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The Impact of Personality Cult in North Korea

Hyun Joo Chon



Korea Institute for
National Unification

**A Study of the Social Control
System in North Korea: focusing on
the Ministry of People's Security**

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Table of Contents

I . Introduction	1
II . The Ministry of People's Security: a vanguard instrument for the leader's absolute rule	5
1. History of the MPS ———	5
2. Duties of the MPS ———	14
3. Status and Organization of the MPS ———	21
III . Departmental Duties of the Ministry of People's Security	34
1. Duties of the Top Level Organization ———	34
2. Duties of Bureaus and Offices ———	36
IV . Social Control by the Ministry of People's Security	47
1. Political Ideological Work ———	47
2. Citizen Registration Work ———	49
3. Classification and Investigation of the People's Social Status ———	50
4. Political Correction Task ———	54
V . Conclusion	59
References	62

- **Tables**

<Table 1> Ranking Structure of the Ministry of People's Security — 23

<Table 2> Central Organization of the MPS

(*refer to the original org. chart) — 25

<Table 3> Structure of Official Positions and the Rank System
in the MPS — 26

<Table 4> Regional Organization of the MPS

(ref. original org. chart) — 26

<Table 5> The Personnel Size of the Ministry of People's Security — 33

<Table 6> Investigation Project of the People's Social Status — 50

<Table 7> Political Classification System in North Korea
by social origin — 51

<Table 8> New Classification System in North Korea — 52

I . Introduction

The increasing tension between the US and North Korea surrounding the recent nuclear issue induced reemergence of the 'collapse theory of the North Korean regime' that prevailed in the past. The collapse theory was particularly prevalent during the collapse of the socialist bloc, following the death of Kim Il Sung, and at times of deepening economic difficulties. Such a perspective, however, is largely derived from general theories of regime change and 'western-style' thinking. It assumes that collapse of North Korea is historically inevitable, for the North Korean people and the military with rational thinking would resist against the dictatorship and remove Kim Jong Il. It also assumes that the death of Kim Jong Il would be accompanied by regime collapse due to its monolithic ruling nature of the system,

Verification of this collapse scenario is constrained by the 'time' variable, which poses difficulty for all social scientists. It is, therefore, inappropriate to discuss likeliness of regime collapse in North Korea, and moreover, it is beyond the scope of this study.

It is evident that maintenance of any form of political system is possible through a proper mixture of coercion and persuasion. There is no need to mention that voluntary obedience of people is a strong tendency in advanced democratic states while forced obedience is a relatively strong feature under dictatorship. It is thus possible to hypothesize that a strong coercive attribute is a priori in a totalitarian

system like the one in North Korea. This is particularly so because the ideology of 'socialism of the great leader' adopted by North Korea greatly stresses absolute loyalty to the leader.

One explanation for the maintenance of the North Korean regime, despite various unfavorable conditions and misfortunes, may be pinpointed as a comprehensive and thorough control of the people by the State Security Department, the Ministry of People's Security, and the Public Security Commands. The Ministry of People's Security (MPS), which is equivalent to South Korea's police organization, especially, controls people from the closest distance.¹

Among the countries that gained independence after the Second World War, South Korea is classified as a country that had most rapidly achieved economic growth and democratization. On the contrary, North Korea has not yet overcome backwardness, serious economic difficulties, and firm dictatorship. We often ask defectors why they think the North Korean regime continues. The most common answer is strong social control in North Korea. When we ask why they did not remain in North Korea to fight against the regime if they were bold enough to flee the country at the risk of their death, the general reply we receive is "you know little about North Korea."

Control of the North Korean people is a life-or-death matter to the ruling class. Without proper social control, the leadership would not be

1 Sung-Hyun Lee, "The Organizational System and Role of the Party Committee and Politburo of the Ministry of People's Security in North Korea," *A Survey of North Korea*, vol. 6, no. 2, (Seoul: Center of Unification Study, 2002), p. 68.

able to suppress people's innate tendency to struggle for freedom. A steady rise in the number of defectors, despite strong control, may indicate weakening of social control in North Korea. Nevertheless, the fact that social deviation act fails to take a collective, organized and political form may also imply that social control itself still operates efficiently. This is backed by defectors' testimony of a perfect control system, which discloses that if five people get together, at least one of them is conducting surveillance.

A fortress of system maintenance in North Korea is, of course, the military. As reflected in the introduction of Kim Jong Il's 'military-first politics,' an advance guard point of national security is the Korea People's Army, the so-called 'descendants of the Partisan.' Furthermore, it is widely known that the State Security Department contributes greatly to the system maintenance. However, discussing the North Korean control system without the Ministry of People's Security, which closely supervises and controls every movement of the North Korean people, is simply unthinkable. For a significant period of time after the liberation, Koreans used to employ expressions such as "a tiger is coming for you" or "the Japanese police is coming to arrest you" to scare misbehaving children. Such fear expressions are still commonly used in today's North Korea.

Understanding how the MPS operates may be a useful means to identifying the basis of system maintenance in North Korea. This study, thus, examines the MPS in terms of its organization, role and function, operational logic in practice, and prospect of how the apparatus would

change in the future.

Because this study aims to find 'new information' through the process of collecting primary data, it has a 'static' feature as opposed to that of pure academic research.² The study is limited to scrutiny of the organization as well as duties of the MPS and its subordinate organs. Therefore, it does not examine the dynamics of change in the North Korean regime in relation to the development of the MPS. Additionally, the description of people's condition in North Korea may not be entirely accurate since the survey mainly relied on memories of defectors.

2 For a theoretical study of the North Korean social control system, see Woo-Young Lee, *The North Korean social control system in the period of transition*, (Seoul: Korean Institute of National Unification, 1999).

II .The Ministry of People's Security: a vanguard instrument for the leader's absolute rule

1. History of the Ministry of People's Security

Up until the Soviet occupation of the northern part of Korea, public peace and order in the north was maintained by the Japanese military and police after national liberation. The task was later taken over by private security maintenance committees based in different provinces - Jawuidae (self defense unit: the right wing organization), Chiandae (public safety unit: the left wing organization) and Jukwuidae (guard unit: the organization of Koreans from the Soviet army) - which operated independently from each other. These units were dissolved after the Soviet occupation, leaving public security in the hands of the Soviet army.

The Soviet force (the Soviet 25th Army under the command of Colonel General Chistiakov) began to march into the northern part of Korea from August 17, 1945. By August 26, the Soviet 25th Army completed its occupation in Pyongyang. Upon establishment of the 'Soviet military command,' it proclaimed the 'order of the commander of the 25th Soviet Army in North Korea' (October 12, 1945), and ordered dissolution of all armed units.

In each province, the Soviet army established the protection and security units (boandae) with a set number of personnel to maintain

public order in cooperation with the Soviet army. These units were placed under the command of the protection and security bureau of the 'five province administrative bureau' which was established on November 19. Responding to the request of Cho Man Sik,³ who was then winning strong popular support, the Soviet military command began to negotiate on how to structure an administrative apparatus to rule all of North Korea. The negotiating took place in the Five Northern Provinces Conference that was held from October 8 to 9, 1945. On November 19, the Five Provinces People Committee was expanded and developed into the Five Province Administrative Bureau.⁴

Ten bureaus were set up under the Five Province Administrative Bureau to respectively deal with industry, transportation, agriculture, commerce, finance, post, education, public health, judiciary, and security.⁵ It was taken as North Korea's articulated intention to set up a separate government.⁶ The Protection and Security Bureau, which

3 Lim Un, *Kim Il Sung Jung Jun* [in Korean] (Seoul: Ok Chon Publishing House, 1989), p. 184.

4 Joong-ang Daily News (ed.), *The Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, vol. 1, (Seoul: Joong-ang Daily News Agency), p. 96.

5 Kim Il Sung explains the establishment of Administrative Bureaus as follows. "These administrative bureaus are to direct the respective economic spheres, effect inter-provincial relations in North Korea and set right the confusion." Kim Il Sung, "For the Establishment of Genuine People's Government," speech delivered at the Second Enlarged Executive Committee Meeting of the Central Organizing Committee of the Communist Party of North Korea, November 15, 1945, *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 1, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1980), p. 361.

came to be a parent body of today's Ministry of People's Security, handled public security matters, including public safety, guarding the national territory, intelligence, and maneuvering the south.

As the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea (chairman: Kim Il Sung) was formed on February 8, 1946, acting as an independent government in practice, the function of the ten bureaus was transferred to this organization. The Protection and Security bureau of the Provisional People's Committee took over the tasks of maintaining security and guarding the borders. The Protection and Security Bureau was organized into an independent Political Security Department that carries out intelligence work against the south and other departments in charge of supervision, guarding, protection, and firefighting. On May 11, 1946, there appeared an armed police organization, a so-called 'Independent security brigade' (commander: Choi Hyun), under the MPS.

All the duties of the Provisional People's Committee were soon taken over by a "permanent" North Korean People's Committee (chairman: Kim Il Sung) upon its establishment on February 20, 1947. The Protection and Security Bureau was renamed the Bureau of Internal Affairs. Within the People's Committee, the 'National Security Bureau' was newly established on February 7, 1947 to mainly deal with tasks of national defence. Accordingly, the existing Bureau of Internal

6 Kim Soon-Kyu, "North Korea's initial Unification Policy" in Kim Il-Pyong (ed.), *The Process of Building the North Korean Regime 1945-1948* [in Korean], (Seoul: Kyungnam University, The Institute for Far Eastern Studies, 1991).

Affairs split into the Bureau of Internal Affairs that executes public maintenance functions and the National Security Bureau that handles national defence.

With the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on September 9, 1948, the Bureau of Internal Affairs of the North Korean People's Committee, that had been executing the police function, was absorbed into the Ministry of the Interior. The ministry of the Interior marked the very first official police organization in North Korea. Following the establishment of the government, North Korea founded the Central Security Officers School under the Ministry in order to quickly cultivate interior officers (police officers). At the first graduation ceremony of the Central Security Officers School on September 19, 1948, Premier Kim Il Sung made a congratulatory address to the graduates in which he encouraged them to "become genuinely popular interior workers who ardently love the country and the people and devote all to the struggle for them." Kim also pointed out the missions of the interior officers (police) such as making a profound study of Marxism-Leninism and the Party's policies, knowing how to put them into practice, and firmly acquiring the noble spirit of patriotism and proletarian internationalism. Additionally, he stressed

7 Kim Il Sung, "You must be interior workers faithful to the country and the people," congratulatory speech delivered at the First Graduation Ceremony of the Central Security Officers School under the Ministry of the Interior, September 19, 1948, *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 4, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), pp. 380-382.

that the interior organs should work for the interests of the workers and peasants and mercilessly combat the enemies within who encroach upon the interest of the state and the people.⁷

In March 1951, in the midst of the Korean War, North Korea reorganized the Ministry of the Interior, and separated the Ministry of Public Security (*saehui anjunsung*) as an independent body. Formation of the Ministry of Public Security, through integration of the Political Security Department and several other agencies, aimed to effectively control the anti-regime resistant force (i.e. reactionaries at the time of the war) and to increase efficiency in maintaining order by removing the notorious reputation of the Political Security Department within the Ministry of the Interior. The central office of the Ministry of Public Security was comprised of the Public Security bureau, Railroad Security bureau, Preliminary Examination bureau, Air Defence bureau, Reform bureau, Government Escort bureau, Guard bureau, Rear Service bureau, Forest bureau, Political bureau, and Communication office. It also set up the Public Security departments in every city, province, *Kun*-level and the Public Security offices in *Myun* or *Ri* level villages. Work of the ministry of public security was far-reaching: it ranged from intelligence and counterintelligence, to surveillance of anti-revolutionary acts, police clearance, surveillance of foreign visitors, maintenance of public order, investigation of crimes, guarding state organizations, traffic regulation, firefighting, taking a census of the population, keeping and handling classified documents, management of citizen registration offices, administration of prisons and labor

camps, guarding railroads, protection of state-owned and private properties, control of the entry and clearance of vassals, and administration of air defence units.

Within the background of the separation of the Ministry of Public Security from the Ministry of the Interior, there was a recommendation from the chief of Political Security Department, Bang Hak Sae, who strongly argued for the necessity of an exclusive public security apparatus in carrying out tasks of maintaining peace and order more effectively and curtailing anti-regime resistance force during the Korean War. At the time, participation of UN troops in the war was leading to an expansion of the UN occupation.

The new system lasted only for a year and seven months. On October 9, 1952, the Ministry of Public Security was absorbed and integrated into the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Accordingly, its functions were transferred to the Public Security bureau in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The bureau had the core unit of the former Political Security Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior, which executed anti-espionage tasks, except for intelligence operations in South Korea or abroad. Its major duties were surveillance on the North Korean people; monitoring political attitudes of the People's Army; supervision and preliminary examination of major government officials or resistant figures; inspection on the Party, mass organizations, media, publications, and religious groups; information gathering; investigation on figures who partook in the South Korean government; counterespionage tasks; and guidance of the internal affairs departments in every city and province.

The Ministry of Public Security merged into the Ministry of Internal Affairs for two possible reasons: firstly, there appeared a problem of low efficiency as tasks of the MPS were becoming more complex. Secondly, the MPS's incompatibility with the ministry of internal affairs generated confusion in carrying out public security work. Behind the scenes, however, there was personal motivation of then minister of Public Security, Bang Hak-Sae, who was informally appointed to the minister of Internal Affairs; Bang wanted to have the MPS organizations under his influence by integrating them into the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Related to this issue, Kim Il Sung mentioned a 'left' deviations tendency of the Ministry of Public Security in his speech.⁸ This seems to suggest that the merger was a way of calling the MPS to account for its failure in fulfilling the party tasks.

In 1956, the structure of the ministry of Internal Affairs expanded extensively to have 5 vice ministers, 9 bureaus and 7 offices under minister Bang Hak-Sae. It consisted of the first bureau (public security bureau), the second bureau (supervision bureau), the third bureau (protection security bureau), the fourth bureau (political bureau), the fifth bureau (general affairs bureau), the sixth bureau (rear services bureau), the seventh bureau (reform bureau), the eighth bureau (guard

8 Kim Il Sung, "The Workers' Party of Korea is the Organizer of Victory in the Fatherland Liberation War," speech delivered before the Teaching Staff and Students of the Central Party School under the Workers' Party of Korea, June 18, 1952, *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 7, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), p. 199.

bureau), and the ninth bureau (government guard bureau: escort tasks), as well as office 2 (cadre office), office 3 (guard office), office 4 (counter-espionage office), office 5 (communications office), office 7 (air-defence office), and the economic security office. Office 4 of the ministry of Internal Affairs exclusively dealt with espionage tasks against South Korea and other foreign countries and had 7 divisions, enlisted as the South Korea department (dept. 1), Japan department (dept. 2), Far East department (dept. 3), accounting department (dept. 4), liaison department (dept. 5), operation department (dept. 6), and Europe department (dept. 7).

Formation of the third DPRK cabinet on October 23 1962 brought about a major alteration to the organization. The Ministry of Public Security was newly established to exclusively conduct the police tasks, while the Ministry of Internal Affairs was given new duties such as soil management, management of natural resources and national territory, and conservation of land, forest, rivers, roads, territorial waters, lakes, and harbors. On December 4, 1964, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was renamed the Ministry of 'Land Administration.'

With an adoption of a new socialist constitution on December 27, 1972, the cabinet was reorganized to become the administration council, and the Ministry of Public Security was renamed the Public Security Department (chief: Kim Byung Ha). As Kim Il Sung instructed in May 1973 to separate the task of public order and the task of political security, the Political Security bureau was separated from the Ministry, and became an independent entity called the 'State Political Security

Agency' (also known as the State Security Department). Consequently, the Ministry of Public Security carried out the police work, and the State Political Security Agency executed a wide range of counterintelligence and internal security functions normally associated with secret police. The Agency monitored political attitudes of the general public and high-ranking officials, searched out anti-state criminals, took upon counterintelligence responsibilities, and administered camps for political prisoners.

In early 1982, the chief of the public security department, Lee Jin Su, was appointed the chief of the State Political Security Agency. The border and coast guarding duties that were formerly carried out by the Ministry of Public Security were transferred to the Agency. At the 1st session of the 7th Supreme People's Assembly, on April 5, 1982, the public security department was separated from the administration council and placed under the direction of the Korean Workers' Party along with the Ministry of People's Armed Forces. At the 1st session of the 8th Supreme People's Assembly, however, the public security department was again returned to the administration council.

On September 5, 1998, the DPRK constitution was revised, in which the administration council changed to the cabinet and the public security department to the Ministry of Public Security. On the third day of the third meeting of the 10th SPA on April 6, 2000, the Ministry of Public Security was renamed the Ministry of People's Security. It was decided in the meeting as follows: "The SPA would abolish the name the 'Ministry of Public Security' of the Republic, and newly name it as

the Ministry of People's Security. This is to exalt the enduring feats of the great leader in establishing and leading the true security apparatus for the people and to further heighten the function and role of the security organizations to meet the demand of constructing a strong and prosperous socialist country (Sahuijuyui Kangsung Daeguk)." North Korea's intention appears to be directed towards resuming the authority and position of the Ministry of Public Security which relatively weakened in the process of building and consolidating the successor's system after the death of Kim Il Sung; inducing loyalty competition within the security apparatus, and accentuating Kim Jong Il's people-first ruling style.

2. Duties of the Ministry of People's Security⁹

Duties of the MPS are very broad. The basic tasks of the MPS can be listed as protecting the great leader, the so-called brain of the revolution; protecting the security tasks of the Korean Workers' Party and the North Korean regime; protecting property and life of the North Korean people; and maintaining the social order. Due to the peculiarity of the North Korean regime, however, death-defying defense of the leader, the Party, and the regime is considered top priority. This reflects

9 Discussed in the following section are facts gathered from interviews with defectors who formerly worked for the Ministry of Public Security. The interviewees are all under pseudo names: Hwang Jung Su (defected in 1997); Kim Young Su (defected in 1999); Kim Jong Ho (defected in 1988); Lee Sang Ho (defected in 1998); Shim Sang Young (defected in 1999).

the revolutionary viewpoint of the great leader, which stresses eternal harmony of the leader, the party (state organs), and the Korean people.

At the national security office branch meeting in Pyongyang that was held from September 30 to October 1, 1999, the general political bureau chief of the People's Army, Jo Myung Rok, congratulated the security officers for their absolute loyalty to the leader and their successful achievements in protecting the headquarters of the revolution. In the same meeting, Vice-marshal Jo further stressed that security officers should be fully equipped with the spirit of defending the leader at the risk of one's life, the spirit of "human bombs," and the spirit of suicidal attack.

A. Defending and protecting the great leader

The task of defending and protecting the leader is the most central and absolute duty of the MPS. Through defending and protecting the head of the state, Kim Jong Il, the MPS is assigned to safeguard the North Korean regime. In safeguarding the regime, the MPS puts top priority on surveillance of anti-state, anti-revolutionary acts. The anti-state crimes are specified in the DPRK criminal law (article 44-51) as the following: Participation in plots to overthrow the republic or in acts of revolt; acts of terrorism against the Party and government "cadres and patriotic people"; preparation, conspiracies, agitation or propaganda against the state to encourage anti-state criminal acts; and treason against the country and people by citizens through acts of

espionage or collaborating with enemies. The MPS only unearths cases of anti-state crimes, and refers such cases directly to the State Security Department (alias State Safety and Security Agency) for imposition of punishment.

The MPS carries out work related to protection of the leader by supporting the State Safety and Security Agency and the Guard Command, which is responsible for the personal security of Kim Jong Il. The event in which Kim Jong Il participates is called 'event no. 1.' These events accompany all the armed guarding organizations such as the Guard Command, the State Security Department, the Security bureau of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces, the Security Command, and the Ministry of People's Security. The MPS is specifically responsible for checking the list of participants, controlling traffic signals when Kim Jong Il travels, and guarding roads in the areas where events takes place.

Additionally, the MPS directly administers the Kim Il Sung thought study center, the Kim Il Sung museum of gifts, and Kim Jong Il greenhouse, through which it propagates the achievements of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Around the time of Kim's birthday (February 16), the MPS set out on the Kim Jong Il idolization project.

B. Managing tasks of the Party and the State security

The MPS directs and executes overall state security tasks to defend and follow the lines of the Korean workers' Party and the DPRK. The Classified Information Liaison office under the General

Affairs bureau keeps, handles, and transports classified documents of the state organs. While the Classified Information Liaison office transports the classified documents, the General Affairs bureau of the MPS issues a travel pass for transportation of the state classified documents, produces cryptograph, and deciphers. All the state classified (secret) documents are kept in a classified information center (underground gallery) located in Manpo city in Jaggang Province.

The Government Guard bureau of the MPS guards major state facilities, such as provincial or city Party buildings, and protects high-ranking officials and their homes. The Air Defense bureau prepares for possible wartime, and thus, carries out training of citizens for evacuation against chemical and air raids. It regularly conducts (twice a year) air raid drills for its civilian population.

The MPS also prints official North Korean public money issued by the Central Bank. The only money-printing house (so called factory no. 62) is located in Baesandong, Pyongsong City in South Pyongan Province, and it is outwardly disguised as a label-printing factory.

The Economic Inspection bureau supervises and inspects factories, enterprises, and collective farms to see whether they properly follow state economic policies. The Foreign Affairs office dispatches security personnel to the North Korean embassies overseas to execute security work and to watch over North Koreans living abroad.

C. Maintaining social order

The MPS directs overall tasks of maintaining social order, which is in greater demand in the 1990s due to increasing crimes and transgression related to severe economic difficulties. Regional organizations of the MPS carry out criminal investigations and prevention of criminal activities. To curtail capitalistic oriented crimes, which began to surface amidst deepening economic difficulties, the MPS cooperates with the State Safety and Security Agency to expose anti-socialist factors in the society.

The Protection and Security bureau of the MPS and relevant regional organizations maintain a traffic order, carry out traffic control, administer driving tests, issue driver's licenses, conduct vehicle registration, and produce number plates.

In order to prevent any kind of powder, electric, or machinery-related explosions and accidents, the MPS carries out inspection, control, and investigation of explosive materials.

D. Surveillance of people's ideology

As a way of safeguarding the regime, the MPS concentrates on checking people's ideological consciousness. As the nature of this work is closely related to maintenance of social order and efficient social control, the MPS conducts projects like political classification of the people, citizen registration and record keeping, issuing citizen identification cards, controlling and directing people's relocation and change of residence, and so on.

The MPS also takes a census of the population nationwide every two years, and classifies individuals into different social groups on the basis of the survey. Through its subordinate organizations (i.e. the citizen registration departments in city and kun-level), the MPS issues citizen identification cards to all citizens over the age of 17, and administers citizen registration (birth and death records) work. The MPS also controls the movement of the population by issuing documents of travel permits and by dealing with matters related to changing residence, address change, and transfer of post.

E. Construction of major state facilities and management of roads

The MPS is directly involved in land development projects such as construction of major facilities and road management. The actual work is carried out by the 7th and 8th general bureaus and other subordinate regional organizations. The 7th general bureau, an independent military unit, conducts special engineering tasks of building major state facilities, including villas of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, and secret sites. The 8th general bureau (alias, the road general bureau) is responsible for construction of major roads and road repair work. In addition to maintaining highways and state roads, the MPS looks after the land, rivers, watercourses and the environment by protecting the forest and water resources.

F. Others

In addition to the aforementioned duties, the MPS executes tasks that would normally not be considered as police work; the ministry is involved in firefighting, earthquake inspection, subway system management, political correction and reform, foreign currency earning, and address information service.

The MPS carries out fire prevention and firefighting work through its fire departments in the city and regional security offices. It also administers a seismological research center for seismological observation, earthquake forecasts, and investigation.

The Railway Safety bureau under the MPS is responsible for the safety of passenger trains operating throughout North Korea and maintaining order for the travelers. The Subway System Management bureau, on the other hand, is in charge of safe subway operation in Pyongyang and subway line conditions.

Through the reform bureau, the MPS carries out the political correction tasks of instructing, controlling, and supervising all the prisons and labor camps around the nation. Most prison camps are managed by the State Security Department, but two prison camps (for special types of criminals in need of segregation) are exceptionally administered by the MPS.

For the purpose of earning foreign currency, the MPS set up the Kumgang Management bureau which administers foreign currency-making offices within the city and province-level Public Security bureaus. Since March 1998, the MPS has operated an 'address

information service', through which it conducts work of locating missing persons and 'separated families.'

3. The Position and Organization of the Ministry of People's Security

A. Position of the Ministry of People's Security

The MPS is officially placed under the cabinet in the government apparatus. But in practice, the MPS is under the guidance and supervision of the highest organ in the North Korean power structure, the National Defense Committee. The premier of the cabinet does not have authority to command the work of the MPS or interfere with them.

As mentioned in section II-1, the MPS was originally a part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It then separated from the state administration council, and moved under the Korean Worker's Party at the first session of the 7th Supreme People's Assembly on April 5, 1982. On December 29, 1986, at the first session of the 8th Supreme People's Assembly, the MPS was returned to the administration council as its subordinate organ. Such a structural change was more of a formality to improve the external image of the public security apparatus; the MPS is still under the direction of the Korean Workers' Party.

On the occasion of amendment of the DPRK socialist constitution (April 2, 1992), the National Defense Commission (NDC) was separated from the people's committee. Accordingly, the Korean

People's Armed Forces came to be subordinated under the NDC along with the State Security Department (State Safety and Security Agency) which is placed under direct control of the two Kims.

The following evidence suggests that the MPS is subordinated to the NDC (though the Party control is still valid), not to the administration council. Firstly, the security personnel of the MPS use military titles (rankings) and wear military uniforms (with different colored shoulder straps) as the military personnel of the People's Armed Forces (see table 1). Secondly, the Korean People's Guard Unit, an armed organization that is directly controlled by the General Staffs Bureau of the Korean People's Army, is subordinated under the MPS. Thirdly, the minister of the People's Security, Choe Ryong Su, is one of the nine members that comprises the NDC. Fourthly, the former minister of Public Security (now called the minister of the People's Security) held an overlapping position as a vice minister of the People's Armed Forces. Fifthly, mutual personnel exchanges between the MPS and the People's Armed Forces take place frequently, in which cadres (Generals) of the MPS are often transferred to the Ministry of People's Armed Forces. Sixthly, the first vice-chairman of the NDC and chief of the General Political bureau of the People's Army, Jo Myong Rok, attends and hosts events of the MPS. Finally, the nature of the work of the MPS, which deals with general public security matters, breeds an assumption that it may as well be placed under the command of the NDC. This is particularly so when we consider the fact that the State Security Department, the secret police, is also subordinated to the

NDC and uses military titles.

<Table 1> Ranking Structure of the Ministry of People's Security

Marshal	Generals	Officers		Subordinate Soldiers	
				Sergeants	Soldiers
Vice-Marshal	General	Senior Colonel	Captain	Master Sergeant	Superior Private
	Colonel General	Colonel	Senior Lieutenant	Senior Sergeant	Private
	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant	Sergeant	Primary Private
	Major General	Major	Junior Lieutenant	Corporal	Soldiers

B. Organizational System of the MPS

As shown in table 2, the central organization of the Ministry of People's Security consists of a minister, ten vice-ministers, the political bureau as an independent Party organization, security agency, and thirty departments.

The General Staff office in the central organization is divided into the supervision bureau, the investigation bureau, the operation bureau, the reform bureau, the security protection bureau, the guard training bureau, the citizen registration bureau, the communication bureau, the arms bureau, the finance bureau, the rear services bureau, the construction bureau, the resource management bureau, the Kumgang management bureau, the general command office (the briefing room),

the general affairs bureau, and the economic supervision bureau. As independent agencies under the MPS, there are the foreign affairs office, education office, transportation office, army medical office, air defense office, accounting office, printing office, and technology appraisal office (the 7th to the 10th offices are unidentified).

There are subordinate organizations under the direct control of the central apparatus, which can be enlisted as the East-West Railway Security bureau, the Subway System Management bureau, the 7th general bureau (engineering), and the 8th general bureau (road).

Organizations directly affiliated with the Ministry include the MPS political college, the engineering college, the Aproz river sports unit, the shooting unit, the money-printing factory, the pistol manufacturing factory, the vehicle repair center, the first and the second hospitals, mobile patrol units, the reconnaissance office, the classified information liaison office, the seismological research center, guarding units, the hepatitis hospital, and the technology research center.

Security departments under the direct control of the MPS are comprised of the central organization security department, the Changkwang security department, and the second economic committee security department.

There are other miscellaneous organizations belonging to the MPS. These are, namely, a gift factory, a publishing house, the MPS orchestra, the literature and art creation departments, the Maeari (echo) sound production company, the gift museum, and armory 73.

<Table 2> Central Organization of the MPS (*refer to the original org. chart)

인민보안성 Minister of People's Security 차수·최룡수 Vice Marshal Choi Ryong-su					
		부상 Vice-ministers			
정치국 Political Bureau		참모장 Chief of General Staff		보위부 Security Agency	
조직부국장 장기수장국장 Chief	선전부국장 장기수장국장 Chief	감찰국 장기수장국장 수사국	1부 장기수장국장 2부 장기수장국장		
		직전국 장기수장국장	3부 장기수장국장	검찰수 장기수장국장 각도직합시보안국	
간부부 장기수장국장	공일성지상연구실 장기수장국장 선물사직단	예심국 장기수장국장	4부 장기수장국장	철도보안국	
청년사업부 장기수장국장	미술창작단	교육국 장기수장국장	5부 장기수장국장	조악기관보안부	
근로대부 장기수장국장	문예창작단	복안국 장기수장국장	6부 장기수장국장	7 중급 (공병)	인민위원회 부안부 장기수장국장 외교부보안부
당원등록과 장기수장국장	도서관 장기수장국장	경비훈련국 장기수장국장	11부 장기수장국장	8 중급 (도로)	대사관보안부 장기수장국장
당생활지도과 장기수장국장	출판물 보급소 장기수장국장	주민등록국 장기수장국장	양력강제육단 장기수장국장	9 중급 (도로)	과학원보안부 장기수장국장
적위대사업부 장기수장국장	김정일 회 오실 장기수장국장	통신국 장기수장국장	경비중대 장기수장국장	국토중급	내각 부안부 장기수장국장
		병기국 장기수장국장	병원 장기수장국장	담서관리소 장기수장국장	중립대학 부안부 장기수장국장
		재정국 장기수장국장	기요연락소 장기수장국장	자위철도관리국 장기수장국장	
		후방국 장기수장국장		115 기동대 장기수장국장	
		건설국 장기수장국장		전파계산기 연구소 장기수장국장	
		지재관리국 장기수장국장			
		금강관리국 장기수장국장			

Public Security Bureau for Province and Directly Administered City					
Bureau Chief: Lieutenant General					
정치국 Political Bureau		참모장 General Staff Bureau Chief		보위지도원 Security Department Cadres	
조직비서 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	선전비서 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	안전부 국장 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	보안부 국장 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	공민등록부국장 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	국토부국장 2011년 1월 1일 10:00
					국토과 (7) 2011년 1월 1일
조직과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	선전과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (10)	직전과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (3)	보안과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (18)		
간부과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	선동과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (7)	감찰과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (15)	통인과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (23)	주민등록과 (26) 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (23)	
당원등록과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (4)	출입등록부 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (4)	산업감찰과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (15)	기보과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (4)	공민등록과 Citizen 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (7)	
통보과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	연구실 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (17)	수사과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (17)	후방과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (43)	5호실 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	
		예산과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (20)	소방대 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (34)		
		기동순찰대 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	교통지위대 2011년 1월 1일 10:00		
		예심처 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	경비지도원감찰과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00 (15)		
	반향공 부국장 2011년 1월 1일 10:00		악전 본주 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	사군 본부 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	
	vice-Chief				
		반향공과 2011년 1월 1일 10:00			
		회학대 2011년 1월 1일 10:00		리동 본주 2011년 1월 1일 10:00	

kun (county-level) Public Security Department						
Chief: Colonel						
정치부장 정치부장 정치부장						
안전부장 안전부장 안전부장	보안부장 보안부장 보안부장	경비부장 경비부장 경비부장	산림부장 산림부장 Chief	2부 Second Division	기요과 Confidential 기요과	후방부장 후방부장 Chief
안전과 안전과 안전과	감찰과 감찰과 감찰과	경비과 경비과 경비과				경리과 Accounting Section
교통과 교통과 교통과	수사과 수사과 수사과	내부경비원 내부경비원 내부경비원	산림과 산림과 산림과			
리분주소 담당자 Cadre	직전과 직전과 직전과		양동장 양동장 양동장			
	호안과 호안과 호안과					
	예심과 예심과 예심과					
	통신과 통신과 통신과					
	공민등록과 공민등록과 공민등록과					
	반탐과 Counter-Espionage Section					

공장, 기업소 보안서 Factory-Enterprise Security Department				리분주소 Security Office		
보안부부장 Security Vice Chief				책임보안원 Chief Security Cadre		
각직장보안원 각직장보안원 Cadre	방탐지도원 Counter-Espionage Cadre	공업지도원 공업지도원 Cadre	경비지도원 경비지도원 Personnel	경비지도원 경비지도원 Cadre	산림안전원 산림안전원 Cadre	경비원 경비원 Personnel

Table 4 illustrates regional organization of the MPS. There are Public Security Bureaus in the level of directly administered cities and provinces, Public security departments in the city and county level, and public security offices in the Dong and Ri level.

The Public Security Bureau (PSB) is a regionally coordinated and integrated organization of the North Korean police, which is equivalent to the 'regional police agency' in South Korea. At present, there exist 12 public security bureaus in total: Pyongyang city PSB; Nampo city PSB; Kaesong city PSB; South Pyongan Province PSB; North Pyongan Province PSB; South Hwanghae Province PSB; North Hwanghae Province PSB; South Hamgyong Province PSB; North Hamgyong Province; Kangwon Province PSB; Jaggang Province PSB; and Yanggang Province PSB.

The Public Security Bureau of Pyongyang City is the largest in size. It has a bureau chief (Lieutenant General), a general staff bureau chief (Major General), a political bureau chief (Major General), and five vice-chiefs. The general staff organization is made up of the general supervision office, the economic supervision office, the interrogation office, the preliminary examination office, the protection security office, the guard training office, the arms office, the rear services office, the citizen registration office, the foreign affairs office, the transportation safety office, the general office, the air defense office, the communication office, the land management department, and the 2nd department. Directly subordinated under the bureau are the guard unit, the mobile patrol unit, the fire department, the classified information

liaison unit, hospitals and 18 public security offices throughout the city. The bureau is located in Yukjundong, Joongguyeok in Pyongyang and is called 'Korea People's Guard Unit 8801.' The total number of staff is estimated to be about 20,000.

The Public Security Bureau in each province has a chief bureau (Major General - Lieutenant General), a chief of General Staff Bureau (Senior Colonel), three vice chiefs, and a chief of political department. It is comprised of the supervision office, the investigation office, the preliminary examination office, the protection security office, the transportation office, the communication office, the rear services office, the citizen registration office, the general affairs office, the guard training office, the air defense office, and the 2nd department. Its affiliated organizations are the guard unit, the mobile patrol unit, the political school, hospitals, the radio wave monitoring office, the military guard dog training center, the chemical unit, and armories. The number of personnel is between 2000 and 3000.

The administrative divisions in North Korea (up to December 2003) featured three directly administered cities (Pyongyang, Kaesong, and Nampo), 9 provinces, 29 cities, 147 kuns, 38 districts, 2 kus, 149 towns (eup), 3,311 ris, 896 donges, and 251 workers' districts.

The Public Security Department is a core regional organization of the North Korean police, which is equivalent to the police station in South Korea. Under the MPS, there are approximately 200 public security departments throughout cities and Kuns. Each security department has a public security department chief (Senior Colonel), a

vice-chief (Lieutenant Colonel-Colonel), and a political department chief (Colonel-Senior colonel). It is composed of the supervision section, the investigation section, the preliminary examination section, the protection security section, the transportation section, the administration section, the integration section, the air-defense section, the citizen registration section, the communication section, the general affairs section, the land section, the fire department and subordinate public security offices.

Organization of the public security department differs slightly in different regions. In some cases, the protection security section concurrently carries out transportation-related work. The integration section, the air-defense section, and the guard training section are sometimes integrated to form an operation section. In some other cases, combined work of the rear service section, the accounting section, and the general affairs section is taken up by either an administration section or a rear services section.

Each Public Security Department has a department chief (Lieutenant Colonel-Major), a vice-chief, 3-5 guiding officers, and security cadres. The number of security personnel in a Public Security Department amounts to about 200-500 (including the personnel of the public security offices). There are also 20-50 civilians working for the public security department.

The Public Security Office is a primary organization of the North Korean police, equivalent to the 'police stand' in South Korea. There are about 4,000 offices set up nationwide in the level of ri, dong, and

workers' district. Each office is comprised of 20-30 personnel including a chief (Major-Lieutenant Colonel), a vice chief (Captain-Major; concurrently a Party cell secretary), and security cadres. There used to be 5 to 10 personnel in each office, however, the number jumped to 20-30 from the mid-1990s. Following Kim Jong Il's instruction of "strengthening the low level combat unit in the Ministry of Public Security" in 1996, the number of personnel in the public security department in the city and county level was cut down to supplement the personnel size of the public security office.

The Public Security Office deploys 1-2 security cadres in an assigned area to supervise people's everyday lives, carry out lectures and patrol activities, investigate criminal cases, confirm exit and entry of outsiders, and check lodging facilities. The resident registration cadres handle citizen registration-related matters and keep detailed records of every household in the area. The 2nd department has 3-5 personnel, and deals with work related to issuing travel documents to the North Korean people.

The waiting area in the public security office is a room of about 4-5 pyong (1 pyong = 3.954 sq. yds) with no locking device. It is used as a temporary detention prison during interrogation of a convict (or a minor offender). The office does not have its own guards; the security staffs alternate work at the office reception every other day. Five to six civilian personnel work during the day, and two civilians work at night. All the security personnel who work at the public security office are armed with loaded pistols with 7 rounds, and in special cases, they carry an

extra 7-round ball cartridge.

The estimated personnel strength of the Ministry of People's Security is displayed in the following table.

<Table 5> The Personnel Size of the Ministry of People's Security

Public Security Personnel	80,000
The Korea Peoples Guard	210,000
The 7th General Bureau	80,000
The 8th General Bureau	40,000
Guard training Bureau and others	10,000
General Workers (civilian personnel)	100,000
Total	310,000

III . Departmental Duties of the Ministry of People's Security

1. Duties of the Top-Level Organization

The minister of People's Security is the head of the MPS who commands and directs the overall work of the North Korean police force. The present minister is Choi Ryong Su. The chief of General Staff of the MPS is a position that was newly established in October 1994. As North Korea became vulnerable to system change after the collapse of the socialist system and the death of Kim Il Sung in July 1994, the chairman of the National Defense Committee, Kim Jong Il, ordered transformation of the MPS to a wartime organizational structure. Following Kim's order, North Korea adopted a system similar to that of the Ministry of People's Armed Force including the chief of General Staff position. The chief of General Staff assists the minister in directing and handling all the practical works. At present, Colonel General Hwang Jin-Tak occupies the post.

Vice-ministers of People's Security assist the minister by coordinating and integrating the work of different departments. Currently, there appear to be about 10 vice-ministers in charge of security, supervision, rear service, citizen registration, engineering, and medical affairs. Vice-ministers are mostly of the rank of either Major General or Lieutenant General. The present vice-ministers are Kang

Young Ho, Paik Pong Man, Park Joong Gun, Park Yun Mo, Shin Il Nam, Shim Jae Bok, Lee Yong Sun, Cho Young Nam, and Han Su Man.

The Political Bureau is an independent political task organization that manages the Party tasks in the MPS. It is the most central and powerful department in the MPS that holds the right of personnel management (cadre task) and work inspection. The political bureau is not under the command of the minister, but that of the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee. Its duties may be listed as supervision and guidance of Party organizational life and ideology of all security personnel, inspection of performance of duties in the MPS, personnel and cadre management (selection, promotion, discharge, commendation, etc.), and supervision of all the public security departments and offices subordinated under the MPS.

The political bureau is stationed in the MPS headquarters with 300 personnel. It is comprised of a bureau chief (Lieutenant General Shim Won Il), two vice chiefs (respectively in charge of Organization and Propaganda), the organization bureau for the headquarters, the organization bureau for cities and provinces, the cadre department, the workers' department, the Party member registration department, the Party life guidance department, the reporting office, and the propaganda bureau (including the Kim Il Sung intellection study center, the historical museum of gifts, the art creation department, the literary creation department, the publication distribution center, library, the Kimjongilia greenhouse, and the MPS orchestra).

The Security Agency is an organization representing the State Safety and Security Agency in the MPS. The agency executes security work on the MPS, its subordinate organs, and all security personnel. The security task is considered the most important work of the State Safety and Security Agency that ensures safeguarding of the regime. The agency's work includes exposure of anti-revolutionary elements and spies, surveillance, counter-espionage, and escort.

2. Duties of Each Bureau and Office

The Supervision bureau collects criminal information, prevents crimes, exposes and investigates criminal cases, hands over cases to the Preliminary Examination bureau, circulates instruction of a decree, investigates wrongdoings of the security personnel, guides and supervises various 'groupa,' and sends supervision cadres to subordinate public security departments to guide and inspect supervision work.

The special mobile patrol is an independent army unit that belongs to the MPS Supervision bureau. It was established in 1995 to suppress collective actions that may occur nationwide and to maintain public order. It has a separate headquarters in Wasandong, Susong District in Pyongyang and consists of a patrol chief (Senior Colonel), a chief of general staff (Colonel), and 10 units (unit leader: Lieutenant Colonel) with five staffs per unit. The total number of personnel is about 80, of which 10 are women security officers. Following the command of the

chief of General Staff of the MPS, these units carry out their mobile patrol activities nationwide, and sometimes accompany expeditionary official trips to foreign countries (China). The mobile vehicles are generally Japanese Nissan automobiles, motorcycles, and jeeps. All members of the units are Takwondo black-belt holders, excellent shooters, and superb drivers (over grade 2) with good command of foreign languages (English, Japanese, and Chinese). They all carry 68-caliber revolvers.

The Investigation bureau arrests criminals, investigates the scene of a crime, identifies fingerprints, blood types, and handwritings, and supervises scientific investigation in the subordinate level. The Operation bureau controls and coordinates operation projects of the provincial public security bureaus, and executes air-defense work. The Preliminary Examination Bureau is in charge of the initial investigations of suspected major crimes, arrest and interrogation of the suspect, crime confirmation, and investigation of unsolved crimes. It also remands convicts to the prosecutor's office, and supervises the detention prison facilities until the convicts are sentenced through trial. The Reform Bureau provides supervision and guidance of systems of detention camp, labor camp, and prisons throughout the country. It handles all matters pertaining to prisoners after sentence has been pronounced, including assignment and transport of prisoners. The Protection Security bureau looks into security matters related to transportation, gunpowder, explosion, and machinery. It also administers traffic control posts, driving tests, provision of vehicle

number plates, and firefighting. It guides and supervises protection and security work of the subordinate security protection bureau.

The Guard Training bureau is responsible for the protection of high-level Party and government officials, their homes and important state facilities (the central Party and State buildings, foreign embassies, Party foreign liaison offices, major railways and tunnels, etc), military training of the security personnel, guidance of the guard unit for factories and enterprises, and supervision of guarding tasks of the subordinate public security bureaus. The Guard Training bureau was newly established in the Public Security Department in March 1983 when the work of guarding the coasts and borders was transferred to the State Security Department. The bureau is also called "4324 military unit of the Korean People's Guard", and has a separate headquarters in Songsan 2 dong, Sungyo district in Pyongyang.

The Citizen Registration bureau takes a census of the population, classifies people's social backgrounds, manages citizen registration records of the entire North Korean population (in the record center in Jaggang Province), and controls movement of the people. In addition to supervising the citizen registration task of the subordinate public security bureaus and offices, it sends out documents which contain detailed information on people requested by provincial public security bureaus. The bureau also provides registration numbers for approved residence in Pyongyang.

The Communication bureau controls security with respect to telegraphic, cable, and wireless communications in the MPS, inspects

unidentifiable radio waves, and supervises communication tasks of the subordinate public security bureaus. The bureau has a wire office, a wireless office, and a radio wave detective office. Within the MPS, there exist a squad of female operators (100-person, 24 hours operation system), a squad of male line-workers (100 persons), communication technicians (50 persons: communication engineering officers), radiomen (50 persons), and decoding personnel (number unknown).

The Arms bureau inspects and manages safekeeping of the weapons, repairs weapons, administers the armory, the arms repair center, and the pistol-manufacturing factory (factory 64), and supervises arms-related tasks of the subordinate provincial public security bureau. The Finance bureau makes and executes the budget of the MPS, buys technological materials for the ministry's work, and supervises finance and accounting work of the provincial public security department. The Rear Services bureau's charge is providing supplies (food and clothes) and equipment. In the bureau, there are the food department, the clothes department, and the subsidiary department. Affiliated with the bureau, there are clothing factories, shoe factories, subsidiary farms, marine product industries, and rear-services storages.

The Construction bureau builds and remodels major facilities of the MPS(e.g. headquarters building and staff apartment), and concurrently manages the interior of the buildings. Affiliated with the bureau are the building administration office, the MPS cement factory, and building

material factories. The Resource Management bureau carries out general management of the overall construction and rear materials. Kumgang Management bureau (alias Trade bureau) administers foreign currency earning business of the MPS, imports necessities for the MPS, runs Dong Hung Trade company, and supervises foreign currency earning business in the sub-level organizations. The bureau was originally established as the 'foreign currency earning bureau' under the Ministry of Public Security in May 1980. Now, there are 40-50 military officers and 5,000 civilian workers in the bureau.

The General Affairs bureau performs comprehensive administrative work for the MPS. It issues security personnel ID cards, investigator's ID, supervisor's ID, and business travel permits, handles and keeps various classified information, and administers the Classified Information Liaison office that transports the state classified documents. The Industrial Supervision bureau carries out a form of inspection throughout factories, enterprises, and collective farms on their work performance and execution of the state economic policy. Moreover, the bureau transfers economic criminals to the Preliminary Examination bureau following the investigation of the case, and supervises industrial inspection work of the subordinate offices.

The Railway Security bureau is a separate department of the MPS responsible for the security of the DPRK's train transportation lines (passenger trains and freights). It manages the security personnel in passenger trains, maintains traveling order, and supervises the railway security bureaus (and offices) in the subordinate level. The Railway

Security bureau was established in May 1977 as the 17th bureau of the Ministry of Public Security, but was renamed the 'Railway Safety Bureau' in early 1985. At present, it is called the '2213 military unit of the Korean People's Guard.' Its headquarters is located behind the Pyongyang station. The bureau is comprised of a chief of Railway Security bureau (Major General), a chief of General Staff (Senior Colonel), two vice-chiefs (in charge of safety and rear-services), the political department, and general staff organizations. There are ten provincial railway security bureaus (Pyongyang, South Pyongan, North Pyongan, South Hamgyong, North Hamgyong, South Hamgyong, Yanggang, Jaggang, North Hwanghae, South Hwanghae, Kangwon).

The Subway Management bureau is another separate department in the MPS that operates the subway system and manages the safety of subway trains. It has an independent headquarters in Yonghung 3 dong, Daesong district in Pyongyang. The MPS manages the subway system and underground facilities not only because the Ministry of Public Security constructed them as wartime shelters, but also because the MPS administers wartime training of the North Korean people such as air-defense drills.

The Engineer Bureau is an independent construction/engineer military unit under the MPS that builds major national infrastructure (the President's palace, villas for Kim Jong Il, etc). It was established in the Ministry of Public Security in early 1990, but later divided into the 7th and 8th general bureaus. The 7th bureau is called the '3154 military unit of the Korean People's Guard,' and is located in Jangeundong,

Mangyongdae district in Pyongyang. Under the command of a bureau chief (Colonel General Kim Chi Duk), a chief of general staff, and a chief of political bureau, there are about 20 engineer brigades and 80,000 staffs (4,000-5,000 personnel per brigade) working for the bureau. The 1st bureau carries out secret construction of Kim Jong Il's special residence. For this purpose, there exist seven brigades - 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, and 13th brigades. The 2nd bureau is charged with large-scale ground projects and has six engineer brigades of the 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th brigades. The 3rd bureau is responsible for the construction of the subway system and underground facilities and consists of 7 engineer brigades of the 27th, 29th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 35th, 37th brigades. The 4th bureau is responsible for digging the vertical mine shafts and constructing mines. Additionally, there is hospital 1.4, and the foreign currency earning office affiliated with the bureau.

Although the General Engineer bureau belongs to the Ministry of People's Security, it is a part of the Ministry of Defense.

04-5 Hyun Joon Chon

Hyun Joon Chon

A Study of the Social Control

System in North Korea: focusing on the Ministry of People's Security

By Hyun Joon Chon Korea Institute for National Unification

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The analyses, comments and other opinions contained in this monograph are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Korea Institute for National Unification.

Introduction

I. The Ministry of People's Security: a vanguard instrument for the leader's absolute rule
51. History of the MPS 52. Duties of the MPS 143. Status and Organization of the MPS
II. Departmental Duties of the Ministry of People's Security
34. Duties of the Top Level Organization 34. Duties of Bureau and Offices
III. Social Control by the Ministry of People's Security
41. Political Ideological Work 42. Citizen Registration Work 43. Classification and Investigation of the People's Social Status 504. Political Correction Task
IV. Conclusion 504

▶ Ranking Structure of the Ministry of People's Security 23 Table 2 ▶ Central Organization of the MPS (*refer to the original org. chart) 23 Table 3 ▶ Structure of Official Positions and the Rank System in the MPS 26 Table 4 ▶ Regional Organization of the MPS (ref-orgi

3. Table 6> Investigation Project of the People's Social Status

50 Table 7> Political Classification System in North Korea by social origin 51 Table 8> New Classification System in North Korea 52

Intro Table 9> The increasing tension between the US and North Korea surrounding the recent nuclear issue

induced reemergence of the 'collapse theory' of the North Korean regime that prevailed in the past. The collapse theory was particularly prevalent during the collapse of the socialist bloc, following the death of Kim Il Sung, and at times of deepening economic difficulties. Such a perspective, however, is largely derived from general theories of regime change and 'western-style' thinking. It assumes that collapse of North Korea is historically inevitable, for the North Korean people and the military with rational thinking would resist against the dictatorship and remove Kim Jong Il. It also assumes that the death of Kim Jong Il would be accompanied by regime collapse due to its totalitarian nature of the system. Verification of this collapse scenario is constrained by the 'time' variable, which poses difficulty for all social scientists. It is, therefore, inappropriate to discuss likelihood of regime collapse in North Korea, and moreover, it is beyond the scope of this study. It is evident that maintenance of any form of political system is possible through a proper mixture of coercion and persuasion. There is no need to mention that voluntary obedience of people is a stronger

feature in advanced democratic states while forced obedience is a relatively strong feature under dictatorship. It is thus possible

to hypothesize that a strong coercive attribute is a priori

in a totalitarian

system like the one in North Korea. This is particularly so because the ideology of 'socialism of the great leader' adopted by North Korea greatly stresses absolute loyalty to the leader. One explanation for the maintenance of the North Korean regime, despite various unfavorable conditions and misfortunes, may be pinpointed as a comprehensive and thorough control of the people by the State Security Department, the Ministry of People's Security, and the Public Security Commands. The Ministry of People's Security (MPS), which is equivalent to South Korea's police organization, especially, controls people from the closest distance. Among the countries that gained independence after the Second World War, South Korea is classified as a country that had most rapidly achieved economic growth and democratization. On the contrary, North Korea has not yet overcome backwardness, serious economic difficulties, and firm dictatorship. We often ask defectors why they think the North Korean regime continues. The most common answer is strong social control in North Korea. When we ask why they did not leave in North Korea to fight against the regime if they were bold enough to flee the country at the risk of their death, the general reply we receive is "you know little about North Ko-

rea." Control of the North Korean people is a life-or-death matter to the ruling class. Without proper social control, the leadership would not be able to maintain its power.

ress people's innate tendency to struggle for freedom. A steady rise in the number of defectors, despite strong control, may indicate weakening of social control in North Korea. Nevertheless, the fact that social deviation still fails to

of a collective, organized and political form may also imply

that socialist control of its efforts still operates
as self-identical.

This is backed by the fact that

s' testimony of a perfect control system, which discloses that if five people get together, at least one of them is conducting surveillance. A fortress of system maintenance in North Korea is, of course, the military. As reflected in the introduction of Kim Jong Il's 'military-first politics,' an advance guard point of national security is the Korean People's Army, the so

-called 'descendants of the Partisan.' Furthermore, it is widely known that the State Security Department contributes greatly to the system maintenance. However, discussing the North Korean control system without the Ministry of People's Security, which closely supervises and controls every movement of the North Korean people, is simply unreliable. For a significant period of time after the liberation, Koreans used to

employ expressions such as "a tiger is coming for you" or "the Japanese police is coming to arrest you" to scare misbehaving children. Such fear expressions are still commonly used in today's North Korea. Understanding how the MPS operates may be a useful means to identifying the basis of system maintenance in North Korea. This study, thus, examines the MPS in terms of its organization, role and fun

change in the future. Because this study aims to find 'new information' through the process of collecting primary data, it has a 'static' feature as opposed to that of pure academic research. The study is limited to scrutiny of the organization as well as duties of the MPS and its subordinate organs. Therefore, it does not examine the dynamics of change in the North Korean regime in relation to the development of the MPS. Additionally, t

he description of people's condition in North Korea may not be entirely accurate since the survey mainly relied on memories of defectors.

Upon the Soviet occupation of the northern part of Korea, public peace and order in the north was maintained by the Japanese military and police after national liberation. The task was later taken over by private security maintenance committees based in different provinces - Jawuidae (self defense unit: the right wing organization), Oidae (public safety unit: the left wing organization) and Jukwuidae (guard unit: the organization of Koreans from the Soviet army) - which operated independently from each other. These units were dissolved afte

of the Soviet occupation, leaving public security in the hands of

of the Soviet army. The Soviet force (the Soviet 25th Army under the command of Colonel General Chistiakov) began to march into the northern

part of Korea from August 17, 1945. By August

August 26, the Soviet 25th Army completed its occupation in Pyongyang. Upon establishment of the 'Soviet military command,' it proclaimed the 'order of the commander of the 25th Soviet Army in North Korea' (October 12, 1945), and ordered dissolution of all armed units. In each province, the Soviet army established the protection and security units (boendae) with a set number of personnel to maintain public order in cooperation

with the Soviet army. These units were placed under the command of the protection and security bureau of the 'five province administrative bureau' which was established on October 19. Responding to the request of Chon Man Sik, who was then winning strong popular support, the Soviet military

command began to negotiate on how to structure an administrative apparatus for the whole of North Korea. The negotiating took place in the Five Northern Provinces Conference that was held from October 8 to 9, 1945. On November 19, the Five Provinces People Committee was expanded and developed into the Five Province Administrative Bureau. Then bureaus were set up under the Five Province Administrative Bureau to respectively deal with industry, transportation, agriculture, commerce, finance, post, education, public health, judiciary, and so on. It was taken

a. South Korea's difficulties in the unit test is separate given the 6th Protocol

on and Security Bureau, which is [REDACTED]

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STUDY OBJECTIVES

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should be over by a permanent North Korean People's Committee

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Chairman: Kim Il Sung) upon its establishment on February 20, 1947. The Protection and Security Bureau was renamed the Bureau of Internal Affairs. Within the People's Committee, the 'National Security Bureau' was newly established on February 7, 1947 to mainly deal with tasks of national defence. Accordingly, the existing Bureau of Internal Affairs was renamed the

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ice bureau), the seventh bureau (reform bureau), the eighth bureau

ps; information gathering; investigation on figures who partook in the South Korean government; counterespionage tasks; and guidance of the internal affairs departments in every city and province. 18

The Ministry of Public Security merged into the Ministry of Internal Affairs for two possible reasons: firstly, there appeared a problem of low efficiency as tasks of the MPS were becoming more complex. Secondly, the MPS's incompatibility with the ministry of internal affairs generated confusion in carrying out public security work. Behind the scene

s, however, there was personal motivation of the minister of Public Security, Bang Hak-Sae, who was informally appointed to the minister of Internal Affairs; Bang wanted to have the MPS organization under his influence by integrating them into the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Related to this issue, Kim Il Sung mentioned a 'left' deviations tendency of the Ministry of Public Security in his speech. This seems to suggest that the merger was away of calling the MPS to account for its failure in fulfilling the party tasks.

In 1956, the structure of the ministry of Internal Affairs expanded extensively to have 5 vice ministers, 9 bureaus and 7 offices under minister Bang Hak-Sae. It consisted of the first bureau (public security bureau), the second bureau (supervision bureau), the third bureau (protection security bureau), the fourth bureau (political bureau), the fifth bureau (general affairs bureau), the sixth bureau (rear serv

Ministry of the Environment

[REDACTED]

bureau), and the ninth bureau (government guard bureau: escort tasks), as well as office 2 (cadre office), office 3 (guard office), office 4 (counter-espionage office), office 5

(communications office), office 7 (air-defence office), and the economic security office. Office 4 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs exclusively dealt with espionage tasks against South Korea and other

foreign countries and had 7 divisions, listed as the South Korea department (dept. 1), Japan department (dept. 2), Far East department (dept. 3), accounting department (dept. 4), liaison department (dept. 5), operations department (dept. 6), and Europe department (dept. 7). Formation of the third DPK cabinet on October 23 1962 brought about a major alteration to the organization. The Ministry of Public Security was newly established to exclusively conduct the police tasks, while the Ministry of Internal Affairs was given new duties such as soil management, management of na-

the session of the 7th Supreme People's Assembly, on April 5

renamed the Ministry of 'Land Administration' With an adoption

of a new socialist constitution on December 27, 1972, the cabinet was reorganized to become the Administration Council, and the Ministry of Public Security was renamed the Public Security Department (chief: Kim Byung Ha). As Kim Il Sung instructed in May 1973

to separate the task of public order and the task of political security, the Political Security bureau was separated from the Ministry, and became an independent entity called the 'State Political Security

Agency' (also known as the State Security Department). Consequently, the Ministry of Public Security

carried out the police work, and the State Political Security Agency executed a wide range of counterintelligence and internal security functions normally associated with secret police. The Agency monitored political attitudes of the general public and high-ranking officials, searched out anti-state criminals, took upon counterintelligence responsibilities, and administered camps for political prisoners. In early 1982, the chief of the public security department, Lee Jisu, was appointed the chief of the State Political Security Agency. The border and coastguarding duties that were formerly carried out by the Ministry of Public Security were transferred to the Agency. At t

1982, the public security department was separated from the administration, and continued in the direction of the

f the Korean Workers' Party along with the Ministry of People's Armed Forces. At the 1st session of the 8th Supreme People's Assembly, however, the public security department was again returned to the administration council. On September 5, 1998, the DPRK constitution was revised, in which the administration council changed to the cabinet and the public security department to the Ministry of Public Security. On the third day of the third meeting of the 10th SPA on April 6, 2000, the Ministry of Public Security was

renamed the Ministry of People's Security. It was decided in the meeting as follows: "The SPA would abolish the name the 'Ministry of Public Security' of the Republic, and newly name it as **Ministry of People's Security**."

Ministry of People's Security. This is to exalt the enduring feats of the great leader in establishing and leading the true security apparatus for the people and to further heighten the function and role of the security organizations to meet the demand of constructing a strong and prosperous socialist country (Sahuijuyui Kangsung Daeguk)." North Korea's intention appears to be directed towards securing the authority and position of

f the Ministry of Public Security which relatively weakened in the process of building and consolidating the successor's system after the death of Kim Il Sung; inducing loyalty competition within the security apparatus, and accentuating Kim Jong Il's people-first ruling style. **Ministry of People's Security** duties of the

MPS are very broad. The basic tasks of the MPS can be listed as pr

cting the head of the state, Kim Jong Il, the MPS is assigned

urity tasks of the Korean Workers' Party and the North Korean regime; protecting property and life of the North Korean people; and maintaining the social order. Due to the peculiarity of the North Korean regime, however, death-defying defense of the leader, the Party, and the regime is considered top priority. This

reflects

~~1. THE TASK OF DEFENDING AND PROTECTING THE LEADER~~
~~IS THE MOST CENTRAL AND ABSOLUTE DUTY OF THE MPS.~~
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~~IS THE MOST CENTRAL AND ABSOLUTE DUTY OF THE MPS.~~

~~THE TASK OF DEFENDING AND PROTECTING THE LEADER~~ the resolution
nary viewpoint of the great leader, which stresses eternal har-
mony of the leader, the party (state organs), and the Korean people.
At the national security office branch meeting in Pyongyang that
was held from September 30 to October 1, 1999, the general poli-
tical bureau chief of the People's Army, Jo Myung Rok, congratulated
the security officers for their absolute loyalty to the leader and their
successful achievements in protecting the headquarters of the revolution.
In the same meeting, Vicemarshal Jo further stressed that security offi-
cers should be fully equipped with the spirit of defending the lea-

der at the risk of one's life, the spirit of "human bombs," and
the spirit of suicidal attack. **A. Defending and protecting the great leader**
The task of defending and protecting the leader is the
most central and absolute duty of the MPS. Through defending and prote-

Article 118 specified in the DPRK constitution (article 4-5) as the following:

safeguard the North Korean regime. In safeguarding the regime, the MP
S puts top priority on surveillance of anti-state, anti-revolutionary acts
. The anti-state

n plots to o

throw the republic or in acts of revolt; acts of terrorism against the Party and government "and patriotic people"; preparation, conspiracies, agitation or propaganda against the state to encourage anti-state criminal acts; and treason against the country and people by citizens through acts of

espionage or collaborating with enemies. The MPS only uses these of anti-state crimes

, and refers such cases directly to the State Security Department (alias State Safety and Security Agency) for imposition of punishment. The MPS carries out work related to protection of the leadership supporting the State Safety and Security Agency and the Guard Command, which is responsible for t

he personal security of Kim Jong Il. The event in which Kim Jong Il participates is called 'event no. 1.' These events accompany all the armed guarding organizations such as the Guard Command, the State Security Department, t

he Security bureau of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces, the Security Command, and the Ministry of People's Security. The MPS is specifically responsible for checking the list of participants, controlling traffic signals when Kim Jong Il travels, and guarding roads in the areas where events take place. Additionally the MPS directly administers the Kim Il Sung thought study center, the Kim Il Sung museum of gifts, and Kim Jong Il g

greenhouse, through which it propagates the achievements of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Around the time of Kim's birthday (February 16), the MPS set out on the Kim Jong Il idolization project.

B. Managing tasks of the Party and the State security The MPS directs and executes overall state security tasks to defend and follow the lines of the Korean Workers' Party and the DPRK. The Classified Information Liaison office under the General

Affairs bureau keeps, handles, and transports classified documents of the state organs. While the Classified Information Liaison office transports the classified documents, the General Affairs bureau of the MPS issues a travel pass for transportation of the state classified documents, produces cryptograph and decipherers. All the state classified (secret) documents are kept in a classified information center (underground gallery) located in Manpo city in Jaggang Province. The Government Guard bureau of the MPS guards major state

facilities, such as provincial or city Party buildings, and protects high-ranking officials and their homes. The Air Defense bureau prepares for possible wartime, and thus, carries out training of citizens for evacuation against chemical and air raids. It regularly conducts (twice a year) air raid drills for its civilian population. The MPS also prints official North Korean public money issued by the Central Bank. The only money-printing house (so called factory no. 62) is located in Baesandong, Pyongsong City in South Pyongan Province, and it is outwardly disguised

pects factories, enterprises, and collective farms to see whether they properly follow state economic policies. The Foreign Affairs office dispatches security personnel to the North Korean embassies overseas to execute security work and to watch over North Koreans living abroad.

Maintaining social order The MPS directs overall tasks of maintaining social order, which is in greater demand in the 1990s due to increasing crimes and transgression related to severe economic difficulties. Regional organizations of the MPS carry out criminal investigations and prevention of criminal activities. To curtail capitalistic or anti-social crimes which began to surface amidst deepening economic difficulties, the MPS cooperates with the State Security and the

erility Agency to top secret - social structures in the society. The perfect and sky

o

f the MPS and relevant regional organizations maintain a traffic order, carry out traffic control, administer driving tests, issue driver's licenses, conduct vehicle registration, and produce number plates. In order to prevent any kind of power, electric, or machinery-related explosions and accidents, the MPS carries out inspection, control, and investigation of explosive materials.

D. Surveillance of people's ideology As a way of safeguarding the regime, the MPS concentrates on checking people's ideological consciousness. As the nature of this work is closely related to mai-

tenance of social order and efficient social control, the MPS conducts projects like political classification of the people, citizen registration and record keeping, issuing citizen identification cards, controlling and directing people's relocation and change of residence, and so on.

C. Census The MPS also takes a census of the population nationwide every two years, and classifies individuals into different social groups on the basis of the survey. Through its subordinate organizations (i.e. the citizen registration departments in city and

kun-level), the MPS issues citizen identification cards to all citizens over the age of 17, and administers citizen registration (birth and death records) work. The MPS also controls the movement of the population by issuing documents of travel permits and by dealing with matters related to changing residence, address change, and transfer of jobs.

t. E. **Construction of major state facilities and management of land**
The MPS is directly involved in land development projects such as construction of major facilities and road management. The actual work is carried out by the 7th and 8th general bureaus and other subordinate regional organizations. The 7th general bureau, an independent military unit, controls special engineering tasks of building major state facilities, including villas of Kim Il Sung.