, and the preference for gaining a quick and decisive military victory by conducting a broad and comprehensive military offensive.<sup>46</sup> Che Guevara's doctrine contributed one fundamental lesson to North Korea's conduct of the revolutionary movement in South Korea in the late 1960s—the stress on the role of the guerrilla *foco* (nucleus) itself—reasoning that it is not always necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist and that insurrection can create them.<sup>47</sup>

It is more difficult to single out the native North Korean features. In the broadest sense, North Korea's insurgent strategy might simply be viewed as the creative application of core elements of Leninist, Maoist, and Vietnamese doctrines in a South Korean setting. But unlike the extreme flexibility of communist strategy in Vietnam, its capacity to adapt rapidly to changing

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<sup>46</sup>For an excellent discussion of the differences in military strategy and tactics between China and Vietnam in the early 1970s, see Eugene K. Lawson, *The Sino-Vietnam Conflict* (New York: Praeger, 1984), chap. 3.

<sup>47</sup>Harries-Clichy Peterson, ed., *Che Guevara on Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 3–8.

**Table 1**  
**North Korea's Support of Foreign Insurgent Movements and Governments, Mid-1960s--1983**

Country	Insurgent Groups			Governments		
	Weapons & Finances	Guerrilla Training	Intervention	Military Assistance	Type of Government	Date Established Diplomatic Relations
<b>Latin America</b>						
Guyana	X	X		X	LN	74.5
Guatemala		X			RN	
Grenada <sup>a</sup>				X	RN	79.5
Nicaragua		X		X	LN	79.8
Mexico		X	X		RN	80.9
Venezuela	X	X	X		CN	74.10
Bolivia	X	X			LN	
Brazil	X	X			R	
Suriname					CN	82.10
Argentina <sup>a</sup>	X	X	X	X	CN	73.6
El Salvador					R	
Uruguay	X		X		RN	63(TR)
Chile <sup>a</sup>	X	X	X		RN	72.6
Costa Rica <sup>a</sup>			X		RN	74.2
Cuba				X	C	61.8
Panama	X		X		CN	
Paraguay	X		X		R	
Peru		X			LN	
Puerto Rico				X		74.7(TR)

Table 1 Continued

Country	Insurgent Groups			Governments			Date Established Diplomatic Relations
	Weapons & Finances	Guerrilla Training	Intervention	Military Assistance	Type of Government		
Africa							
Ghana <sup>b</sup>		X		X	CN		64.12
Gabon				X	RN		74.1
Guinea-Bissau				X	LN		74.3
Nigeria				X	RN		76.5
Togo				X	LN		73.1
Namibia	X			X	RN		
Lesotho				X	LN		80.7
Rwanda			X	X	LN		72.4
Madagascar				X	LN		72.11
Mozambique		X		X	LN		75.6
Benin				X	LN		73.2
Botswana				X	CN		74.11
Seychelles				X	LN		76.8
Somalia		X		X	RN		67.4
Sierra Leone				X	RN		71.10
Angola		X		X	RN		76.4
Uganda				X	CN		
Zaire				X	RN		72.12
Zambia		X		X	LN		69.4
Equatorial Guinea				X	RN		69.1
Central African Rep <sup>b</sup>			X	X	CN		69.9
Zimbabwe	X			X	LN		80.4
Chad	X		X		CN		69.5
Kenya		X	X		RN		75.5

**Table 1 Continued**

Congo				X		X	LN	64.12
Tanzania					X	X	LN	65.1
Asia								
Laos			X			X	C	
Bangladesh		X				X	CN	73.12
Burma <sup>a</sup>		X		X		X	CN	75.5
Sri Lanka				X			RN	70.7
India			X			X	RN	73.12
Cambodia				X			C	64.12
Thailand					X		R	75.5
Pakistan						X	CN	72.11
Middle East								
PDR Yemen			X			X	LN	68.2
Lebanon			X				CN	81.2
Libya					X	X	LN	74.1
Yemen Arab Rep						X	CN	63.3
Sudan						X	RN	69.9
Syria						X	RN	66.7
Algeria						X	LN	58.9
Egypt						X	RN	63.8
Iraq <sup>a</sup>				X		X	CN	68.1
Iran						X	CN	73.4

SOURCES: National Security Planning Agency, ed., *North Korea's Export of Violent Revolution and Shameful Behavior Abroad* (Seoul, Nov. 1983); "The Current Trend of North Korea's Terrorism Abroad," *Japan Military Review*, Aug. 1982, 70-79.

NOTES: LN (left neutral); RN (right neutral); R (right); CN (central neutral); C (Communist); TR (trade representative).

<sup>a</sup>Severed diplomatic relations.

<sup>b</sup>Severed diplomatic relations but reestablished them.

circumstances,<sup>48</sup> North Korean strategy lacked doctrinal flexibility in deliberate and artful manipulation of various means of struggle. The communists in Korea failed to arouse peasant nationalism against foreigners who were involved in their nation's political affairs, unlike the communists in China, and lacked a mass line of investigation of popular grievances, wishfully thinking that the southern workers and peasants continued to hope for a communist revolution in South Korea. The weather and terrain worked against the South Korean guerrillas, especially in protracted war, in contrast to the guerrillas of China and Vietnam.

One of the indigenous elements of North Korean revolutionary strategy is its reliance on the framework of three stages of the People's Democratic Revolution, placing priority on the first stage. In the democratic revolutionary stage, the communists, under the guise of democratic forces, merely support a revolution and afterward obtain a fruitful result. That the communists have considered the disaffected students and intellectuals a primary target for communist espionage plots as well as for the united front is unique to the revolutionary movement that the North Koreans have attempted to develop in the South. A second North Korean native element is its emphasis on irregular warfare capabilities, irregular forces representing more than one-seventh of the entire North Korean ground forces. These are key not for defensive purposes but in the revolutionary war to communize the South. The irregular warfare units have been prepared in order to make the revolutionary war as speedy as possible, forming a second front behind enemy lines and turning the entire country into a battlefield in the initial stage of the war, when North Korea decides to intervene in South Korea with armed forces. They will also be capable of combining political and military activities, organizing violent struggles to throw South Korean society into chaos, and expanding the procommunist underground forces. They can act as commandos to destroy government offices and to assassinate key figures in the South.

Such a revolutionary military strategy is fundamentally different from the doctrine of People's War under Chinese leadership. Under modern conditions, the Chinese leadership is following a strategy solely of improved effectiveness in People's War. By this they are likely not to mean improving offensive capabilities that can be deployed and operated several hundred miles beyond their borders but to mean improving weapons and fighting techniques so that they will not have to lure the enemy in quite so deep, will

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<sup>48</sup>It can be argued that one of the most distinctive features is a doctrinal flexibility. The Vietnamese revolutionary strategy abandoned in the early 1960s the Maoist vision of the three-stage revolution, relying on the political violence of the masses and leading to a combined general offensive in the countryside and a general uprising in the cities. See William J. Duiker, "Vietnamese Revolutionary Doctrine in Comparative Perspective," in William S. Turley, ed., *Vietnamese Communism in Comparative Perspective* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), 66–69.

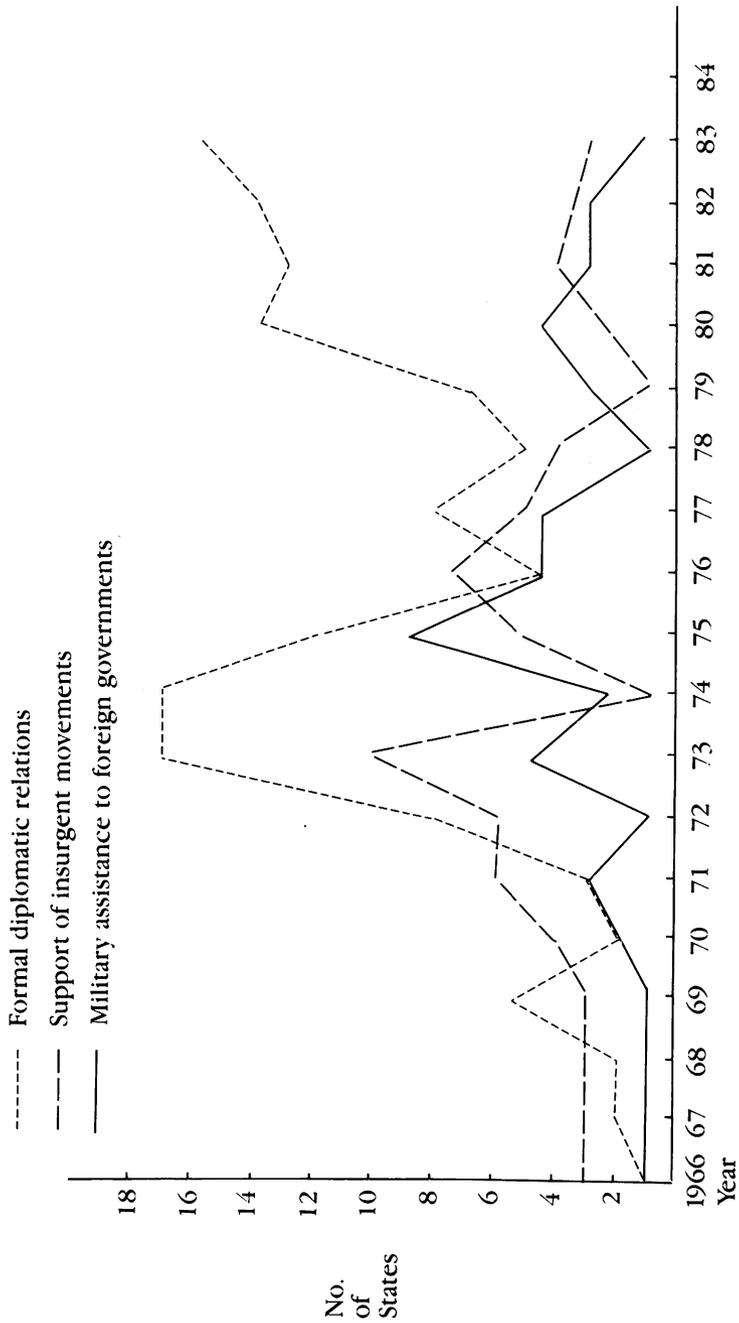


Figure 1. North Korea's Support of Foreign Insurgent Movements and Governments, 1966-83

not be required to make such great sacrifices in men and material, and will be able to reduce the duration of the war.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, North Korea places greater stress on terrorism and support of antigovernment insurgent movements in the Third World countries than China and Vietnam do today. North Korea's terrorism differs from that of China and Vietnam in target and goal. In both Vietnam and China, communist-led terrorism aimed at mobilizing the masses by neutralizing progovernment forces and winning over middle forces. In South Vietnam, the primary target of the Vietcong's terrorism was not the government officials but the peasants.<sup>50</sup> In contrast, North Korea's target has been high officials of the government, including the president, meaning that it practiced terrorist activities in order to achieve such short-term goals as paralysis of the top leadership, disorder and obstacles in society, and discrediting of government authority.

In the 1970s, and in the 1980s in particular, China and Vietnam have gradually reduced their ties with insurgents in the Third World countries and embarked on a policy of improving state-to-state relations.<sup>51</sup> Unlike China and Vietnam, which have achieved their goals of placing their countries under communist rule, North Korea seems to feel it must pursue dual track policies in the Third World countries so that its goal to strengthen international revolutionary forces will be maintained. Whether North Korea will follow the pattern of China and Vietnam in the near future remains to be seen, and is an interesting problem to be studied in the future.

Finally, what will be the main characteristic of North Korea's insurgency in South Korea? Will it be terrorism or propaganda-cum-subversion? It seems that the latter will be the main trend, even though North Korean terrorism against South Korea cannot be ruled out, especially before the Seoul Olympic Games take place in the fall of 1988. Riding on the democratic reform mood in South Korea and on a new and ominous leftist tendency that is evident in the South among a small segment of the younger generation, especially radical student activists, North Korea will accelerate its propaganda and subversion campaign in order to penetrate deep into South Korean society. Using the Pyongyang and clandestine radio stations, North Korea continues to air Marxist jargon and communist tactics for revolution in the South, and to stir up nationalistic and anti-American feelings among South Koreans, which have

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<sup>49</sup>Monte R. Bullard, *China's Political-Military Evolution* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), 23–24; Harlan W. Jencks, "People's War under Modern Conditions," *China Quarterly* 98 (June 1984): 305–19.

<sup>50</sup>Walter Laquer, *Guerrilla* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), 270–73.

<sup>51</sup>For the current Chinese attitude toward national liberation movements in the Third World countries, see William Heaton, "China and Southeast Asian Communist Movements: The Decline of Dual Track Diplomacy," *Asian Survey* 22 (Aug. 1982): 779–800; and for the Vietnamese attitude, see Nguyen Van Canh, *Vietnam under Communism, 1975–1982* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), 247–48.

been growing in recent years. Pyongyang's espionage agents will be sent to South Korea, but will not present themselves as criminal saboteurs or subversives. They will act as lawful political activists and social crusaders, infiltrate through collusion with indigenous opponents of the government and its free political system, and try to expand their ties, with the primary goal of diluting South Korea's liberal commitment and subverting democratic institutions.

In the recent past, Pyongyang's immediate goal of insurgency in the South was to create civil disorder to the extent that the 1988 Olympic Games would be moved or discredited. But it is plausible that North Korea will not send its commandos to the South as it did in the late 1960s. Pyongyang may calculate that the commandos might not do the job successfully and that the violence would arouse strong anticommunist feelings among South Koreans as well as arouse world public opinion against North Korea. North Korea may choose a cheaper alternative by instigating either an international terrorist group or antigovernment dissident activists in South Korea to commit violent activities in the South, if Pyongyang determines that nothing but resorting to force will be effective.

## 14. Guerrilla Communism in Asia

LARRY A. NIKSCH

With the important exception of the Philippines, guerrilla communism in Asia of the traditional variety—insurgencies against noncommunist, often pro-Western governments—is in its nadir. Communist insurgencies in Burma, Thailand, and Malaysia are declining sharply in strength or show little growth potential. None have the remotest chance of gaining power. In the case of the Malay and Thai insurgencies, the prognosis is extinction or descent into a comatose condition.

This stands in contrast to the situation in the early and mid-1970s when the communist parties of the three countries had high hopes of growth. China, then under the throes of Maoism, saw itself as a revolutionary force with a mission to aid “fraternal” communist parties in neighboring countries, especially those engaged in People’s War against “reactionary” governments. Chinese material aid, indeed, flowed to the Thai and Burmese insurgencies.

The mid-1970s also featured the communist victories in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam and the ouster of American military power from mainland Southeast Asia. These triumphs gave a psychological lift to other communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia. Thai communists also viewed a communist Indochina as a source of expanded material aid.

The Communist Party of Burma (CPB) had used Chinese territory from 1968 to 1973 to attack government towns and outposts and take control of hundreds of square miles of territory along the Burma-China border. China provided substantial quantities of arms and even Chinese “volunteers” to fight alongside the CPB.<sup>1</sup> By 1975, the CPB had a secure “liberated area” along the border and over fifteen thousand troops. It seemed prepared for a second stage of its offensive, to penetrate west toward Mandalay and south into the ethnic Burman heartland.

By the mid-1970s, communist insurgency in Thailand had over thirteen thousand guerrillas<sup>2</sup> and dominated large areas of northeast Thailand and the southern part of the country. China and Vietnam provided weapons and

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Congressional Research Service.

<sup>1</sup>Bertil Lintner, “Burma: The Rise and Fall of the Communists,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 4, 1987, 27–34.

<sup>2</sup>Shee Poon Kim, “Insurgency in Southeast Asia,” *Problems of Communism*, May–June 1983, 49.

maintained training facilities for guerrillas and political cadres of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). Laos allowed the CPT to operate a string of camps in its territory, and arms supplied from China and Vietnam flowed through Laos. China also provided the CPT with a powerful radio transmitter for broadcasts into Thailand. With the collapse of noncommunist regimes in Indochina, CPT prospects looked better than at any time since the communists had proclaimed armed struggle in 1965.

The Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) seemed to have less positive prospects than its Thai and Burmese counterparts. Communist insurgency had nearly collapsed in Malaya by the end of the 1950s. The remnants, about five hundred guerrillas, fled across the border into Thailand where they established a series of base camps. The CPM also split when two breakaway factions established separate organizations with their own guerrilla forces. The CPM Revolutionary Faction was the first, consisting of two to three hundred members. In 1974, the CPM's Twelfth Regiment formed the CPM Marxist-Leninist Party with nearly one thousand guerrillas.

Because of geographic factors, China was unable to provide meaningful aid to the CPM, but Chinese propaganda organs in 1968 began to urge the CPM to revive People's War. China also established a clandestine radio transmitter—the Voice of the Malayan Revolution—in South China. The CPM and the breakaway factions had successes in recruiting in southern Thailand and had forces numbering about three thousand by the early 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

The CPM then began to infiltrate in small groups back into northern Malaysia. Insurgent activity reached its height in 1975 and 1976 when communist guerrillas assassinated a police inspector general and a dozen other policemen. The CPM also bombed the national monument in Kuala Lumpur. In short, the CPM, despite its weaknesses and divisions, viewed the early and mid-1970s as a period of potential revival.

Yet within a few years, the Burmese, Thai, and Malay insurgencies were in a state of decline. Only the Philippine communist insurgency continued to grow into the 1980s and posed a real threat to the government in Manila. The failures of these insurgencies grew out of a combination of factors, some external to the insurgent movements and some related to internal organizations and strategies. The communist insurgency in the Philippines has succeeded in avoiding most of these factors or adjusting to them. It faces, nevertheless, continuing problems from a number of them, making its ultimate success problematic.

A new phenomenon of guerrilla communism has emerged in Southeast Asia in the 1980s: a communist guerrilla movement, the Khmer Rouge, trying to overthrow a communist regime in Cambodia. This is a new manifestation of the Sino-Soviet dispute in Asia. Key questions relate to its importance to

<sup>3</sup>K. Das, "The Jungle War that Refuses to Go Away," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Mar. 6, 1983, 49.

communist Asia as a whole and the effect on noncommunist states' relations with communist countries.

## **Insurgency Failure**

### *The Ethnic Chinese Factor*

Analysts of Southeast Asian communist movements have made much of the ethnic Chinese factor as a reason for the decline of insurgencies—perhaps too much. The traditional analysis has stated that insurgencies led by ethnic Chinese are alien to the majority ethnic groups of these countries. The ethnic Chinese factor no doubt has been important in the Malay communist insurgency. Its importance in the Thai movement, however, has been in combination with other factors, and it has not existed in the Burmese insurgency.

At its height in the 1950s, the Malay insurgency was primarily an ethnic Chinese movement. When it moved across the border into Thailand at the end of the decade, it recruited mainly from the ethnic Chinese population of Thailand's southernmost region rather than from Thais of Malay ethnic origin.<sup>4</sup> The CPM has announced the formation of various front organizations aimed at attracting Malays and Muslims. These, however, have proved to be paper organizations.

The Malay majority in Malaysia has viewed the insurgency as a Chinese movement and has not been attracted to it. The CPM's traditional rejection of Islam also has been debilitating, especially in recent years as the fundamentalist Islamic movement has grown among Malays.

The CPT, like the CPM, was formed and led by ethnic Chinese, commonly called Sino-Thai. In 1982, five of the seven members of the CPT's Politburo were believed to be pure ethnic Chinese and another reportedly was half-Chinese and half-Thai.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the Malay insurgency, however, the CPT was not prevented from successfully recruiting ethnic Thais in the northeast and south during the 1965–75 period, when armed insurgent strength grew from one thousand to nearly thirteen thousand. Moreover, some three thousand Thai students and intellectuals joined the movement after the Thai army took power through a military coup in 1976.

In short, the ethnic Chinese factor in itself did not negate a potential for insurgency growth in Thailand. Sino-Thai were more integrated into Thai society than the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia. Culturally, ethnic Chinese and Thai have had more in common than ethnic Chinese and Muslim Malays. The ethnic factor did prove a problem in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, but this grew out of the internal policies of the CPT and the attitude of the CPT leadership itself.

The ethnic composition of the Communist Party of Burma has been

<sup>4</sup>K. Das, "Changes of Plan but Not Policy," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 8, 1979, 20–21.

<sup>5</sup>Kim, "Insurgency in Southeast Asia," 50.

primarily Burman, reflecting the majority Burman population. The ethnic factor thus does not inhibit the CPB's appeal to the Burmans. The real ethnic factor in Burma is the tribes of Karens, Kachins, Shans, and others that have been in revolt against the Rangoon government since Burma gained independence in 1948.

The ethnic Chinese factor has not affected the Philippine communist insurgency. Even more than in Thailand, the ethnic Chinese have assimilated into Filipino society. Inter-marriage has been common, and many prominent Filipino families have Chinese origins. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has had no distinguishing ethnic characteristics that have set it apart from the society as a whole.

### *The China Factor*

The internal ethnic factor has varied in its influence, but the role of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the Southeast Asian insurgencies has been a decisive force. China's influence has turned out to be mainly negative for the insurgencies in three respects. First, China's support and guidance to the insurgencies exacerbated the ethnic Chinese factor in Malaysia and, to a degree, in Thailand, and it aroused nationalistic sentiment against the insurgencies everywhere. Second, China's decision in the late 1970s to cease or reduce support to the insurgencies had negative effects on morale and material resources. Third, the insurgencies' ties to China bound them to Maoist ideology and the doctrine of People's War and limited their abilities to adjust strategies to changing internal conditions. The CPP is the only one of the Southeast Asian communist movements to have dealt with China's role without significant damage to the movement.

Even without material aid from China, the Communist Party of Malaya's links with China were intimate. CPM leaders in the 1970s lived in China. The CPM broadcast over its radio, the Voice of the Malayan Revolution, from powerful transmitters in South China.<sup>6</sup> The CPM doctrine and ideology slavishly emphasized Maoism and People's War and rejected concepts of urban uprising and the mixing of legal with armed struggle.<sup>7</sup> Despite some benefits of PRC support, the CPM was saddled in Malaysia with the image of a Chinese-dominated party in its leadership and its foreign ties.

The factional split in the CPM did not alter the pro-China position of the Malay communists. The two breakaway groups proved to be equally as pro-Beijing as the main CPM.<sup>8</sup> They passed up opportunities to turn to the Soviet Union and Vietnam when China came into open conflict with Moscow and Hanoi in the late 1970s.

The CPT's relations with China bore similarities to those of the CPM, and

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<sup>6</sup>William R. Heaton, "China and Southeast Asian Communist Movements: The Decline of Dual Track Diplomacy," *Asian Survey*, Aug. 1982, 786.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 787.

<sup>8</sup>Das, "The Jungle War," 27.

they contained the added element of material Chinese aid to the communist-led insurgents. The ethnic identification with China stood out because most top CPT leaders were ethnic Chinese. The CPT, too, operated a powerful radio in South China aimed at Thailand. Beijing supplied arms, money, food, and clothing to the insurgents, through Laos and Burma.<sup>9</sup>

The CPT's leadership also adhered to the doctrines of People's War and Mao Zedong Thought. The CPT's political program of 1976 described Thailand as dominated by imperialism and feudalism that only People's War led by the CPT could break open.<sup>10</sup> This ideological loyalty to the PRC proved critical; for as will be discussed shortly, the CPT's short-lived attempt in 1975 and 1976 to adjust People's War strategy produced challenges and contradictions that the rigid CPT leadership was unable to meet.

China has had the closest ties to the CPB, despite the leadership's lack of ethnic Chinese. Geography, particularly Burma's long border with China, has played more than a compensating role. Beijing nurtured the CPB in sanctuaries inside China during the 1950s and 1960s. The Burmese communists' seizure of a zone along the border during the 1968–73 period, as described previously, constituted in reality an invasion from China. Chinese material aid sustained the campaign. A CPB radio station began to broadcast from Chinese territory in 1971.<sup>11</sup> Loyalty to Maoism and to Mao himself was a main feature of CPB pronouncements even after the Chinese dictator had died.<sup>12</sup>

The Communist Party of the Philippines was founded in 1968 with a Maoist ideological-political program. The CPP proclaimed People's War against the Philippine government based on armed struggle in the rural areas. The CPP immediately took a strong pro-PRC, anti-Soviet line in its pronouncements, which continued into the 1970s, through Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia.

Nevertheless, differences existed in the CPP's relations with China. The party's leadership had spent little time in China, and there was no ethnic identification with the PRC. Geography prevented the PRC from extending material aid to the CPP. The bases for long-term ties were not as strong as in China's relations with the other communist movements.

Because of the links that the Malay, Thai, and Burmese parties had with China, it was inevitable that the parties would suffer serious damage when the PRC began to reduce support in the late 1970s. The story is well known and needs little elaboration here. China began to normalize relations with the United States in 1972 with the Nixon visit. It soon followed with similar initiatives toward noncommunist Southeast Asian governments. The Sino-

<sup>9</sup>John McBeth, "Caught in the Crossfire," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Nov. 12, 1982, 28–29, and "A Battle for Loyalty in the Jungles," *ibid.*, June 8, 1979, 19–20.

<sup>10</sup>Kim, "Insurgency in Southeast Asia," 50–51.

<sup>11</sup>Heaton, "China and Southeast Asian Communist Movements," 790.

<sup>12</sup>Lintner, "Burma," 29–33.

Soviet dispute hit hard in Southeast Asia after the fall of Saigon in 1975. China and Vietnam became bitter enemies, and Vietnam moved into the Soviet camp. A more moderate Chinese leadership under Deng Xiaoping came to power after the death of Mao and called for Asian countries to form an “antihegemony front” against Soviet and Vietnamese expansionism. China launched its army against Vietnam briefly after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. It then adopted a long-term strategy of cooperation with the ASEAN governments to oppose Vietnam’s domination of Cambodia.

These initiatives to the ASEAN governments forced China to reassess its policy of supporting communist insurgencies seeking to overthrow these governments. Southeast Asian governments were suspicious of China after years of combating PRC-backed insurgencies, and they pressed China to show good faith by abandoning these movements. China has responded with a new policy containing three elements:

1. An end to material aid to the Thai insurgency and large reductions in material support to the Burmese communists.
2. Termination of propaganda support, including the shutting down of the China-based radio stations in the 1978–81 period. Media commentary from the PRC regarding the CPP also waned.
3. An apparent PRC policy of encouraging the communist parties to negotiate with incumbent governments or even accept offers of amnesty. This policy is especially apparent in Thailand and Burma.<sup>13</sup>

Leaders of the PRC asserted in the initial stages of this policy shift that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) would maintain party-to-party links with the Southeast Asian parties while the PRC government built up government-to-government relations. Under criticism from ASEAN governments for this two-track approach, they soon took the position that the CCP would extend only “moral support” to these parties.

The shift in Chinese policy affected the Malay, Thai, and Burmese parties and insurgencies in several ways. First, material strength declined as the flow of Chinese arms and other supplies fell off. Second, morale suffered in the leaderships and among the rank and file guerrillas. The idea of loyalty to China and support from China as essential ingredients of ultimate success was ingrained in both elements. This has been symbolized best by the Mao-style uniforms worn by many of the Malay, Thai, and Burmese guerrilla fighters. When such beliefs no longer had validity, disillusionment set in. Third, the communist parties were tied to China so closely that they could not adjust their outside links after Beijing cut support. The parties continued to espouse People’s War and Maoism after China had broken most ties. They could not

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<sup>13</sup>For a recent analysis of PRC encouragement of negotiations between the CPB and the Ne Win government, see Josef Silverstein’s article in the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, May 27, 1985. For PRC policy in the Thai situation, see the analysis in the *Washington Post*, Oct. 8, 1980.

take advantage of the Sino-Soviet dispute by either (1) adopting an independent line in order to induce Beijing, Moscow, and Hanoi to bid for allegiances, or (2) moving into the Soviet-Vietnamese camp in order to gain assistance from the USSR, the newly assertive power in Southeast Asia.

This particularly affected the Thai insurgency. The CPT had secured large amounts of weapons and supplies from Vietnam during the 1960s and early 1970s. Hanoi and the Pathet Lao allowed the CPT to operate base and training camps inside Laos and Vietnam. When China and Vietnam came into open conflict in 1978 and 1979, Hanoi, with Soviet backing, sought to woo the CPT into its camp. Vietnam tried to win the allegiance of the northeast regional committee of the CPT, which directed the insurgency in the area adjacent to Laos. This attempt failed.<sup>14</sup>

Vietnam then cut ties with the CPT, at the same time that it invaded Cambodia. In December 1978, Hanoi shut down the CPT's training camp at Hoa Binh. Vietnam's client regime in Laos ordered the CPT out of base camps in Lao territory the following month. The CPT responded with criticism of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia.

Vietnam's termination of support constituted a harsh blow to the CPT, coming on top of the decline of Chinese aid. Hanoi's takeover of Cambodia also terminated an emerging new source of aid from the Khmer Rouge regime in Phnom Penh. It also sparked factionalism within the party. An estimated one to two hundred cadres defected to Vietnam and were installed in Laos as a new movement. Debate arose within the CPT over general strategy as critics called for major changes in the CPT's pro-China policy and in the People's War approach to insurgency in Thailand.

The communists in the Philippines were least affected by the decline in Chinese support. As stated previously, the CPP's ties with China were less intimate, and the party had not stressed the role of China in the "political education" of rank and file guerrillas. The CPP already had suffered blows at the hands of the Marcos government in the mid-1970s and had undertaken changes in strategy.

### *Communist Internal Strategies and Operations*

These policy shifts by the CPP in the late 1970s point up the question of how ties with China affected the internal strategies of the Southeast Asian communist parties. It would appear that the benefits of material aid and training from China have been more than offset by the PRC's contribution to a doctrinal rigidity and strategic inflexibility in the leadership of the Malay, Thai, and Burmese communist parties. They have been unable to focus their thinking and planning on the real conditions and opportunities within the

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<sup>14</sup>John McBeth, "Hazards along the Neutral Path," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Sept. 19, 1980, 44; *Asian Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 17, 1978.

indigenous societies. Dependence on China and other outside sources for material resources produced bad habits and an unwillingness to develop self-reliance.

These weaknesses contained several elements:

1. The lack of an emphasis on building party-controlled organizations at the grass roots as the foundation for rural insurgency, using local conditions, problems, and grievances as the chief themes in recruitment efforts
2. De-emphasis or rejection of an urban strategy, including urban guerrilla operations; of the building of political alliances with non-communist elements; and of the infiltration of middle-class, elite, and industrial labor organizations
3. An overemphasis on military operations, including conventional attacks on government forces
4. The phenomenon of warlordism—operating within a specific area, confining activities primarily to that area, de-emphasizing efforts to establish and expand a presence in other regions, and becoming involved in the local economy
5. Little infusion of new blood or new ideas into the party's leadership; purges of party elements that might challenge established leaders and policies

The degree to which these weaknesses have applied to the Malay, Thai, and Burmese communist insurgencies has varied from case to case. Nevertheless, all or nearly all have been present in each insurgency. In contrast, the CPP has avoided nearly all of them. This, more than anything, explains the growth of the Philippine communist insurgency while the others have fallen into a state of stagnation or decline.

The Burmese communists began to show these strategic weaknesses even during their successful military operations of the 1968–73 period. The CPB plan was to establish a “liberated area” along the China frontier and then penetrate areas of central Burma.<sup>15</sup> The strategy, however, was primarily military: push the Burmese army out of the border region through conventional attacks and move CPB military formations west toward Mandalay and south toward central Burma.

The military operations of the CPB used little that one would describe as guerrilla warfare. Communist units, heavily armed with Chinese-supplied weapons, attacked the Burmese army frontally, often employing Chinese-style human wave assaults.<sup>16</sup> Successes usually had a cost in heavy casualties.

After 1975, the Burmese army began to gain the upper hand. The CPB's

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<sup>15</sup>Lintner, “Burma,” 27–28.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 28.

military power waned as PRC support declined, but the CPB did not adjust tactics. It chose to defend territory gained rather than melt into the jungles and villages.

Consequently, the party's policy in the border zone has stressed the recruitment of soldiers and has neglected the development of political cadres that could penetrate central Burma in small groups and try to build CPB political organizations and recruit new followers. Military units, which the CPB ordered to central Burma, were detected and attacked by the army before reaching their targeted areas. The CPB maintains few education and political training facilities in its zone. Existing cadres are described as inefficient, as reflected in a poorly run administration in the zone.

The political themes of the CPB contain outworn Maoist descriptions of Burmese society as semicolonial and semifeudal. They have had little relevance to Burmese attitudes toward the Ne Win regime and the poor economic conditions in Burma. Younger party members have begun to criticize the dominant political line as inappropriate to the country's situation.<sup>17</sup> This has not produced factional divisions yet, but the potential appears to be there.

The CPB has attempted to form alliances with the ethnic insurgent groups in revolt against Rangoon. This tactic certainly deviates from pure Maoism and may be of benefit to the CPB, but it further robs the party of nationalist credentials with the Burmans.

Political flexibility is limited by the CPB's aging leadership of men in their sixties and seventies, who have controlled the party for three decades. The leadership has stuck with Maoism despite Deng Xiaoping's repudiation of it in China. With the exception of a short-lived negotiation with the Ne Win government in 1980, the CPB has rejected PRC suggestions that it seek talks with Rangoon. Beijing and the CPB appear to agree only on the formation of alliances with the ethnic tribes.

Warlordism has thus become a dominant feature of the CPB. The border zone today is less a center of revolutionary activity than a bastion of smuggling and opium trading. Contraband trade, mainly in products from China, ironically benefits both the CPB and the Ne Win regime. The CPB taxes on the goods are a lucrative source of income. The Chinese products flow from the border into Burma's notorious black market,<sup>18</sup> which keeps Ne Win's subjects supplied with consumer goods and thus alleviates potential unrest.

The CPB has become involved in the opium trade in its zone of control after fruitless efforts in the early 1970s to end it, and it is now a major source of money for the CPB. The party collects opium from growers and sells it to traders. Besides income from this "official" policy, many party cadres reportedly are involved privately in opium trading or smuggling.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Bertil Lintner, "War in the North," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 28, 1987, 55.

<sup>18</sup>Bertil Lintner, "Alliances of Convenience," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Apr. 14, 1983, 23–28.

<sup>19</sup>Lintner, "Burma," 31–33.

In short, the CPB has sunk roots in its border redoubt and seems increasingly satisfied with this status quo. Maoism has evolved into pro forma rhetoric with little real revolutionary meaning. The leadership lacks the flexibility to revive revolutionary goals under a different standard and strategy.

The CPT since 1975 shows many of the same internal flaws as the Burmese party. The consequences have been deeper, however, and threaten the CPT's future existence.

The CPT, like the CPB, has an aging leadership that has been in power for nearly three decades. It did not adopt a new strategy in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the face of declining PRC support and rapid socioeconomic changes in Thailand. The leadership tried to make adjustments a few years earlier but aborted the attempt, thus sparking factionalism and contributing to declining morale among the rank and file cadres and guerrillas.

After the fall of a military dictatorship in 1973 and the installation of a democratic parliamentary government, the CPT initiated an urban operation aimed at attracting intellectuals, students, and industrial workers in Bangkok. The CPT had some success in the universities and among left-leaning politicians. When the military took power in 1976 through a coup d'état, approximately three thousand students, intellectuals, and a few politicians fled Bangkok and joined up with the CPT in northeast Thailand and Laos. The CPT formed the Coordinating Committee for Patriotic and Democratic Forces (CCPDF), appointed its new recruits to direct the organization, and indicated that the CCPDF would continue united front building in the cities.

The CPT leadership did not abandon People's War as its basic strategy, however. This, coupled with apparent distrust of the newcomers, resulted in the leadership's apparently downgrading the urban strategy and relegating the newcomers to unimportant, isolated positions. Few of the three thousand ever became party members. The CPT sent the majority of them to its camps in Laos, and most never operated within Thailand itself.<sup>20</sup>

This situation, coupled with the effects of the Sino-Vietnamese split, produced a factional split in the insurgency by 1980. Many of the three thousand and like-minded CPT cadres challenged the leadership's policies. They demanded changes in the People's War strategy, concentration of future operations in the cities, and an end to the pro-China policy. Some called for a pro-Hanoi policy.<sup>21</sup> The leadership answered back, defending rural insurgency and the pro-China line and promising only token concessions to the critics. The showdown came in a CPT party congress held in 1982 in which the CPT leaders rejected the proposals for change.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>*Washington Post*, Oct. 8, 1980.

<sup>21</sup>*Bangkok Post*, Sept. 12, 1982; John McBeth, "Seeking a Strong Local Accent," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Aug. 22, 1980, 30–32.

<sup>22</sup>John McBeth, "Still Out in the Cold," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 12, 1983, 23.

Factionalism, coupled with the suspension of outside aid, brought about a disintegration of the insurgency by 1985. Most of the three thousand students and intellectuals abandoned the movement and turned themselves in to Thai authorities. Some two hundred allied themselves with the Vietnamese and have tried to build a new movement from Laos. Most serious, the rank and file guerrillas began to surrender in droves. By 1987, the insurgency that had had thirteen thousand armed guerrillas in the late 1970s had only a few hundred.

Some of the same factors contributed to a disintegration of the CPM in southern Thailand in 1987. Over six hundred guerrillas turned themselves in to the Thai army during the first half of the year, leaving an active force of an estimated eight hundred in June 1987.<sup>23</sup> Morale had plummeted as a result of the failure to make any inroads into Malaysia (by the early 1980s there were estimated to be fewer than a hundred guerrillas inside Malaysia),<sup>24</sup> a leadership that lived in China, infighting among the three CPM factions, and undoubtedly disillusionment in reaction to declining Chinese support.

Warlordism had affected the CPM too. By the late 1970s, most of the CPM rank and file in southern Thailand were natives of that region rather than of Malaysia. That, coupled with the inability of the CPM to mount operations in Malaysia, turned the CPM toward establishing a political network for the Thai border region. The CPM concentrated on taxing local inhabitants and businesses but also on operating its own enterprises such as tin mines, timber, and rubber. Taxation reportedly turned into a protection racket in some instances.<sup>25</sup>

### *The Philippine Exception*

The successes of the CPP in contrast to the other insurgencies reflect the very different internal strategy of the party. The CPP has carried out rural People's War in a classic way, emphasizing political organization of the peasants as the foundation of the New People's Army (NPA), the party's armed wing. The NPA has developed several forms of armed struggle, ranging from battalion-size assaults, to ambushes and raids, to individual assassinations by the feared "sparrow units."

The CPP also has been pragmatic in adopting urban and united front-building strategies alongside rural insurgency. It has adopted urban guerrilla warfare tactics, established numerous front organizations in the cities, and infiltrated the Catholic church, labor unions, and educational institutions. The CPP has downplayed ideology in its rural and urban operations and uses themes related to local grievances and deteriorating social and economic conditions. It has been adept at taking advantage of the weaknesses of the Philippine government and armed forces at all levels. It has rejected a strategy

<sup>23</sup>*Nation* (Bangkok), May 22, 1987.

<sup>24</sup>Das, "The Jungle War," 26.

<sup>25</sup>*Bangkok Post*, May 20, 1982.

of building a “liberated area” in part of the country and instead has spread the insurgency to all parts of the country as a deliberate strategy designed to strain the government’s resources.

The leadership has been fluid, with a constant inflow of new blood. In contrast to the CPT, the CPP has taken urban students and intellectuals into the party and has used them as cadres who establish political organizations at the grass roots. Students and middle-class intellectuals have moved up the CPP hierarchy and have provided a constant infusion of new leaders.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of the Marcos regime, the CPP had established a political presence in about 35 percent of the country’s 41,000 barangays and a significant organizational presence in 18 percent. The NPA regular strength had reached an estimated 22,000; it had been an estimated 3,500 in 1980.<sup>27</sup> Front organizations of the CPP had grown rapidly in the cities, and the party had gained significant influence in the Catholic church, a leading labor union, and student organizations.

However, even the CPP’s tactical flexibility has had limits. The party suffered a big loss of political influence and erosion of its urban front groups when it refused to support Corazon Aquino in her race against Marcos in the February 1986 election. Nevertheless, the insurgency under Aquino has not experienced the disintegration found in the Malay and Thai cases. Despite Aquino’s political successes against the CPP, the insurgency in the rural areas remains intact and in a position to renew growth if the Aquino government does not address its fundamental causes.

### Counterinsurgency

The Thai and Malaysian insurgencies might have staved off these debilitating losses were it not for the counterinsurgency strategy adopted by the Thai government and army at the beginning of the 1980s. This strategy took full advantage of the falling morale within the CPT and CPM rank and files and induced the significant defections that have taken place. Top CPT cadres who surrendered stated that Thai government policies played an important part in the decisions of CPT cadres and guerrillas to give up the struggle.<sup>28</sup>

The Thai government spelled out its counterinsurgency program in the directive 66/2523 of 1980, later supplemented by directive 66/2525. The directives stated that the keys to defeating the CPT were continued democratization, an offer of amnesty, assistance to guerrillas wishing to reintegrate themselves into the civilian society, a purge of corrupt and abusive officials

<sup>26</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the Philippines*, prepared by the Congressional Research Service, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985), 8–27.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>28</sup>See the testimony of Udom Siduwar, former member of the CPT Politburo and the highest ranking cadre to surrender, in *Matichon Sutsapda*, Oct. 23, 1983.

from the local bureaucracy, and economic development of the high insurgency regions.

The Thai government and military commanders took a number of steps to implement the program. They also ensured that their measures received substantial publicity at the local level. The long-neglected south experienced an economic surge through road building, widespread electrification, development of tourist facilities, and business investment. General Harn Linanond, Thai army commander for the southern region, closely supervised the provincial governments and local police and strengthened discipline within the army. The government transferred a number of high-ranking policemen from the area. General Harn pushed government programs aimed at supporting Muslim culture in a region with a large Muslim population where Muslim insurgent bands long had operated.<sup>29</sup>

The government also pushed economic development into the CPT strongholds of the northeast. Seventeen development showcase projects were in place in the region by early 1980, affecting generally for the better the lives of several hundred thousand people.<sup>30</sup> The northeast has remained poorer than other parts of Thailand, but the projects served to demonstrate a commitment by the government to improve conditions in the region. This *demonstration of commitment* appears to have had a broader influence than just on the people who benefited materially from the development projects.

The decline of the CPT is one piece of evidence of the government's success. Another is Vietnam's failure, after seven years, to establish a new communist insurgency in the northeast under its auspices. Despite periodic reports of infiltration of Pak Mai personnel from Laos, the Thai communists in Laos apparently have not been able to establish a foothold in the northeast.

The Thai army also applied selective but sometimes intense military pressure on CPT and CPM strongholds. Thai and Malaysian troops have struck at CPM camps in a number of joint operations since 1977. The Thai army also captured CPT base camps and strongholds in a series of operations in the early 1980s. The guerrillas undoubtedly found themselves under more intense pressure in the 1980s than they had felt previously.

The Burmese government has had no similar counterinsurgency strategy. Rangoon relies exclusively on military pressure and offers no amnesty. It refuses to grant autonomy to the ethnic tribes, which if offered and accepted, could isolate the CPB politically and militarily. Rangoon has played the "China card" skillfully against the CPB, however. Steps by the Ne Win regime to improve relations with Beijing no doubt have influenced China's policy of distancing itself from the insurgency.

The Marcos government was particularly ineffective in dealing with the

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<sup>29</sup>Paisah Sricharalchanya, "A Softer Approach," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 23, 1985, 50–51; *Asian Wall Street Journal*, July 16, 1984.

<sup>30</sup>John McBeth, "A Long, Tough March towards Total Security," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Apr. 17, 1986, 30–31.

CPP-led insurgency in the 1980s. The government did little to improve local government and police organizations. Military-civilian relations progressively worsened mainly because of military abuses of civilians and corruption. The government allowed the resources and training of the armed forces to deteriorate. It neglected large regions of the country in economic development programs. The absence of democracy alienated elements of the urban middle and upper classes. All these failures laid fertile ground for the CPP, which was effective in taking advantage of them.

### **The Khmer Rouge**

The case of the Khmer Rouge is unique to the story of guerrilla communism in Asia in the 1980s. As is well known, the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, after winning an insurgency struggle against the pro-American Cambodian government. It then instituted a tyrannical regime, which was responsible for the deaths of 1–3 million people. It broke ties with its former ally, the regime in Hanoi. Vietnam invaded Cambodia at the end of 1978, ousted the Khmer Rouge, and installed its own puppet regime.

Many observers at that time predicted that the Khmer Rouge would disintegrate. It has not fallen apart for several reasons: (1) the well-knit organization and strong, harsh discipline; (2) substantial arms aid from China; (3) access to sanctuaries among the refugee camps on both sides of the Thai-Cambodia border; and (4) some political legitimacy gained through association with the noncommunist Khmer resistance groups in a coalition government that receives wide international recognition as the legal government of Cambodia.

The Khmer Rouge now numbers about fifty thousand. It has made a comeback as a guerrilla force. Thousands have penetrated into Cambodia from the border and carried out numerous ambushes and raids against the Vietnamese since 1983. The Khmer Rouge leadership contends that it has moderated its ideology, but Khmer Rouge coercive practices among the refugee population along the border cast doubt on the claim.

The Khmer Rouge is unlikely to regain exclusive political power. Vietnam would not permit it, and China does not appear to see this as a viable outcome to the Cambodia conflict. The Khmer Rouge primarily is China's instrument to push the Vietnamese out of Cambodia and restore PRC influence in Indochina. Beijing probably will support it until Hanoi comes to terms, and then accept a coalition regime.

In a broader sense, the Khmer Rouge today represents the willingness of China and the Soviet Union to interfere in situations of instability or succession in East Asian communist states. Despite recent, modest improvements in Sino-Soviet relations, Moscow and Beijing undoubtedly view such situations as zero-sum games; a victory for one is a defeat for the other.

<sup>31</sup>Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, 28–49.

## Conclusions

Guerrilla communism in Asia seems to have little future in the traditional form of a Maoist rural insurgency. China is not likely to resume its role of benefactor to such movements. Political trends in China could produce a more orthodox Marxist-Leninist regime after Deng Xiaoping leaves the scene, but such a regime probably would not revert to Maoist radicalism. The communist parties of Malaya, Thailand, and Burma show little prospect of revival. Their movements for years were models of People's War more in name than in fact. This, together with democratic outlets for political expression, stronger and more effective governments, and effective counterinsurgency, represents formidable obstacles to a revival of the insurgencies.

The Philippine insurgency is a different matter. The government of Corazon Aquino appears to have reduced CPP political influence in the major cities through its democratization measures and its attempt to secure a cease-fire and a negotiated settlement. The government's cease-fire policy was popular with the urban middle class even though it failed to produce a settlement. The government has consolidated political support from the more affluent elements in the cities (professionals, civil servants, businessmen, sections of the intelligentsia, and students). The CPP reportedly has acknowledged in its internal documents that its urban front network has been damaged and is no longer completely reliable.<sup>32</sup>

The situation in the countryside is more unsettled. The conditions that fueled insurgency growth remain. The Aquino government has not had a substantial effect on rural poverty. The governmental bureaucracy continues to function poorly in delivering basic services. The land tenure system creates up to 10 million poor landless workers, who are the main recruiting base for the insurgency. Reform of the military has not proceeded far. Local government and law enforcement organs are weak and ineffective. Local officials remain appointed rather than elected and thus are often unpopular.

The strength of the NPA is around twenty four thousand. The CPP has a major political presence in 20 percent of the barangays and some kind of contact with 37 percent, up slightly from 1985.

The insurgency will probably remain on a plateau in 1987 and 1988. It may grow little, but it will not collapse. Developments after that will depend on whether the Aquino government begins to alleviate socioeconomic conditions in the countryside, establishes popular local governments through democratic elections, and improves the effectiveness of local government and the armed forces in counterinsurgency and related functions.

If the government does not succeed in these tasks, the insurgency could start to expand again in the rural areas by 1989. Renewed CPP/NPA growth

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<sup>32</sup>*Business Day* (Manila), Mar. 31, 1987.

also would threaten the government's base of support in the cities because urban opinion probably would turn against the government, and new political opportunities could emerge for the CPP. The current problem of anti-Aquino sentiment in the armed forces no doubt would become even more serious and a threat to the government.

Another element in this situation is whether the CPP/NPA will receive arms from the outside. American officials are concerned that the CPP may receive arms in the future from the Soviet Union, North Korea, and Vietnam. Moscow already is providing money to the May First Movement, the pro-CPP labor union that waged debilitating strikes in 1987. If the CPP/NPA obtained weapons from abroad, the NPA's armed strength could expand rapidly because the manpower for such growth is available. In view of the CPP's effective organization and the NPA's sophisticated tactics, the communists could be expected to use outside aid more effectively than the insurgencies in Thailand and Burma.

The CPP's urban operations may serve as a forerunner of future communist or leftist movements in Asia. Urban-based leftist movements may emerge in several countries as the major political force on the left. Such movements probably would be coalitions of different groups. In contrast to the Philippine situation, they would probably not be identified with communist parties—although individual elements in a broader movement might favor extreme left causes. The urban left could be expected to press for policies that would emphasize income redistribution, more government controls over business and industries, protectionist trade policies, and foreign policies aimed at reducing ties with the United States and improving relations with the Soviet Union. Such movements probably would be more pro-Soviet than pro-China. They would probably receive support and even material assistance from leftist groups in Western countries, which currently are providing large sums of money to the CPP's National Democratic Front in the Philippines.

The rise of large and increasingly diverse urban populaces in East Asian countries would provide the context for the emergence of the urban left. The urban middle and professional classes have become a powerful political force in practically every noncommunist Asian country. This trend will expand in the next decade as urbanization continues and economies advance. These groups will have the greatest power to put political pressure on governments, and they are demonstrating a growing, broad political awareness. The urban, industrial work force is another rapidly growing element that has potential political influence in several East Asian countries. The Christian churches are growing into important institutions in urban South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan. Social activism is a force in the Catholic church and established Protestant denominations active in East Asia (Methodist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ), and this makes them amenable to alliances with, and influence from, political groups on the left.

In assessing prospects for the emergence of the urban left in East Asia

outside the Philippines, one should watch South Korea. The recent disorders in South Korean cities contained elements of urban terrorism that were not widely publicized (attacks on specific targets such as police stations and office buildings), and the radical student left may have the organizational capability to go underground. However, if South Korea succeeds in democratizing over the next few months, such a trend probably will not occur.

Nevertheless, the emergence of a political party on the left is a distinct possibility if South Korea moves into a democratic system. One can find left of center views not only among students but also among intellectuals, church leaders, labor leaders, and members of the Kim Dae Jung faction of the current political opposition. These elements could coalesce, and the current political parties would probably experience divisions and restructuring in a post-Chun Doo Hwan democratic environment.

**Part Eight**  
**Foreign Relations**

# **15. The Dual Character of the Korean Division: Implications for a Korean Settlement**

HAKJOON KIM

This study begins with a comparison of the Korean division with those of three other states divided since World War II: Germany in the West and China and Vietnam (before its reunification in 1975) in Asia. Then it attempts to demonstrate that the Korean division has a dual character; that is, the Korean division is international like the German division on the one hand and national (or civil war) like the Chinese and the Vietnamese divisions on the other hand. The latter aspect of the Korean division, like the Chinese and Vietnamese divisions, represents a problem of Asian nationalism, which (at the risk of simplification) is characterized by a mixture of revolutionary socialism and anti-imperialism.

Despite the dual character of the Korean division, Western major powers have only one approach to this Gordian knot. Because the Korean division is an international division like the German division, they maintain that Germany is a precedent for Korea and attempt to move Korea into a German-style political situation. Hence come the various proposals for the legitimization of the Korean division. The typical proposals include the cross recognition of North and South Korea by the four major powers and the simultaneous admission of the two Koreas into the United Nations. These would lead the two Koreas to a mutual recognition and a conclusion of an agreement stipulating their bilateral relations, thus stabilizing the Korean division.

North Korea seeks to destroy the German-style solution which favors the legitimization of Korean division, while capitalizing on it in order to widen North Korea's own diplomatic relations. The legitimization of Korean division is anathema to North Korea, for whom a Vietnam-style solution, that is, unification through civil war under the name of nationalism, is more attractive, if possible.

South Korea tends to accept a German-style solution, vehemently opposing a Vietnam-style solution. It accepts the necessity of stabilizing the status quo for the time being as a prerequisite to ultimate integration, the goal that cannot be abandoned. However, anti-status quo sentiment is growing among South Korean youth, a trend that has somewhat weakened domestic support for the South Korean government's position.

The contrasts between the status quo and the civil war orientations and between the positions of the two Koreas tell us much about intra-Korean relations. We should admit that any one-sided solution is doomed to fail. A Korean settlement should then be sought that is based on understanding of the dual character of the Korean division.

To clarify the dual character of the Korean division, it is helpful to compare divided states. One massive study devoted to this subject applies the concepts of *divided nations* and *partitioned nations* to eleven cases.<sup>1</sup> My doubts concerning the usefulness of these concepts have led me to compare a more limited sample—the four states divided since World War II.

Professor Kamiya Fuji classified the divided states into *national type* and *international type*.<sup>2</sup> China and Vietnam belong to the national type, in which the origin of the division is civil war and solution depends “on [the two sides] solving national problems by themselves rather than [on] international considerations.” Germany and Korea belong to the international type of division, in which the division was an outcome of international power politics and the international environment heavily influences the relations between the divided parts. Now that there is an international environment that favors détente and peaceful coexistence between East and West, he concludes, the two Germans and the two Koreas should be able to move toward that position themselves.

Such an analysis may be criticized as based on a simplistic, mechanical logic. In order to avoid this, Kamiya admits that “even an ‘international type’ divided nation usually does not actively seek an ‘international type’ solution, but rather the well-off party usually seeks a ‘national type’ solution, denying recognition to the other party as a legitimate nation.” Therefore, he suggests cross recognition of the two parts of the division as a means of stabilizing their mutual relations in accordance with the international type solution, that is, the formula of peaceful coexistence. There are differences between the German division and the Korean division. The most conspicuous of these, according to Kamiya, is the existence of “the postwar aftermath” in Korea. He concludes, “The Koreans should place coexistence above national unification itself on their list of priorities.”

### **The German, Chinese, and Vietnamese Divisions**

Let me go into depth borrowing Kamiya’s concepts. The German division is basically international. There was an avowed intention and prearrangement among the Allied powers to make Germany impotent by means of partition. Since the early 1940s, there had even been Allied plans to dismember

<sup>1</sup>Gregory Henderson et al., *Divided Nations in a Divided World* (New York: David McKay, 1974).

<sup>2</sup>Kamiya Fuji, “On the Problems of Korean Unification,” *Journal of Unification Studies* (Taegu, Korea: Youngnam University) 2, no. 1 (Oct. 1971): 103–12.

Germany into several smaller, independent states, or to turn it back into an agrarian society stripped of industrial capacity (Morgenthau Plan). Germany's western neighbors proposed the annexations of German territory, and the Soviets were preparing to indemnify Poland for the Polish territories they themselves had acquired under the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, allotting Poland German territories beyond the Oder-Neisse line.

Except for this last-mentioned plan, however, neither dismemberment nor annexation took place.<sup>3</sup> The partition of Germany was formally agreed to at the Yalta Conference, and the German Dismemberment Committee was established. The committee agreed that upon the surrender of the Reich, they would assume supreme authority over all Germany, which would be divided into four zones of occupation. Joint control by the four would be exercised by an Allied control council with headquarters in Berlin. For this reason, Berlin would remain outside the zones of occupation and in turn be divided into four sectors; it would be governed by an inter-Allied command.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Germany was the prototype of the division of a state by the major powers through an international agreement.

More important, the Germans accepted the division as inevitable. Most of them realized "that their leadership had been responsible for the outbreak of World War II and that, somehow, they had to pay for it by resigning themselves to loss of territory and partition."<sup>5</sup> They also realized that partition was likely to continue into the indefinite future, and that all they could hope for was an improvement in personal, family, and cultural ties, as well as in trade and economic relations, between the two Germanys. Therefore, at the outset, both sides accepted the status quo. East Germany publicly advocated the doctrine of the *Zweistaaten*, that is, the assumption of the existence of two independent German states, each entitled to international status and recognition. West Germany, despite its "sole representation" claim, that is, its claim to be recognized as the only legitimate German unit and thus entitled to speak for all Germans, limited its territory in the Bonn Basic Law to include West Germany alone, an act that clearly defined West Germany's acceptance of the status quo.<sup>6</sup>

Because of this acceptance of the status quo, when the international atmosphere greatly improved for détente in the early 1970s, the two Germanys could "resolve" their problems, which has led to (1) the exchange of representatives, (2) dual recognition of the two Germanys by other states, (3) dual representation of both Germanys in the diplomatic corps of other

<sup>3</sup>Peter H. Merkle, *German Foreign Policies, West and East: On the Threshold of a New European Era* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: American Bibliographical Center—Clio Press, 1974), 81.

<sup>4</sup>John H. Herz, "Germany," in Henderson et al., *Divided Nations*, 5.

<sup>5</sup>John H. Herz, "Korea and Germany as Divided Nations: The Systemic Impact," *Asian Survey* 15, no. 11 (Nov. 1975): 962.

<sup>6</sup>Herz, "Germany," 9–10.

states, (4) membership for both East and West Germany in the United Nations, and (5) direct trade and tourism between the two systems.<sup>7</sup>

China is the prototype of division caused by a civil war; there is no doubt that the “uneven division”<sup>8</sup> of China resulted from the civil war between the communists and the nationalists. No outside forces intervened in the division of the Chinese. Or we may say that “foreign influence has been less potent in the case of China than in either Germany or Korea.”<sup>9</sup> The Nationalists continue to talk about returning to the mainland, and the communists continue to talk about liberating Taiwan. Each claims to be the sole lawful government and rejects the “two Chinas” solution.<sup>10</sup>

The Chinese situation is the opposite of the German arrangements. Until the middle of 1987, there was virtually no interaction between the two parts. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland still has the policy of stepping up diplomatic pressure on the Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan to make it a nonstate, and of insisting on the PRC’s right to liquidate the ROC by all means, including the use of force, while proposing “a peaceful measure for unification under the one state, two systems formula.”<sup>11</sup>

Vietnam represented a combination of international division and domestic division in which the civil war element, the conflict between Hanoi and Saigon, predominated. Outside forces also intervened in a variety of ways from the time of the Japanese surrender in 1945, thus complicating the situation. The result was a mixture of civil war and a series of international agreements intended to produce a cessation of hostilities through a separation of the two sides.<sup>12</sup> The Geneva Agreement of July 1954 is an example, but it should not be construed as an international agreement originally aimed at the division of Vietnam. It was rather a product of the first Vietnam war, between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, headed by Ho Chi Minh, and France, supported by its associated state of Vietnam headed by the French protégé Bao Dai. The dividing line drawn along the 17th parallel was part of the cease-fire agreement and merely reflected the war situation at that time.

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<sup>7</sup>Yung Wei, “The Unification and Division of Multi-system Nations: A Comparative Analysis of Basic Concepts, Issues, and Approaches,” in Hung dah Chiu and Robert Downen, eds., *Multi-System Nations and International Law: The International Status of Germany, Korea, and China* (Baltimore: School of Law, University of Maryland, 1981), 62.

<sup>8</sup>King-yuh Chang, “Foreign Policy of Unevenly Divided Nations: China,” *Korea and World Affairs* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 21.

<sup>9</sup>Erich Weede, “Reunification in Comparative Perspective,” *Korea and World Affairs* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 99.

<sup>10</sup>Nathaniel B. Thayer, “China: The Formosa Question,” in Henderson et al., *Divided Nations*, 125.

<sup>11</sup>Hungdah Chiu, “The International Law of Recognition and Multi-System Nations—with Special Reference to the Chinese (Mainland—Taiwan) Case,” in Chiu and Downen, *Multi-System Nations and International Law*, 49–50.

<sup>12</sup>Le Thi Tuyet, “Vietnam,” in Chiu and Downen, *Multi-System Nations and International Law*, 129–48.

When the Vietnamese division is seen as a civil war between two regimes contending for the legitimacy of Vietnamese nationalism, it is not surprising that it was ultimately solved through a Vietnamese civil war. North Vietnam, supported by and mobilizing Vietnamese nationalism, defeated through a military revolutionary strategy South Vietnam, maintained by outside forces.

### The Korean Division

A detailed analysis of the Korean division is presented in the first chapter of my book *Unification Policies of South and North Korea*.<sup>13</sup> For present purposes, it is enough to note that the division of Korea represents a combination of international and domestic elements, with the international elements preponderant. However, with the passage of time, the influence of the domestic elements has grown, diluting the international elements to some extent. I call that trend a replacement of external influences by internal influences in the determination of the Korean nation's destiny. Or, we may call it "the Koreanization of the Korean issue."

With the demise of the Korean sovereign nation in August 1910, there emerged a surging nationalism that produced many organized nationalist movements. The movements in turn produced many leaders of diverse temperaments and influences, who represented different ideological orientations. The nationalist leaders therefore lacked unity, a condition that would prove fatal to the achievement of their ultimate goal of winning independence through the efforts of the Koreans themselves.

In retrospect, the most significant division among the nationalist activists was that between the right-wing nationalists and the socialists, or left-wing nationalists. They differed from each other not only in their views on the nature of Japanese imperialism and the methods to be used by the independence movement but also in their long-range vision of the post-Liberation nation-state they were building. At the risk of simplification, it may be said that the right-wing nationalists envisioned a somewhat westernized democratic state with a capitalist economy, while the socialists advocated the establishment of a "people's democratic" government on the basis of a planned economy.

Many of the socialist revolutionaries saw the domestic right-wing nationalist elements as an exploiting class who acted in cooperation with the Japanese colonial authorities. Many rightist leaders held the socialist elements to be dangerous radicals inspired by the doctrine of proletarian dictatorship. The ideological differences were so serious that reconciliation within the Korean nationalist movement was seen by most observers and participants as almost impossible in the colonial period. In this context, we may sympathize with Robinson's persuasive argument that "the present division of Korea can

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<sup>13</sup>*Unification Policies of South and North Korea: A Comparative Study*, rev. ed. (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1986).

be viewed as the continuation of an unresolved nationalist struggle. . . . The origins of this division in ideological terms can be traced to the colonial period."<sup>14</sup> Still, they were united in their vision of an independent and unified Korea.

Contrary to the aspirations of the Korean people for independence, the Allied powers' solution to the Korean problem was the temporary division and military occupation of Korea by the United States and the Soviet Union, an occupation that was to be superseded by a four-power trusteeship. The main thrust of the Allies' scheme was that the trusteeship by the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and Nationalist China should be imposed upon the Korean nation as a prerequisite of the full restoration of Korean sovereignty. I will not discuss this subject here at length.<sup>15</sup> For present purposes, it is sufficient to note that the trusteeship idea, which was to be realized via the Moscow Protocol on Korea in December 1945, itself indicated the beginning of the major powers' long-term involvement in post-Liberation Korea.

The "liberated" Koreans themselves rejected this liberators' solution and attempted to establish a unified, independent Korean government, but their efforts proved futile. First of all, the Koreans became hopelessly disunited. Behind this disunity were the ideological differences inherited from the Korean nationalist movement of the Japanese colonial period. Second, there was severe disharmony among the Allied powers on Korea, particularly between the United States and the Soviet Union, and conflicts between the Koreans and the major powers ensued. These factors in combination finally led to the establishment in Korea of two rival, hostile regimes in 1948. The Republic of Korea (ROK) was proclaimed in the south on August 15, 1948, through an election observed by the United Nations, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was declared in the north on September 9, 1948.

Despite the establishment of the two separate regimes, all Koreans rejected the permanence of the division and "were united in their urgent desire for an early reunification."<sup>16</sup> Each regime asserted its claim to be the sole representative of all Koreans. The ROK steadfastly refused to extend official recognition to the communist regime in the DPRK, as well as to the DPRK as an entity, avoiding even the term "DPRK" and referring to the area in

<sup>14</sup>Michael Robinson, "Ideological Schism in the Korean Nationalist Movement, 1923–1930: Cultural Nationalism and the Political Critique," *Journal of Korean Studies*, 4 (1982–83): 268.

<sup>15</sup>For the traditional point of view on the trusteeship idea, see Soon Sung Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940–1950: An Evaluation of American Responsibility* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 29–58; for the revisionist point of view, see Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), chap. 4.

<sup>16</sup>Robert R. Simmons, *The Strained Alliance: Peking, P'yongyang, Moscow, and the Politics of the Korean Civil War* (New York: Free Press, 1975), 103.

question as the “enemy area occupied illegally by an antistate organization” or later the “north side.” Under the Korean version of the Hallstein doctrine, the ROK tried to compel the rest of the world not to recognize the North Korean establishment. To the ROK, North Korea was an area to be liberated from “Soviet enslavement and its puppet North Korean communists” and the DPRK was an object to be destroyed. Syngman Rhee (Yi Süng-man), the then president of the ROK, declared publicly that his government was ready to march north for that purpose and termed the future campaign a “holy war against the communist devil.”

The DPRK termed its southern counterpart a “colony ruled by the American imperialists.” Declaring in its constitution that Seoul, the capital of the ROK, was the DPRK’s capital, the Pyongyang regime made it clear that southern Korea, “an integral part of the DPRK,” should be liberated from “the American imperialists and their hirelings” by the northern Korean People’s Army and termed the pending campaign “a war of national liberation.” As a result of this mutual hostility, the Korean peninsula was tense with the threat of civil war.

The Korean War should be seen in this context. There is no doubt that North Korea, with the blessing of the Soviet Union, capitalized on the American troop withdrawal in 1949 and anticipated an American decision to refrain from military involvement in Korea (Dean Acheson’s Speech of 1950 was evidence for such an assumption) when it initiated the conflict on June 25, 1950. Therefore, full responsibility for starting this internecine war should be attributed to the North Korean leadership. However, it is hard to deny that “the war was the culmination of a basic struggle between Left and Right that began with Korea’s liberation in 1945, or perhaps back in the 1920s,” when serious ideological differences became manifest.<sup>17</sup> At the risk of repetition, all this shows the civil war character of the Korean War and of the division of Korea.

However, the Korean War could not remain a simple civil war. The intersection of the interests of the major powers in this strategically crucial peninsula inevitably and immediately produced outside intervention. This first came from the United States. Likening the North Korean aggression to Hitler’s invasion of Poland, President Truman believed that Stalin’s aggression, if not checked in Korea, would extend to other parts of the globe, as had Hitler’s step-by-step expansions. Therefore, he decided to intervene in the Korean War, and successfully mobilized the United Nations to support the cause of the United States and the ROK.

At this time, the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) was created to assist in bringing about the establishment of a unified, independent, and democratic government of all

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<sup>17</sup>Frank Baldwin, “Introduction,” in Harold J. Noble, *Embassy at War* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), xvi.

Korea through elections to be held throughout Korea under its auspices. The United Nations and ROK forces drove the North Korean forces across the 38th parallel and finally marched to the Sino-Korean border at the Yalu River. The unification of Korea on South Korean terms seemed at hand.

At this point, however, the PRC intervened by sending its "volunteers." In late October and early November of 1950, as we know, the North Korean regime was saved by Chinese intervention from total collapse. Then came stalemate, which finally led to the Korean Armistice Agreement concluded in July 1953. The whole sequence of events demonstrates the other side of the Korean problem, that is, its inevitable international character.

The Geneva Conference was convened in 1954 to deal with Korea, as well as with Indochina, but the delegates could not reach agreement on Korea. This nineteen-power conference served only to demonstrate the sharp, irreconcilable differences between the two opposing sides. The ROK and its allies attempted to internationalize the issue by arguing that the United Nations should have a primary role in bringing about a settlement and that United Nations forces should be stationed in Korea until a unified Korean government had been created through elections to be held under United Nations supervision. North Korea, the Soviet Union, and China attempted to nationalize the issue by rejecting categorically the role of the United Nations and its forces. The only formula agreeable to them was one in which Koreans would be left to solve their own problems free from "outside interference." Thus, according to them, all foreign troops had to withdraw from Korea simultaneously, before elections, which would be held under an "all-Korean Commission."<sup>18</sup>

### **International Recognition of the Two Koreas**

After the breakdown of the Geneva Conference, relations between North and South Korea remained frozen, and there was no movement to improve relations between them. Rather, the two Korean sides had made their territories more or less self-sufficient by the end of the 1960s. The result was a sharp decrease in the former interdependence between the industrial north and the agricultural south. The division was in effect being frozen internally, thus turning the call for peaceful reunification into mere rhetoric or at best the articulation of a distant prospect.

At the same time, this domestic situation became internationalized; that is, in the 1960s, there was a steady increase in the number of states, particularly among the Afro-Asian neutrals, that tended to accept the existence of the two "sovereign" states in the Korean peninsula as an accomplished fact. Still, each side refused to accept the other as a negotiating partner. Each claimed that it alone represented the whole Korean nation and peninsula and pursued a

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<sup>18</sup>See chap. 5, section B, of my *Unification Policies of South and North Korea*.

policy whose aim was to incorporate the other into its own system. Under such circumstances, it was impossible for any dialogue, discussion, or negotiation to evolve.

By the 1970s, this abnormal situation could not continue any longer. A new configuration of power had developed among the United States, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and Japan in East Asia, a configuration that has been called the "quadrilateral balance"; this, and the period of détente that ensued, dramatically changed the external environment of the Korean problem. Since the Korean peninsula is the only place in the world where the four major powers come into intimate contact, it is not surprising that the shifting balance and changing pattern of relations among them had a profound effect upon the Korean problem.

However, it should not be forgotten that the Korean problem itself seldom occupies center stage in international political debates. Historical and diplomatic records tell us that this matter has usually been at the periphery of the issues dealt with by the major powers in working out their compromises; a tacit Korean agreement has usually been one of the by-products of efforts to reduce tension in great power relations. The Korean scene in the early 1970s substantiated this fact. In the process of realignment among the four major powers, Korea was reconsidered, and as a result, the attitudes of the powers toward Korea changed.

Although some may disagree, there exists a consensus that it was the United States that initiated a whole series of international changes in the early 1970s. With the advent of the Nixon administration and its Guam doctrine in 1969, the United States pursued a policy of détente with the Soviet Union and a substantial improvement of its relations with the PRC. Both the Soviet Union and China responded favorably to the American initiative. China, in particular, surprised the world by seeking rapprochement with her erstwhile arch-enemy—"American imperialism."

The Sino-American rapprochement was "the most important international event of the 1970s."<sup>19</sup> It induced the Soviet Union to increase its flexibility toward United States détente policy, as well as assisting in the reestablishment of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations in 1972. The Soviet Union, out of fear of a possible Sino-American alliance, attempted to woo the United States by showing increasingly cooperative attitudes. Japan, while following the lead of the American initiative, wanted to join the China bandwagon to avoid being isolated from the new international trend.

Regarding the Korean problem, there were at least two important developments in this period. One was the PRC's replacement of Taiwan in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council in 1971, which meant an increased role for Beijing, a North Korean ally, in international diplomatic

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<sup>19</sup>Roderick MacFarquhar, "Preface," in Roderick MacFarquhar, ed., *Sino-American Relations, 1949-1971* (New York: Praeger, 1972), xix.

negotiations dealing with the Korean problem, in general, and in the traditional annual debates on Korea at the United Nations, in particular. The other, and more serious development was a substantial change in the American attitude toward the Korean problem.

The United States, in an effort to relax tension on the Korean peninsula, changed its long-standing policy of nonrecognition of North Korea sufficiently to allow North Korea to be treated at least as a partner with which to negotiate. Implicit in the changed American policy was the notion of "the existence of two Koreas." This new concept, in turn, influenced the other major powers to adopt a "two Koreas policy" and thus to reinforce a trend that had already been implied in their Korea policies, though latently. To summarize, the four major powers all moved in the early 1970s in the direction of recognizing the division of Korea.

Why was this the case? At the risk of simplification, my answer is that they became interested in eradicating or at least reducing the dangers posed by the unsolved Korean problem: (1) the danger of incidents arising from the close positioning of armed forces on the two sides; (2) the danger of an increase in general tensions, which could nullify détente and jeopardize the attainment of a "structure of durable peace" among the major powers; (3) the possible action by the Koreans themselves to fulfill Korean interests as they saw them; and (4) the possibility, particularly from the Sino-Soviet point of view, that tensions on the Korean peninsula might provide an excuse for the Japanese rightists to go nuclear. In sum, the four major powers sought a relaxation of tensions in Korea; and in order to institutionalize this relaxation, they attempted to legitimate the division of Korea. To attain that end, various proposals were advanced publicly by the governments and legislatures, and in the academic and journalistic circles of the four major powers.<sup>20</sup>

Against this backdrop, a North-South dialogue has been maintained intermittently since July 4, 1972, thus moving the case of the two Koreas to somewhere in between that of the two Germanys and the two Chinas. Although the "détente" between the two Koreas has not significantly reduced hostility between them, it has led to dual recognition and dual representation of the two Korean governments in at least sixty-seven countries.<sup>21</sup> Yet North Korea once contemplated applying a Vietnam-style solution to the South. Seeing the fall of Indochina to the communists, Kim Il Sung made an unusual trip to China in April 1975 with high hopes of obtaining Chinese support for his South Korean revolutionary strategy. However, the Chinese leaders were cautious about making commitments to their guest.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>For detail, see chap. 8, section A, of my *Unification Policies of South and North Korea*.

<sup>21</sup>Wei, "Unification and Division," 63.

<sup>22</sup>Young, C. Kim, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1975," *Asian Survey* 19, no. 1 (Jan. 1976): 83.

## Conclusion

The Korean problem has two faces: domestic or intranational, and international. The international issue weighs more heavily than the domestic issue. In other words, the influence of outside forces has been greater than that of domestic forces in determining the fate of the Korean nation. Professor Soon Sung Cho has concluded that "the Korean reunification issue is closely tied to the changing pattern of Asian relations."<sup>23</sup>

However, it should be pointed out that despite their role as stimuli, international influences have so far failed to produce any enduring amelioration of the Korean problem. Why? Conventional wisdom concentrates its explanations upon North Korean obduracy. North Korea's dogmatism, that is, its revolutionary approach to unification, is said to have obstructed any movement toward gradual improvement of the North-South relationship or toward the legitimation of the division, which can be the basis for peaceful integration. Soviet and Chinese hesitancy to accept the cross-recognition formula is also explained as stemming from North Korea's obstinate refusal to recognize the status quo. South Korea is seen as being ready to accept legitimation of the division.

I do not argue against this line of analysis. Rather, I argue that conventional wisdom fails to point out another factor that makes most international formulas futile and that is a crucial weakness inherent in the international proposals whose starting point is the two Koreas concept; that is, they fail to appreciate nationalist sentiment. Their basic orientation is denationalization of the Korean unification issue, an attempt to dilute the nationalist zeal that permeates the issue, at least as seen by North Koreans and some South Koreans. They emphasize the need to make Korean nationalism the supreme goal, even if this should entail a civil or revolutionary war.

From this comes the powerful and implacable opposition to any recognition of the status quo that characterizes such nationalists. They see international proposals to legitimate the Korean division as the kiss of death to Korean nationalism, a permanent curse on the Korean nation. This is understandable in the context of Korean history. Both the division of Korea in 1945 and the involvement of Korea in the cold war were not the result of wishes and voluntary actions of the Korean people but an outcome forced upon them by international power relations. As a consequence, in the words of Hongkoo Lee, "There always exists [among Koreans] a built-in resentment and suspicion toward anything international insofar as it is concerned with the solution of Korean problems."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup>Soon Sung Cho, "The Changing Pattern of Asian International Relations: Prospects for the Unification of Korea," *Journal of International Affairs* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1973): 231.

<sup>24</sup>Hongkoo Lee, "World Peace and Intra-System Confrontation: The Politics and Dialectics of Korean Unification," *Journal of Unification Studies* 5 (Dec. 1976): 52.

Nationalism in Europe can be understood in relation to, or in contrast with, internationalism or regionalism. Nationalism in Asia has no relation to either regionalism or internationalism, because of the lack of a heritage or system of international law. What characterizes nationalism in Asia is a strong sense of resistance to international intervention in domestic affairs. Korean nationalism is explicitly and visibly opposed to outside intervention in the context of an international environment that is without system and without legal norms.<sup>25</sup>

Even in South Korea—in contrast to North Korea, where xenophobia and resistance to outside forces have been meticulously instilled in the population—internationalism has prevailed and nationalism has frequently been suppressed. The result is that now we see frequent surges of nationalism. In South Korea, where pro-American sentiment is traditionally strong, anti-American feelings are growing steadily among the students, particularly since the Kwangju incident of 1980. Evidence for this is found in the incendiary attack on the Pusan branch of the United States International Communication Agency in March 1982 and in the anti-American student demonstrations when Vice-President George Bush visited Seoul in May 1982, when students were arrested for burning an American flag.<sup>26</sup> There have been many subsequent events, moreover. Such rising nationalist sentiments in South Korea are already working against the two Koreas concept.

Professor Gari K. Ledyard of Columbia University once deplored the lack of appreciation of Korean nationalism on the part of Americans:

The depth of the Korean need for unification is not sufficiently appreciated by many Americans, who realize neither the tremendous force of what Koreans like to call their 5,000 years of history, nor the emotional pain of a people unable to transmit their full national legacy to their children. Americans, seemingly more pragmatic, might consider that half a country saved from communism is better than none, and that economic development and the material enrichment of Korean life are not only as important if not more important than unification, but actually attainable.<sup>27</sup>

My stress on the importance of Korean nationalism is not meant as an argument for an overnight leap to national unification, which is impossible. Rather, I have taken the position that any movement toward unification by peaceful means will have to come in very gradual stages and that the most that can be realistically expected in the foreseeable future is a reduction of

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>For an assessment of the rising anti-Americanism in South Korea, see Dae Sook Suh, "South Korea in 1982: A Centennial Year," *Asian Survey* 23, no. 1 (Jan. 1983): 95–97.

<sup>27</sup>Gari K. Ledyard, "To Dream the Impossible Dream: Korean Unification," in Academy of Korean Studies and the Wilson Center, *Reflections on a Century of United States–Korean Relations: Conference Papers (June 1982)* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983), 229.

military tensions and a tortuous movement toward coexistence.<sup>28</sup> But I would like to emphasize that we should make a differentiation between a de facto coexistence and a de jure two Koreas arrangement. The first would leave the door open for moves toward unification; the second would appear to freeze the division in its present form indefinitely. If we adopt the first, it should clearly be linked to projected steps in the direction of unification. And if we do not, to cite the words of Selig J. Harrison, "It will not be easy for external powers to promote two-Korea arrangements after the German model."<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, it is my view that South Korea's proposal for national unification, on January 22, 1982, was a great forward step. Professor Ledyard, who has usually been critical of South Korea's unification stance, asserted that "South Korea's recent unification proposal is much more substantial, structured, and detailed than any other southern proposal has ever been."<sup>30</sup> South Korea for the first time projected the future vision or image of a unified Korean state, that is, a unified democratic republic of Korea based on four principles of nationalism, democracy, liberty, and individual well-being, although, as Ledyard notes, it "wisely postpones the question of the name of the unified entity."<sup>31</sup>

Now northern and southern proposals approach each other in enunciating the paramount importance of national unification as a goal while at the same time upholding the ideal of accommodating diversity. North Korea acknowledges the need for the coexistence of separate social and economic systems, and South Korea calls for a unified constitution but an interim separation of the two states with mutual exchange of "liaison offices" and other forms of intercommunication. Of course differences still exist, which Ledyard summarizes deftly: "The South's plan in general is more concrete in details and stages. . . . The North's plan has a cleaner and more general sweep. It wants to create a unified entity first, then arrange the details. The South wants to begin with gestures and tokens, build up to step-by-step exchanges, have both sides recognize each other, and some day end up unified."<sup>32</sup>

Still, the real problem lies not in the differences expressed in unification policies or formulas, but in the differences in the two sides' views of the unification issue as a whole. North Korea sees the issue fundamentally as an intranational one in which outside forces have no voice at all; South Korea

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<sup>28</sup>For this point, see also Selig J. Harrison, *The Widening Gulf: Asian Nationalism and American Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 365.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ledyard, "To Dream," 240.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 241.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

sees it as one to be solved among the two Koreas and the major powers. As Professor Sung Chul Yang expresses it, "The current stalemate between the two continues, while South Korea's 'peace first and reunification next' policy and north Korea's 'foreign force out and reunification talks' policy persist without leeway for compromise."<sup>33</sup>

Can this stalemate be broken? As I contended earlier, the Korean unification issue, with the passage of time, has been increasingly a bone of contention between Pyongyang and Seoul. The systemic development of the two Koreas has increased each side's veto power over any proposal that it deems unfavorable to itself. This is why many proposals from the international community have met with frustration.

The foregoing analysis leads to the following rather familiar conclusion. The historical mandate for effecting reintegration of the Korean people stems from the Korean sense of nationalism. It is through a Korean nationalism that bonds the Korean people together and eschews violence that we can achieve unification. It is in the spirit of Korean nationalism that leaders and institutions in both societies with vested interests in perpetuating their own power and prestige must sacrifice their ambitions. In awareness of these conditions, Professor Cho concludes:

Consequently, unification largely depends on a sense of patriotism, devotion, and sincerity from the leaders of both countries. If everyone is ready to make some sacrifices for the great cause of unification of the fatherland, such a union could be achieved in a fairly short period of time. . . . If the leaders are not sincerely ready to make sacrifices there is a real danger of consolidating the division of Korea rather than achieving reunification.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, it should be stressed that, in the terms of Professor B. C. Koh, "the Korean peninsula remains a tinderbox of potentially catastrophic conflagration."<sup>35</sup> Under such circumstances, reunification remains only a distant possibility. Therefore, the urgent task for the two Koreas at present is to normalize their mutual relations.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Sung Chul Yang, "Korean Reunification: Autism and Realism," *Korea and World Affairs* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 68.

<sup>34</sup>Cho, "Changing Pattern," 230.

<sup>35</sup>B. C. Koh, "North Korea, 1976: Under Stress," *Asian Survey* 17, no. 1 (Jan. 1977): 61.

<sup>36</sup>For this point, see Guy Hicks, "Toward a Truce in the Korean Cold War," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 18, 1984.

## 16. Ideology, Populism, and Statecraft: The Mix in Asian Communist Foreign Policies

ROBERT A. SCALAPINO

Shortly after the October Revolution, Lenin proclaimed that one fundamental task of the new Bolshevik government was the victory of socialism in all countries.<sup>1</sup> Although this precept was to be modified shortly by the priority given to the achievement of socialism in one country (the USSR), it continued to be a principle to which homage was paid, and one incorporated in varying degree into Soviet policies. Correspondingly, other communist states have had to conjure with their moral obligation to those who, under a variety of names, belong to the global society of Marxist-Leninist believers. Asian communist regimes constitute no exception. Despite the absence of any substantial proletariat (unless one counts agricultural toilers), Asian communist parties took special pains from the outset to identify their cause with that of the workers of the world.

This identification produced two initial results. One was the acceptance of a political order transcending the nation-state, based upon class rather than nationality. And because the Soviet Union was the motherland of the global proletariat, it was natural to accord to it leadership of the new order. One should not denigrate the idealism underlying the cosmopolitan beliefs of many of the young Asian intellectual Marxists of the 1920s and thereafter. Cosmopolitanism, to be sure, had Asian roots in Confucian doctrines. The distinction between the civilized man and the barbarian did not rest upon ethnicity or nationality. Both Confucianism and Marxism, moreover, had their moral underpinnings in a broadly based humanism, in theory if not in practice. For Asia, however, the daring aspect of Marxism-Leninism in its early phases lay in the challenge it posed to "narrow nationalism," notwithstanding the decision to use nationalism in the form of a multi-class united front to combat imperialism. It is not a distortion to state that in its quest for universality, Asian Marxism picked up the uncompleted task of Confucian-

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<sup>1</sup>For one prominent expression of his views on the obligations of the Bolshevik Party to the global revolution, see Lenin's draft entitled "Declaration of Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People," *Sobranie Uzakonei, 1917-1918*, no. 15, Jan. 1918, art. 215.

ism, but with Moscow not Beijing the designated center of the civilized world.

A second result of ideological commitment was the willingness to share resources—even meager resources—with others of like faith. It should be emphasized that first the Soviets, then various Asian communist governments, perceived themselves in strongly defensive terms, beleaguered societies under the imminent threat of predatory capitalism. By the time that they came to power, Asian communist leaders had taken to heart the Leninist injunction that to aid revolutionary movements in colonies or client states of the West was to strike at the soft capitalist underbelly. As Zhou Enlai once put it when speaking of the proper strategy toward the United States, by fomenting many revolutions, Marxists could create a host of jumping fleas, and in trying to keep its fingers on various fleas, the United States would lose them all and in the process weaken itself.

### **The PRC—Ideology in Decline**

The Chinese communists had an advantage in interacting with certain revolutionary movements, notably those in agrarian societies, because they could offer a model of revolutionary success employing a mobilized peasantry to encircle the cities. Thus, many of the Southeast Asian revolutionary movements gravitated for a time toward “Maoism,” and in turn, acquired not only material but also ideological and organizational assistance from the Chinese.<sup>2</sup> In the final analysis, however, what is striking is the limited applicability of the Chinese revolutionary experience, even to societies that at least superficially appeared to have a similar socioeconomic structure. The farmers proved enormously difficult to mobilize in such societies as Burma and Thailand where rural economic conditions were relatively good, social cohesion fairly strong, the power of religion significant, and traditional institutions such as monarchy (or its facsimile) still vibrant. Rebellions could more easily fly religious or ethnic banners, and indeed, ethnicity became the critical factor at certain points in the communist movements of Malaysia and Burma, exhibiting a strong influence within the Thai Communist Party as well.

Where urban intellectuals retained communist leadership, moreover, as in the Philippines and Thailand, the influence of traditional techniques—many derived from Soviet teaching—vied with new revolutionary approaches. In more developed societies, including all of those in the West, the appeal of Maoism was restricted to a relatively small band of intellectuals wholly

<sup>2</sup>Among the many articles and monographs dealing with China's policies toward Southeast Asia in the earlier period, see Jay Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia—Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements*, expanded ed. (New York: Praeger, 1976); King C. Chen, *Vietnam and China, 1938–1954* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969); and Melvin Gurtov, *China and Southeast Asia—the Politics of Survival* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

removed from the working classes, self-indulgently luxuriating in utopian dreams. With the Chinese Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, their visions were shattered, and with very few exceptions, they faded away.

The Sino-Soviet split and events within China during the 1960s also greatly affected PRC ideological influence in the so-called Third World, including neighboring Asian states. The fierce rivalry between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) split many communist movements. Initially, Beijing was able to mobilize a number of Asian communist parties in opposition to Khrushchev's policies, including those of North Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia. For the first time, international communism exhibited regional divisions reflective of both the cultural differences among societies harboring communist movements and the rough geographic boundaries of Soviet and Chinese influence. But the Chinese expended their ideological capital quickly in the course of the ensuing Cultural Revolution. The highly ethnocentric nationalism of the late Maoist period combined with the excesses in policies and group behavior to alienate foreign communists as well as others. Meanwhile, cumulative evidence of involvement in revolutionary movements dedicated to the overthrow of existing Asian governments severely damaged the Chinese image, running counter to the five principles of coexistence so carefully cultivated by Zhou Enlai at Bandung and elsewhere. New governments in Burma and Indonesia as well as elsewhere in Southeast Asia came to regard China as their most serious threat.

Thus, by the 1970s, Chinese leaders were confronted with the fact that efforts to extend China's ideological influence abroad ran counter to China's state interests. The result was a dramatic reduction in proselytization and aid to foreign revolutionary movements. Deng Xiaoping has insisted that the CCP must continue to exhibit "moral support" to fraternal parties, and in the aftermath of Sino-Soviet rapprochement, party-to-party relations have been restored with a sizable number of communist parties, especially in the West, but active Chinese support for revolution has largely ceased. Radio transmitters on Chinese soil purporting to be situated in various Southeast Asian countries and voicing communist revolutionary messages have been transferred to indigenous bases or closed. The training of revolutionaries in China or abroad has largely ended. Economic and military aid to insurrectionary forces has ceased except for the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia (against a rival communist faction) and to the noncommunist Mujahedeen in Afghanistan. If foreign revolutionaries visit the PRC or live in exile there, they do so discreetly and their activities are generally unpublicized. Only a few exceptions can be discerned, relating to safe causes such as the Palestinians and South African blacks.

Even more instructive is the caution with which the Chinese party and state treat revolutionary movements in nations with which they seek good relations. The current theme is "revolutions cannot be exported." A recent

striking example is to be found in an article on the Indonesian elections published in the internationally circulated journal *Beijing Review*.<sup>3</sup> The authors, speaking of Suharto's twenty-year rule, after noting that he and the army have exercised control "with absolute power and made significant economic progress," write matter-of-factly about the execution of nine former leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party, the forced retirement of 3,500 officials suspected of having communist contacts, and the dismissal of 1,700 oil miners for the same reason. After a few other factual points, they conclude an evaluation of Suharto with the comment "These steps are believed to have divided and weakened the dissident groups, pacified his followers, and improved his public image." End of article!

The decline of the ideological weapon in Chinese foreign policy and of the effort to exercise revolutionary leadership is naturally related to the tumultuous upheaval in China itself over the past two decades. When Maoism is under recurrent assault in China and a not insignificant portion of the intellectual vanguard is agnostic toward Marxism-Leninism, the central leadership must concentrate upon restoring their values at home. There is little possibility of engaging in missionary work abroad. Thus, Deng and others repeatedly open campaigns to shore up faith, with the hope that new generations can be brought back to the fold. After various retreats, the ideological defense line is currently drawn in front of "the four cardinal principles"—party leadership, following the socialist road, dictatorship of the proletariat, and Marxism—Leninism—Mao Zedong thought. Of these, the socialist road and party leadership are critical. Evoking the appeal that stability and unity are necessary for further progress, China's current leaders insist these can only be achieved under a one-party dictatorship and socialism "with Chinese characteristics." Thus, on occasions, they have attacked the demands for greater intellectual freedom and genuine political competition as manifestations of "bourgeois liberalization."

But can the present defense line be held? Partly as a result of massive mistakes and the corruption innate to the Leninist system and partly as a product of the recent political relaxation, a crisis of legitimacy exists for Chinese communism. Indeed, party elders admit this in acknowledging the need for political reform even as they seek to combat liberalism. Moreover, the rejection of "Western values" is not intended to interfere with a continued "turning out" for science and technology, illustrating a hundred-year-old Chinese dilemma.<sup>4</sup>

As noted earlier, the contradictions and unresolved ideological problems

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<sup>3</sup>Li Yongmin and Shu Hai, "Golkar Expects Landslide Victory," *Beijing Review*, May 4, 1987, 11–12.

<sup>4</sup>For an effort to balance the need for accelerating economic reform with the call for political stability and unity, see Zhao Ziyang's speech of March 25, 1987, at the fifth session of the Sixth National People's Congress, reproduced in *Beijing Review*, Apr. 20, 1987, III–XX. See also a printing of Deng Xiaoping's speech of Feb. 6, 1962, entitled "Deng Xiaoping on Democratic Centralism," *ibid.*, Apr. 27, 1987, 23–26.

at home are paralleled in the diverse attitudes displayed toward various political systems abroad. If extreme caution is exercised in criticizing the ideological underpinnings of any of the ASEAN states, less care was taken with the Chun Doo Hwan government of South Korea. Chun was castigated for *not* pursuing bourgeois liberalization even as his rival, Kim Il Sung, was praised for leading the North Korean people forward to economic growth (in the face of incontrovertible evidence to the contrary).<sup>5</sup> No public criticism of Kim's dynastic succession scenario or other aspects of the political order in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is allowed, moreover, despite the widespread private Chinese distaste for the North Korean regime.

Generally speaking, party-to-party relations are meaningful only where they abet or do not interfere with state-to-state relations. Thus, in the aftermath of limited Sino-Soviet rapprochement, such ties have been reopened with the East European parties, although withheld thus far in the case of Moscow. Ties with West European communist parties have also been reestablished; because these parties are committed to parliamentarianism, this does not threaten Chinese relations with the states of the region.

In sum, the ideological component of Chinese foreign policy has been strictly subordinated today to a sense of national interest. When used, ideological identifications are testimony to that fact. Thus, the Soviet Union, once labeled a social imperialist or even fascist state, has been reestablished as a socialist society, and Gorbachev's reform efforts are treated sympathetically. Support is given to the East European governments without exception. Greatest interest has perhaps been shown in Hungary because of its economic reforms, but the independence exhibited by Romania has been the object of praise, notwithstanding its Stalinist politics. Movements like Solidarity garner no official support; that type of protest strikes too close to home. In general, however, no distinction is made between the "progressive" and the "conservative" socialist regimes of Eastern Europe insofar as political support is concerned. The prevailing thesis is that each is developing socialism in accordance with its own special characteristics.

Political judgment is either positive or suspended on Third World states, from the most repressive to the most liberal. This suggests that PRC leaders have substituted stage of development for class in applying Marxism. Third World or developing states constitute "the global proletariat" of which China is a part. Thus, differences among them are at most contradictions within the people, not between the people and their enemies. There are exceptions—namely, China's enemies. The Vietnamese are "hegemonists." The Heng Samrin government in Phnom Penh is a puppet regime, as is the Kabul

<sup>5</sup>For recent treatment of South Korean political developments, see Gao Haorong, "Unrest Follows Chun's About-Face," *Beijing Review*, North American ed., May 18, 1987, 12–13. Compare this with Li Nengqing, "DPRK—Rapid Development of Agriculture," *Beijing Review*, May 25, 1987, 10, and Guo Zhongshi, "Korean Leader Cements Friendship with China," *China Daily*, May 25, 1987.

government. Thus, there can be “bad socialists.” Indeed, China’s principal problems at present are precisely with “bad socialists,” and that seems likely to continue into the indefinite future, given the geopolitics of Asia.

The old ideological analysis of global capitalism is more qualified in current Chinese writings and speeches; the element of inevitability is subdued. To be sure, the current difficulties of capitalist economies are set forth, partly as an indication to the Chinese people that socialism—at least Chinese-style socialism—will ultimately be superior.<sup>6</sup> Yet there are enough exhortations to study the methods employed by Japan, other advanced nations, and the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) to offset such criticisms. The economic model for the younger Chinese elites is rarely the USSR or other socialist societies—a fact for which the government itself bears considerable responsibility. Meanwhile, in criticizing the United States, PRC leaders usually place the emphasis upon America as superpower (along with the USSR), not as symbol of capitalism.

### North Korea—Ideological Redoubt

Despite the periodic influence of China upon North Korea’s socialist development, the contrasts between the two societies are more prominent than the similarities at present, and the differences stand out most sharply in the role of ideology in the two societies. The public speeches of DPRK leaders and the contents of such publications as *Kulloja*, *Rodong Simmun*, and other party or government organs are dominated by ideological exhortations to an extent that can only be described as numbing. The key themes, endlessly repeated, are utterly simple. As is well known, the centerpiece is *chuch’e*, probably best translated as “self-reliance.” Spinning out the ramifications of *chuch’e* is a full-time occupation for a substantial number of North Korean intellectuals.<sup>7</sup> In essence, these can be summarized as independence in foreign policy, self-reliance in domestic development, and the cultivation of an ironclad unity under the great leader, Kim Il Sung, and the dear leader, Kim Jong Il, his son and heir.

Spokesmen of the DPRK do not hesitate to define North Korea as an ideal society, a paradise on earth. In recent times, the *blood ties* between the people and the party—and the people and the leader—have been stressed, with the assertion that the current legacy will be passed from generation to

<sup>6</sup>A relatively balanced account of economic trends in the West, but one outlining the multiple problems, is Huang Su’an, “General Economic Trend of the Western World for the Next Decade,” *Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs Journal*, Mar. 1987, 33.

<sup>7</sup>From among the countless expositions of *chuch’e*, see such recent articles as “The Loftiness of Our Party’s Mission Is an Important Source of the Popular Masses’ Trust in the Party,” *Rodong Simmun*, Jan. 31, 1987; Ch’oe Chong-hyon, “The Revolutionary Principle Elucidated by the Chuche Ideology,” *Kulloja*, Nov. 1985; Son Yong-kyu, “The Chuche Theory of Revolution Is a Mighty Theory of Revolution Protecting the Interests of the Popular Masses and Enhancing Their Role,” *ibid.*, Oct. 1986.

generation—a theme that helps to underwrite the dynastic succession now in place.<sup>8</sup> Paradoxes do creep into the overall presentation. Individuals are urged to develop their potentialities to the fullest without an explanation of how this can be done through monolithic unity. The DPRK is proclaimed a firm supporter of the international socialist community despite the numerous manifestations of xenophobic nationalism and an exclusiveness playing upon the uniqueness of the Korean system. In an effort to bridge the gap, North Korean writers indicate that a true international socialist community should be composed of wholly independent societies developing in their separate ways, communicating with each other as equals.

Admissions of shortcomings, in contrast to the trend in other communist states, are scarce and almost always set forth indirectly. Yet by reading between the lines, one finds familiar weaknesses: excessive bureaucratism, elitist privilege and corruption, and numerous economic deficiencies. To an unprecedented extent, institutions and issues have been personalized for the masses through the most extensive cult of personality in modern times. The elder Kim is proclaimed the source of all that is moral, beneficial, and correct—the Great Sun of the Korean nation. The younger Kim is pronounced a genius under whose warm guidance future progress is assured. Indeed, the male heads of the Kim family for at least four generations are credited with the political acumen and activities that make this family the legitimate leaders of the entire Korean people for the indefinite future. Never has monarchy been so clearly combined with select Marxist-Leninist themes and practices.

An intriguing question is whether the Korean communist leaders have been able to do something as yet unaccomplished by other communists—namely, to create and sustain New Socialist Men or, at a minimum, a nation of true believers. Such evidence as is available suggests that an overwhelming percentage of the DPRK population is loyal to the system and leadership. Are surface manifestations contradicted by inner feelings? In any case, what cannot be measured is the part played by coercion and that played by persuasion. And how brittle might the allegiance be if the citizenry were confronted by the real world in greater measure? Obviously, these questions have implications for DPRK foreign as well as domestic policies.

An ideology such as that propagated in North Korea does not travel well. When DPRK authorities first took out full-page advertisements in prominent and not-so-prominent newspapers throughout the world to spread Kim Il Sung's doctrines, the reactions ranged from mirth to incredulity. To discuss Kim Il Sungism with Soviet or Chinese intellectuals is generally to provoke a rolling of the eyes if the discussant can be trusted. And yet, efforts persist to parlay ideology into a weapon forwarding North Korean foreign policy.

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<sup>8</sup>For example, see "Our Party Is an Ever-Victorious Party Inheriting the Paektu Revolutionary Spirit," *Rodong Sinmun*, Feb. 13, 1987.

Regularly, announcements are made of the meetings of study groups or special lectures throughout the world devoted to probing the inner significance of *chuch'e*, the essence of Kim Il Sungism, or the wisdom of Kim Jong Il. The sites of such activities are ordinarily Third World countries—Ghana, Bangladesh, and Peru being a few of the recent examples.<sup>9</sup> On occasion, however, one is told of homage being paid to Kim Il Sungism by devotees in Canada, France, and even the United States. Prominence is also given to favorable ideological comments set forth by foreign leaders, especially in the course of their visits to Pyongyang.

Words are not the only North Korean export in support of revolution. At various times, North Koreans have trained budding revolutionaries, provided militants with temporary sanctuary, and funneled money to student radicals or insurrectionary movements quite apart from North Korean activities relating to South Korea. Above all, arms have been made available to select movements and governments. This assistance, however, has generally been on the basis of sales, not gifts, and has been a major source of foreign exchange for the DPRK. Sometimes, the aid has been independent of others; often, as in Grenada, it has been combined with assistance from such sources as the Soviet Union and Cuba.

In view of the economic difficulties confronting the DPRK, the heavy military burdens that it has taken unto itself, and the paucity of concrete results from its ideological and material assistance to the cause of international revolution—as well as the complications that ensue in relations with various governments—why is it continued? One must not rule out genuine faith and, beyond this, the pride that comes from having played a role on a much larger stage to leaders who are extremely conscious of the small scope of their domain. But more important is that such activities are for domestic consumption: to tell a people largely cut off from the world that they are a vital part of the global scene; to demonstrate the relevance of the Korean revolution to the world in the eyes of the subjects; and to portray the global prominence of Kim Il Sung and his son. Equally important, ideological projections and various forms of aid are a means of displaying North Korea on the global stage, however marginally, when other means are constrained. The DPRK is not in a position to have extensive economic or cultural relations with others, even with most of the nations with which it has formal diplomatic relations. With the prominent states of the capitalist world, moreover, it has no such relations. Dissatisfied as it is with the status quo, to project a revolutionary image is to engage in both retribution and commitment. Finally, Pyongyang is anxious to compete with Seoul for the allegiance of the overseas Koreans, and the ideological route, with its emphasis upon nationalism and independence, is considered promising.

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<sup>9</sup>For notices of such meetings, see *Rodong Sinmun*, Nov. 2, 1985, 3; Nov. 14, 1985, 5; Nov. 25, 1985, 1; Pyongyang KCNA, Feb. 11, 1987, reported in *Korean Affairs Report*, Mar. 12, 1987, 105–7.

## Vietnam and Its Protégés—Other Priorities

In contrast to the Koreans, the Vietnamese communists have always relegated ideology to a fairly modest role in the projection of their foreign policy. The history of their movement provides a partial explanation.<sup>10</sup> Unlike the circumstances of the early Korean communist movement and different also from the dominant indigenous element within Chinese communism epitomized by Mao Zedong, the Vietnamese came to communism in a relatively cosmopolitan environment. Many of the key leaders were educated in France or by Frenchmen. Ho Chi Minh's international connections through lengthy Comintern service were extensive. It is not surprising, therefore, that most Vietnamese communists took on the ideological coloration of the European (including Russian) movements to a greater extent than communists elsewhere in East Asia. The most prominent ideological dispute within Vietnamese communist ranks in the pre-1945 era was that between Trotskyites and Stalinists. Unlike their Chinese and Korean counterparts, Vietnamese leaders have never claimed to have made original contributions to Marxism-Leninism.

The circumstances of their lengthy struggle for control of Vietnam, moreover, were intimately connected with the effort to build a united front at home and abroad through the projection of nationalist values. Indeed, when the occasion demanded, even more than the Chinese, they were quite willing to camouflage their allegiance to communism, flying purely nationalist banners. Their strategy—and it proved successful—was to conduct a political campaign abroad to persuade those who would listen that they were the leaders of a broad nationalist front dedicated not merely to independence but also to a postindependence government that would provide harmony and equal access to all classes and social groups except “traitors.” In this fashion, they were able to win the support of or neutralize a sizable number of French, and then American, elites.

This strategy did not prevent the Vietnamese communists from active participation in the international communist movement and, in particular, from cultivating intimate relations with both the Soviet and the Chinese communists. And as is well known, to these two communist states, the Vietnamese communists owe both their success and their problems. There is no evidence that in making the difficult decisions pertaining to Russia and China after the Sino-Soviet cleavage, the Vietnamese communists were motivated by Marxist-Leninist ideological considerations. After the 1954 Geneva conference, they had reason to doubt the strength of ideology as a bond inducing unquestioning sacrifice on behalf of socialist brothers by either

<sup>10</sup>For a well-documented study, see Huynh Kim Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism—1925–1945* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982). A rich source providing insights into the dominant views of the father of Vietnamese communism is available in his collected works, Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works*, vols. 1–4 (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960–62).

Moscow or Beijing. And when Hanoi tilted toward China in joining in criticism of Khrushchev's actions at the Twentieth CPSU Congress and afterward, it did so not as an exponent of Maoism but out of consideration of the greater Chinese commitment to support of "anti-imperialist" (read anti-American) revolutions during this period. Nor did ideological considerations play any significant role in the later decision to topple the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and install a regime friendly to Vietnam. Hanoi showed no alarm about Pol Pot's extremist policies until he began to purge pro-Vietnamese elements in his ranks, and it put in power some of the very individuals who had worked with Pol Pot in the initial—and most ruthless—phases of the Cambodian revolution.

At present, the Vietnamese appear content—at least on the surface—to render unswerving support to Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism, whatever its manifestations. Homage was rendered to the "conservative" Brezhnev administration. Equal homage is rendered to the "progressive" Gorbachev government. The dependence upon the USSR since 1979 has been such that less could scarcely be expected. It is possible that the Gorbachev reforms will have greater effect than past Soviet policies and, in the long run, influence ideology at a time when disputations over policies at home are surging forward, and domestic ideological debate virtually certain to follow at some point. Wartime conditions continue into a third decade with no end in sight. But the earlier unity within the communist movement that the requirements of victory appeared to impose is eroding as Vietnam fights for empire, in the process entering into ever-greater dependence upon external forces. Wartime conditions continue into a third decade with no end in sight. But the earlier unity within the communist movement that the requirements of victory appeared to impose is eroding as Vietnam fights for empire, in the process entering into ever-greater dependence upon external forces.

It should now be clear that each of the three Asian communist states under examination has had a different record on the use of ideology as a component of its foreign policy. To be sure, all define themselves as Marxist-Leninist states, proclaim that a common ideology provides the basis for special relations among socialist states, and acknowledge certain obligations to the international socialist movement. For China, however, those obligations have been greatly reduced, and for the Vietnamese, they have existed only with respect to their Cambodian and Laotian neighbors. Once, the Chinese communists did make ideology an important component of foreign policy, not merely in their support for revolutionary movements but also in their later struggle against the Soviet Union. Partly because of the idio-

<sup>11</sup>For a recent appraisal of domestic conditions in Vietnam impinging upon foreign policies, see Barry Wain, "A Deeply Dissatisfied Populace Is Prodding Vietnam's Leaders down the Road to Reform," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 26, 1987. Also Lewis M. Stern, "The Vietnamese Communist Party and the Economic Reform Program," *Asian Survey*, Apr. 1987; and John H. Esterline, "Vietnam in 1986: An Uncertain Tiger," *ibid.*, Jan. 1987, 92–103.

synchry of Mao, the PRC took pains to identify “genuine Marxists” as against “revisionists,” thereby raising the issue of legitimacy and contributing mightily to the split among communist parties and states. But the China of the 1980s, while seeking to revitalize ideology at home, accepts the widest range of differences, within as well as outside the communist movement, making exceptions only when this is dictated by national interests. In this, it parallels the evolution of the Soviet Union. The North Koreans are thus *sui generis* today, constituting a notable anachronism in a pragmatic age.

## People-to-People Diplomacy

### *The Chinese Record*

The reduced use of the ideological weapon has heightened the importance of people-to-people diplomacy for each of the communist states. This is a field, to be sure, that the communists assiduously cultivated before they achieved full power. As in the case of ideology, its specific elements bore a close relation to the prevailing domestic political strategy. The Chinese communists, it will be remembered, accepted an alliance with the Guomindang, as advocated by the Comintern at a very early point, albeit under protest. Subsequently, they used the assorted weaknesses of the Guomindang and, more importantly, the nationalism generated by Japanese expansionism to forge ties with various Third Force groups in the 1930s. This technique reached its most advanced form in the course of World War II when the Yan'an government adopted the so-called 3–3–3 system, allotting one-third each of the elected local and regional posts to the Communist Party, the Guomindang, and the independents. Also during this period, through moderate reforms, the immediate goals proclaimed were those of a New Democracy rather than those of a Leninist state.

Under such circumstances, it was natural that the communists would pursue two types of international contacts. On the one hand, ties with various front organizations of the communist movement, most of them Comintern affiliates, were maintained. Moreover, assistance was accepted from individuals such as Dr. Norman Bethune who were communists. On the other hand, through outlets like the National Salvation League, whose prominent leaders included Soong Ching-ling, a relatively successful effort was made to reach out to a broader international community through humanitarian appeals. The contacts with individuals such as Edgar Snow—a journalist who publicized Yan'an leaders, including Mao, sympathetically—and, later, with the group of American officials sent to Yan'an are well known. The effectiveness of these contacts is illustrated by the controversy over American policies toward China that subsequently erupted, and the not unfavorable image of the Chinese communists in certain circles that prevailed both in America and in other Western countries. It should be noted, of course, that a favorable American image also applied to the Russians because they too were allies in a titanic struggle against fascism.

By the time that the communists had won the Chinese civil war in 1949, however, events on both sides had soured relations between the victors and the West. Consequently, PRC united front activities during the first years of its existence were directed primarily at the non-Western world, the byword being "anti-imperialism." These efforts were not unsuccessful. In tandem with approaches to "neutralist" governments in the Afro-Asian–Latin American world, many individuals and groups representative of labor, journalism, and the intellectual and political communities were invited to China. Chinese delegations paid reciprocal visits and, when the occasion warranted, participated in conferences oriented to leftist or Liberation causes.<sup>12</sup>

The Sino-Soviet split, as we have noted, adversely affected these efforts by creating acrimonious divisions in virtually all the united front organizations, in addition to those directly representative of the communist movement. By the early 1960s, however, the Chinese had formulated their "three worlds" thesis. The first world was proclaimed that of the superpowers; the second world was that of the developed capitalist states of Western Europe and Japan; and the third world, to which China belonged, was that of the underdeveloped hinterlands. By this means, Chinese leaders hoped to concentrate upon the vast majority of the world's people—surrounding, as it were, the "urban" West with the "rural" global countryside and, in the process, separating their Soviet rivals from the revolutionary mainstream. As a strategy for China, it has much to commend it, but unfortunately for Beijing, for more than a decade it was adversely affected by the Cultural Revolution. The ties with Third World groups were largely severed in the course of China's domestic turmoil.

When the PRC began to reenter the world in the 1970s, its goals—and the methods attendant to them—had been expanded. The first part of the process of "turning out," which was later to encompass broad economic goals, was largely political. Ties to the Third World, whatever their political logic, could not meet two vital requirements—security and development. It was necessary to cultivate the West and, most especially, the United States. These efforts also coincided with modest trends toward political relaxation within China, as the worst excesses of the Cultural Revolution were corrected. Thus, in the early 1970s, Chinese leaders used the associations available to them to reach out to a new type of foreigner: civic leaders, moderate intellectuals, politicians of varying perspectives, and representatives of the business and professional communities—all of them from the West, with a special emphasis upon the United States. The results were not uniformly favorable, but on balance, the new policies paid rich dividends. Romanticism on one front combined with realism on another to promote sympathetic Western attention to China and its developmental problems.

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<sup>12</sup>See Samuel S. Kim, "China and the Third World: In Search of a Neorealist World Policy," in Kim, ed., *China and the World* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984).

There can be no doubt that the unofficial ties forged during this period abetted the developments that were taking place at the official level.

By the end of the 1970s, another facet of people-to-people relations was under way. A network of intellectual connections was being created; foreign students in small numbers went to China and Chinese students in larger numbers went abroad, largely to the United States but also to Japan and Western Europe. On a more extensive scale, tourism began to be promoted by the Chinese as a source of foreign exchange, but with recognition of a possible political by-product. Once again, these contacts were not wholly favorable to the PRC. Close contact often produced irritation or disillusionment, and in general, the trend among Westerners was from romanticism toward realism. However, the very intensification of ties produced a growing stake for Japan and the West in a politically stable, economically developing China. Some of the personal relationships established, including those between Overseas Chinese and their relatives in China, serve to supplement governmental contacts. Relations with the Overseas Chinese, however, must be treated with extreme care, especially in Southeast Asia, where the PRC has experienced severe setbacks because it was viewed as having cultivated compatriots for political and economic purposes that were adverse to the interests of the indigenous governments.

Today, however, people-to-people relations—running the political gamut—are an essential part of China's foreign relations, an avenue that can be used in conjunction with official relations or separately from them. For example, such relations are an important aspect of the PRC lobbying capacity. Conscious of the skills exhibited by representatives of Taiwan in the United States, particularly at state and local levels, PRC authorities have recently dedicated themselves to strengthening this aspect of their outreach.

#### *North Korea—Orientation toward the Third World and Overseas Koreans*

North Korea's people-to-people diplomacy stands today approximately where PRC policy stood in the 1960s, but there are indications that current goals are patterned after those China pursued in the 1970s. Overwhelmingly, North Korea's unofficial ties, paralleling its official ties, are with the Third World and the socialist states. In part, this is a product of its competition with South Korea for global recognition. In part, it is a product of necessity; it has been unable to establish extensive contacts with Japan and the West.

A steady stream of visitors from Africa, Latin America, and other parts of Asia make their way to Pyongyang as guests of associations specifically created for this purpose. Visits to shrines, discussions on subjects "of mutual interest," and carefully planned contacts with the citizenry take place. Because of the volume of such traffic, people-to-people diplomacy must require extensive commitments of time, even from important officials. The reward, as noted earlier, is the sense of affiliation with "the world of the future"—a sense that is communicated to the North Korean citizenry at large.

As in China in earlier times, North Korean authorities have paid special attention to those Koreans living abroad, and with good reason. The Korean population living in Japan, numbering some seven hundred thousand, has long been a political battlefield on which North and South vie for influence.<sup>13</sup> At an earlier point, the North appeared to be winning the struggle, but in recent years, DPRK influence seems to have peaked and somewhat declined. A sizable number of Koreans in Japan have opted for neutrality or an apolitical position. Nevertheless, a part of the Korean community in Japan is both a source of economic investment in the North and a valuable instrument of propaganda aimed at the Japanese as well as the Koreans. Sizable sums have been expended in maintaining a university for Koreans in Tokyo, in various journalistic endeavors, and in the General Federation of Koreans Resident in Japan—the principal front organization.

Success in influencing a second major Korean overseas community, that in the United States, has been far more limited because of the different environmental conditions and socioeconomic background. In addition to the continuing anti-Korean prejudice manifested in Japan, most Korean residents came to that country as laborers during World War II. The Koreans in the United States either came from higher social and economic classes or have more lengthy roots in American society. Seeking to initiate contacts, North Korean authorities have invited a number of American-Korean intellectuals and a few religious figures from the American-Korean community for brief visits. Generally, the results have been less than satisfactory from Pyongyang's standpoint. Simplistic propaganda, overstructured programs, and limited access have resulted in critical post-trip reports.<sup>14</sup> The small number of Americans of non-Korean ethnicity who have made the trip, including scholars and journalists, have with few exceptions had similar reactions.

Nevertheless, North Korean authorities have cautiously experimented with a broader range of unofficial contacts with Americans in recent times—a logical counterpart to the effort to open a dialogue with the American government. It remains to be seen how far, how fast such policies will go, and much depends upon decisions within the DPRK on broader economic and political policies. Thus far, the commitment to turning out has had very limited economic results because of conditions within the country, although officials reiterate that their goal is expanded trade, investment, and tourism with the world, including Japan and the West. While this route clearly has its

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<sup>13</sup>Materials on the Korean minority in Japan are to be found in George DeVos and Changsoo Lee, *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). See especially the article by Lee on Korean political activities in Japan. For a brief account of past involvements of *Ch'ongnyon* (the General Federation of Koreans in Japan), see sections of Byung Chul Koh, *The Foreign Policy Systems of North and South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

<sup>14</sup>Highly informative accounts are presented in C. I. Eugene Kim and B. C. Koh, eds., *Journey to North Korea—Personal Perceptions* (Berkeley, Calif.: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1983).

political hazards for Pyongyang, its economic rationale will be apparent to a growing number of younger North Koreans in and out of government. The xenophobia endemic to Korea's cultural background and underwritten by past official policies may thus be countered by expanded people-to-people contacts in the years-ahead, but developments are likely to be slow and erratic. In particular, if a policy of terrorism continues to be pursued, relations with the United States and Japan are certain to suffer.

*Vietnam—Symbol of Effective Popular Front Policies*

No communist government has ever had a more extensive preliminary experience in populist diplomacy than that of Vietnam. In its lengthy political and military struggle, first with France, then with the United States and associated nations, the Vietnamese communists were at their most creative in either establishing groups or using already existent organizations to support their cause, directly or indirectly. Some of the foreign participants in such organizations did not know the extent of Hanoi's involvement; others—including noncommunists—did not care because they regarded their position as the morally and politically correct one. Popular Front drives by the Vietnamese communists were by no means concentrated in states that were their principal opponents. They encompassed much of the world, but special attention was given to the West and to Japan because the people of these countries could and did apply the greatest leverage on the French and American policymakers.

Once again, a close parallel existed between domestic and foreign policies. At home, the communists cultivated a variety of individuals outside the party in the South—intellectuals, Buddhist monks, and assorted others. An elaborate front structure was created, and individuals both within and outside Vietnam were caused to believe that this front would have independence from communist control. A number of the later defectors who are now living in the West were once in these ranks.<sup>15</sup>

It is ironic that in the aftermath of victory, Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) efforts to build people-to-people relations have faltered in precisely the locales of greatest success during the successive Vietnam conflicts. A negligible number of French or Americans are currently associated politically or personally with Vietnamese united front activities. Such activities are largely confined to the Third World and to the Soviet bloc. Significant alterations in the present pattern of relationships are conceivable but would probably require an end to Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia together with other changes in foreign and domestic policies. There is

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<sup>15</sup>David Chanoff and Doan Van Toai have presented an arresting series of accounts by former NLF and Vietnam Workers' Party members in *Portrait of the Enemy* (New York: Random House, 1986). See also Doan Van Toai and David Chanoff, *The Vietnamese Gulag* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986).

evidence that apart from their strong xenophobic tendencies, the Vietnamese are unhappy with their nearly exclusive reliance upon Soviet contacts—but it is their policies that determined their current fate, and it is those policies that will have to be changed if contacts are to be broadened.

## State-to-State Diplomacy

### *China as a Quasi-Major Power*

Twenty years ago, when the PRC was in the midst of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese ambassadors had been withdrawn from every nation except Egypt, and contacts with virtually every other government were either hostile or minimal. It is some measure of the importance that the Chinese government has attached to state-to-state relations since the early 1970s that it now has diplomatic relations with over 130 nations of every political hue, and that even when political considerations inhibit formal ties, as in the case of South Korea, it has entered into quasi-official negotiations over hijackings and similar matters. Naturally, China's acceptance by the world—and in turn, of the world—has had a substantial effect on its foreign relations. Its decision-making process has been rendered vastly more complex, replete with the contradictions that accompany the foreign policies of all major states. Words and actions do not always match, but in every case, actual PRC policies reflect a strongly nationalist elite's perception of China's national interests.

Out of necessity, as noted earlier, Chinese foreign policy in the 1950s was directed largely toward the non-Western states, especially those in Asia. The great monument to the accomplishments of that era was the agreement among Zhou Enlai, Nehru, and U Nu on the so-called Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, establishing the basis for relations between nations having different political and social systems. That agreement and the Bandung Conference of 1954 that followed represented a major step forward for Chinese diplomacy. Despite the support being given to various Asian communist movements, material as well as moral, Zhou conveyed an image of moderation at Bandung that served China's purposes well, although the immediate results were not extensive.<sup>16</sup>

In the late 1950s, moreover, Chinese leaders made far-ranging trips to parts of the non-Western world, concentrating particularly upon Africa with an effort to identify China with various postindependence governments. Results were mixed but the Chinese persevered, providing economic or military assistance in some cases from their limited resources. The fruits of such efforts finally came in the form of a sizable bloc of non-Western nations

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<sup>16</sup>On the Bandung Conference, see George McT. Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1956).

willing to recognize the PRC, admit it as a member of the nonaligned bloc, and support its admission to the United Nations.

After the Cultural Revolution interlude, China successfully met the challenge of official acceptance by the major Western nations and Japan, an accomplishment due to a combination of survival, independence from the Soviet Union, and the compatibility of the current interests of the PRC and others—notably, the United States. So far had China diverged from earlier policies by the end of the 1970s that Deng Xiaoping and his associates were calling for a global alliance against Soviet hegemony, an alliance to be led by the United States. When the immediate danger passed, and it was evident that the United States was committed to a balance of power in the Pacific-Asian region, Chinese foreign policy shifted, in the early 1980s, to that of nonalignment, a low-cost, low-risk policy congruent with the nation's top priority on economic modernization.

Once again, the PRC sought to identify itself politically and morally with the Third World (a world that in reality did not exist in such form). Its official pronouncements contained an ample volume of criticism directed against both superpowers.<sup>17</sup> In fact, however, Chinese foreign policy maintained a perceptible tilt toward Japan and the West, especially the United States, notwithstanding the complaints against the major capitalist states regularly registered. Economic intercourse with the advanced industrial world dwarfed that with the socialist bloc. On such immediate issues as Indochina and Afghanistan, the PRC political-military stance was with the noncommunist states. A low-level strategic relationship was established and sustained with the United States.

There can be no doubt that at present, China is behaving like any other major power; security and development are the basic desiderata of policy, and official relations with other states are governed accordingly. Improvements in Sino-Soviet relations may well continue, especially if Gorbachev is able to redirect Soviet priorities toward internal reform and to reduce the Soviet image as regional and global threat. Geopolitical factors, however, make a Sino-Soviet relationship of intimacy and trust unlikely for the foreseeable future. Thus, the policy of tilted nonalignment is apt to continue, together with the turning out for science and technology that will bring an increasing cosmopolitanism and interdependence to China. Once, Chinese communists saw these qualities as desirable in Marxist terms—a global brotherhood of the proletariat. Now they are confronted with them in more troublesome form as a conflict of ideas and cultures makes its debut in China, an inescapable by-product of internationalization. But the die is cast, and only

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<sup>17</sup>A recent analysis of China's contemporary foreign policies by a group of specialists is Harry Harding, ed., *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984).

a massive reactionary revolution could push China back into a xenophobic, exclusive mold—even though the residue of earlier times will long persist.

In sum, China is at last a nation-state, even if it has entered that status at a point when national sovereignty everywhere faces new challenges from the accelerating global economic revolution. Only when a revolutionary mission coincides with China's national interests as perceived by its leaders will it seek to play a former role. In this, it is now launched firmly on a path pioneered by the USSR.

### *North Korea—the Continuing Quest for Legitimacy*

The DPRK is now recognized by more than a hundred states—an accomplishment largely of the 1970s and, in considerable measure, a result of the arduous and successful North Korean efforts to affiliate with the Non-aligned movement. But this achievement is also a product of the flexibility of a state that has rarely demonstrated flexibility. The North has been willing to accept dual recognition of itself and the ROK from more than sixty states, notwithstanding its adamant opposition to cross recognition on the part of the USSR and China. The contradictions do not end there. The DPRK has accepted dual membership in a number of international organizations, including auxiliary agencies of the United Nations, while denouncing efforts to obtain the seating of both Koreas in the United Nations itself as a plot to create two Koreas.<sup>18</sup>

And, once again, North Korea is seeking to come into official contact with the United States and Japan, using China to actively promote this development. The United States, however, although interposing fewer barriers to informal contacts, is not likely to move rapidly toward more official bilateral or trilateral relations unless North-South relations improve and terrorism ends. This policy will also govern Japan in all probability, at least for the near term.

Meanwhile, the DPRK continues to fashion its relations with its two big communist neighbors to retain both flexibility and maximum national advantage. The task has not been easy. Perfect equidistance between the USSR and China has never been possible, or necessarily desirable, for Pyongyang. Kim Il Sung began his career in post-1945 Korea as a protégé of the Russians after youthful interaction with the Chinese communists. He still bears the deep scars of having to accept client status from the Soviets during the early years

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<sup>18</sup>Recent evaluations of North Korean foreign policy are found in the essays in Robert A. Scalapino and Hongkoo Lee, eds., *North Korea in a Regional and Global Context* (Berkeley, Calif.: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986). For English translations of materials on DPRK foreign and domestic policy from the leading North Korean organs, see issues of *Korean Affairs Report*, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Articles by South Korean scholars can be found in *Vantage Point—Developments in North Korea*, published monthly in Seoul. *North Korea News*, published by Naewoe Press, Seoul, contains a running survey of current developments.

of the DPRK. The Sino-Soviet cleavage enabled him to sustain a degree of independence, playing Moscow off against Beijing. At first, the tilt was toward the PRC, but after the onset of the Cultural Revolution, relations with both China and the USSR were cool.

Only with the 1970s did Pyongyang and Beijing work closely together again, to the unhappiness of Moscow. Yet increasingly, Chinese policies, including rapprochement with the United States, deeply disturbed the North Koreans. In view of the development of economic and, more especially, strategic ties with the United States and its rapidly expanding trade with South Korea, the PRC could not be expected to give primary consideration to DPRK interests, nor did it have the material means to do so.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in the early 1980s, Pyongyang turned to the USSR for increased economic and military assistance as a response both to an ailing economy and to the proclaimed Northeast Asian NATO—a much exaggerated version of the U.S.-Japan-ROK strategic understandings. The Soviets, having their own concerns about American power in Northeast Asia and anxious to return to the region politically, carefully increased their assistance, reaping certain political and military advantages from Pyongyang in return.<sup>20</sup>

There is no indication that the fundamentals governing North Korean state-to-state relations will shift in the near future. Kim Il Sung's mid-1987 visit to Beijing had both symbolic and substantive aims. It was intended as a sign that nonalignment will be officially sustained and it permitted a renewed request for various types of support, political as well as economic. Independence will continue to be the principal underlying official DPRK foreign policy, even though North Korea can never be truly independent because of its economic and strategic needs. Evidence of that fact is that North Korean positions on such issues as Afghanistan, Indochina, and Mongolia have recently shown an increasing congruity with those of the USSR without, however, converging.

Meanwhile, efforts to broaden contacts with key supporters of South Korea, notably Japan and the United States, will continue. In reality, however, all the major states deeply involved in the Korean peninsula will gravitate toward a two-Koreas policy in the years ahead, irrespective of Pyongyang's desires. The Chinese have set the pattern, and Japan is not far behind. At some point, the United States and the USSR are likely to follow. As this course unfolds, North Korea, like China, will find itself increasingly giving state-to-state relations priority over other types of relations—its rhetoric notwithstanding.

<sup>19</sup>See Chae-Jin Lee, "China's Policy toward North Korea: Changing Relations in the 1980s"; and Chin-Wee Chung, "North Korea's Relations with China," in Scalapino and Lee, *North Korea*; and Chong Wook Chung, "China's Role in Two-Korea Relations in the 1980s," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, Fall 1986, 52–66.

<sup>20</sup>One able account is Dae-Sook Suh, "North Korea in 1986—Strengthening the Soviet Connection," *Asian Survey* 27 (Jan. 1987): 56–63.

*Vietnam—When Will Priorities Change?*

Among the three communist states with which we are concerned, Vietnam is currently unique in having entered into an alliance with the USSR encompassing economic, political, and strategic matters that causes it to rank with the People's Republic of Mongolia as one of the staunchest Soviet allies outside Eastern Europe.<sup>21</sup> Almost all Vietnam's state-to-state relations are currently governed by that central fact: its close relations with the East European countries, its full support for the Soviet client state in Afghanistan, its improving relations with North Korea, and its cordial relations with India. Some of its state-to-state relations stand somewhat apart from the Soviet connection: the extreme hostility characterizing relations with China; the relatively normal relations with Indonesia, a nation whose leaders are profoundly suspicious of China; and the cool to hostile relations with the other ASEAN states. These deviations, of course, reflect Vietnam's quest for control of Cambodia and Laos.

In the long run, Vietnam's central national problem will revolve around its relations with China, that massive state on its northern border. Can it maintain hegemony over Indochina and at the same time reestablish cordial relations with Beijing? The answer is almost certainly in the negative, and yet Hanoi's commitment to dominance in Indochina has deep historic roots, and a strategic as well as an economic rationale. There is no question that Vietnam would like to normalize relations with Japan and the United States to counterbalance the Chinese threat and Soviet power. But the gains from such a policy for the United States are difficult to discern. The concept of competing with the USSR for influence in Vietnam is totally lacking in substance; the divisions that would be produced in ASEAN at this point would be major; a new issue with China would have been opened.

Thus, Vietnam is likely to continue to be a Soviet client state in the near term. In the long run, a combination of geopolitical and psychological-cultural factors will almost certainly alter the Soviet-Vietnamese relationship, especially because the costs of the alliance to both sides equal or exceed its benefits. But escape for either Hanoi or Moscow at present would also be costly.

It is ironic that the communist state that has the greatest history of contact with the West and the lowest degree of ideological primacy in foreign policy should have come to its present status. And it is also an illustration of the extent to which elitist decisions—in this case, the intervention in Cambodia, as well as in Laos—can be a variable of major significance, apart

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<sup>21</sup>A valuable survey-analysis is Douglas Pike, *Vietnam and the Soviet Union—Anatomy of an Alliance* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987). For a recent article, see Lee Suck-Ho, "Evolution and Prospects of Soviet–North Korean Relations in the 1980s," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, Fall 1986, 19–34.

from whatever ideological or geopolitical determinants exist, accepting an interrelation between personal and impersonal causations.

### **In Summary**

Seven decades ago, the Bolshevik Revolution presaged the establishment of the first Leninist state. The foreign policy patterns that it set, including the evolutionary changes that accompanied the development of state power, have been followed in broad outline by the other Leninist states that it spawned, but with important deviations reflective of particular decisions or unique circumstances.

The initial stage in the establishment of a Leninist state has generally been marked by a strong degree of ideological quotient in foreign policy, both rhetorically and, to the extent permitted by the available resources, in practice. A similar emphasis exists on the domestic front during this period.

A second stage witnesses the rapid increase in people-to-people diplomacy across a political spectrum that expands over time as the young state seeks to heighten its international visibility and to apply pressures when it cannot do this effectively through official channels.

As the new government proves its capacity to survive, effecting internal stability and acquiring greater power, it seeks legitimacy less through revolutionary activities and more through diplomatic channels, obtaining recognition from an increasing number of states outside its ideological-systemic group. This serves to render its decision making more complex; a sizable number of options, each with its opportunities and hazards, are presented. The basic foreign policy goals, however, take on an increasing resemblance to those of all nation-states, security and economic development being at the forefront. The obligations of ideological fraternalism are progressively sacrificed to national interests. Heightened contact with key groups in a position to abet those interests becomes a central drive, irrespective of its political connotations.

Each of the Leninist states under study here has shown some variations from this general model. The People's Republic of China has been the most faithful, subject only to the irrationality of the Cultural Revolution era when domestic extremism overrode reasonable foreign policy goals and put China in jeopardy by the end of the 1960s. North Korea has remained in a relatively high ideological phase beyond what might be considered a normal period, partly because of a continuity of leadership composed of first-generation peasant-soldiers, partly as a means of acquiring the internal unity needed to cope with a larger South and the proximity of two giant communist neighbors. The continued division of Korea—including the form of that division—has had a major effect upon both the domestic and the foreign policies of the two Koreas. The North, by maintaining ideological “purity” and at the same time pursuing nonalignment, maintains political independence in the strict

sense while having to accept a sizable degree of economic and strategic dependence.

Vietnamese communist elites, more closely identified with the West—notably France—than other Asian communist leaders and preoccupied with the lengthy struggle for domestic control, found united front tactics more useful than Marxist-Leninist ideological appeals, both at home and abroad. In this sense, the Vietnamese communist movement was more “nationalist” in its initial stages than that of the Chinese and the Koreans. It is, thus, ironic that Vietnam must currently adhere to Soviet policies to preserve a relationship critical to its immediate needs. The state-to-state, as well as the ideological and populist, elements in Vietnamese foreign policy are subordinated to this necessity. Almost certainly, however, Vietnamese foreign policies will undergo significant alterations at some point, in conformity with the geopolitical and developmental requirements that Hanoi’s leaders must acknowledge and that cannot be met by current policies.

The domestic contents of Marxism-Leninism are being altered—not in the direction of convergence with Western liberalism but in increasing conformity with authoritarian developing states experimenting with mixed economies. Similarly, the foreign policies of the Leninist states—with various lags and deviations due to circumstances likely to be temporary—are being altered in the direction of the orthodox nation-state behavior characteristic of the late twentieth century, with due account having to be given to elements of both independence and interdependence across ideological and systemic lines.

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