

Unification Options and Scenarios: Assisting A Resistance

David S. Maxwell

Unification of Korea is the only acceptable outcome on the Korean Peninsula. It is the only condition that will solve three of the most intractable problems in Northeast Asia: (1) the Kim family regime's nuclear threat; (2) the human rights atrocities and crimes against humanity that have been perpetrated on the Korean people living in the north each and every day for the past six decades; and (3) the achievement peace and prosperity in the region. It is only through unification described as "a stable, secure, peaceful, economically vibrant, non-nuclear peninsula, reunified under a liberal constitutional form of government determined by the Korean people," that can bring security and stability to Northeast Asia.

There are four paths to unification: peaceful, internal regime change, regime collapse, and war. Because no one can foresee the path it will take, planning for unification has been stymied. Peaceful unification is the best but also counterintuitively the hardest to achieve. Regime collapse (that could lead to conflict) and war will result in the significant loss of blood and treasure and have global economic impact as a minimum. Further, it is possible that due to North Korean indoctrination that the Korean people living in the north may resist unification and form a resistance to conduct an insurgency against the ROK as it implements unification plans.

There is the possibility of growing internal resistance against the Kim family regime. Considering the possibility of resistance after the removal of the regime, one way to prevent it may be to co-opt the internal resistance now, give it support and whether it is successful or not, this could help prevent organized resistance to unification. It is time to take a professional approach to supporting a resistance in the north.

Keywords: Unification, Kim family regime, Dresden Initiative, resistance, unconventional warfare

"It is time to take a professional approach to supporting a resistance among the Korean people living in the north."

Unification of Korea is the only outcome that will solve three of the most intractable problems in Northeast Asia: (1) the Kim family regime's nuclear threat; (2) the human rights atrocities and crimes against humanity that have been perpetrated on the Korean people living in the north¹ each and every day for the past six decades; and (3) the threat to peace and prosperity in the region. It is only through unification, described as "*a stable, secure, peaceful, economically vibrant, non-nuclear peninsula, reunified under a liberal constitutional form of government determined by the Korean people,*"² that can bring security and stability to Northeast Asia. No enlightened person can deny that this is what all Korean people deserve.

The combination of threats posed by North Korea with its conventional and asymmetric military capabilities, and the impact of conflict on the region and globally as well as the thought of the humanitarian crisis with 25 million hungry and suffering Korean people, has paralyzed the nations that have a major role in the region (the Republic of Korea, the United States, Japan, China, and Russia) as well as the broader international community. For decades we have approached the security and humanitarian problems through stovepipes trying to solve pieces and parts of the overall problem. There are the six-party talks trying to solve the nuclear problem, while the regime continues to develop and test nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems, while rewriting its constitution to call itself a nuclear state. For the first time, there is the United Nations Commission of Inquiry (COI) investigation of the human rights atrocities that called for the referral of Kim Jong-un to the International Criminal Court. There are

-
1. The use of the phrase "Korean people living in the north" is deliberate. It is used to recognize that there are no north or South Korean people but only Koreans out of respect for the ROK Constitution and the unnatural division of the peninsula.
 2. David S. Maxwell, "A Strategy for the Korean Peninsula Beyond the Nuclear Crisis," *Military Review* 84, no. 5 (2004), p. 104.

many other initiatives of engagement with governments and non-government organizations to assist the north with education, technology development, and agricultural development as well as food aid trying to assist the Korean people living in the north.

It is time to recognize the central problem and to understand that nuclear weapons and human suffering are the result of one thing: the existence of the Kim family regime and its oppression and enslavement of the Korean people living in the north. With recognition of the problem, it may be possible to harness or at least orchestrate the actions of the many disparate organizations to achieve one goal: to free the people in the north and reunite the entire Korean Peninsula.

Of course to many, this is interpreted as regime change and in effect that is what I am arguing except that I am not arguing for an externally imposed regime change but one organized, led, and executed by people from within the northern part of Korea so that they can be free to peacefully reunite with their Korean brothers and sisters in the southern half of the peninsula.

What stymies the international community and regional powers from achieving decisive change in the Kim family regime behavior and solving the nuclear and human rights issues is first and foremost the existence of the regime and its vital national interest: regime survival. The regime will not succumb to international engagement or pressure or carrots or sticks. It will only continue to practice its time worn strategy of conducting blackmail diplomacy by using provocations to gain political and economic concessions while conducting illicit activities (counterfeiting, drug trafficking, and weapons proliferation to rogue states and non-state actors) around the world to gain hard currency and vital resources to ensure survival of the regime. There is no carrot or stick that will cause the regime to end its quest for nuclear weapons or lift the yoke of oppression from the people in the north because both are deemed as key to regime survival.

The second obstacle that prevents action is the uncertainty of regime collapse that could very likely lead to conflict or the outbreak of war between North and South on the Peninsula. The only thing we know with some certainty is that any form of conflict from regime

collapse or war will lead to a tremendous loss of blood and treasure on the peninsula and the economic effects of conflict will have global impact.

Some will argue that supporting a resistance in North Korea poses a moral hazard as it could put innocent Koreans at risk if the Kim family regime conducts widespread security operations to suppress a resistance. I would argue that the regime is already conducting such operations because the system is designed in such a way as to deliberately oppress the people to prevent coups and resistance. Yes, there will be crackdowns and Koreans will be arrested and put into the gulags and worse. But I would counter the moral hazard argument with a reminder that the 25 million Koreans living in the north are already suffering horrendously with many being sent to the gulags and worse already. They deserve to be free and the risk posed by supporting a resistance is one worth taking for the people to attain freedom. We should consider the morality of not helping them and remember the history of not helping the suffering and oppressed which has in past times led to genocide in other parts of the world.

Nor should we be afraid to talk about this for fear of upsetting the Chinese or even undermining potential negotiations with North Korea. The Chinese and the Kim family regime, as well as others in the international community, believe this is the ROK, and with U.S. support, objective of President Park's Dresden Initiative.³ No amount of words, denials, or lack of words will alter their belief, so we may as well be transparent about our belief and desired end state: that there will be no end to the nuclear threat, no end to the human rights atrocities, or the establishment of security and stability in North Korea and Northeast Asia until there is unification. We should not shy away from these objectives or the way to achieve them.

Why should we focus on internal resistance among the Korean people living in the north? From all outward appearances, it seems

3. "Full Text of Park's Speech on N. Korea," *The Korean Herald*, March 28, 2014 (also known as the Dresden Initiative), available at: <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20140328001400>.

that Kim Jong-un has a firm grip on the nation given the successfully brutal purges he continues to execute. In fact, a reading of Robert Collins' seminal work on the analysis of regime collapse shows that North Korea is in the suppression phase (phase four of the seven phases of regime collapse) and that it is phase five in which resistance overcomes the regime's ability to suppress. Once phase five is reached, there could be a quick succession through phase six, the fracture of the regime, and phase seven, the formation of a new government (and possibly the beginning of the path to unification).⁴

We are seeing some evidence of internal resistance from the nascent but growing black market economy as well as the newly authorized markets in support of the *byungjin* policy (dual efforts to develop nuclear weapons and the economy),⁵ to the increasing access to outside information and people taking risks to hear the news from non-North Korean sources and watch South Korean dramas. Although we have recently seen soldiers cross the DMZ to defect, there has been an overall decline in defectors due to the increased border security to prevent civilian defections. This may be an indication of the regime's assessment of the increasing resistance among the general population. We also see evidence where security forces, to include the military, are strong-arming the people not to enforce laws or protect the regime but to obtain resources, both money and food, for themselves. And while corruption has always been an integral part of the regime we are seeing it rise to even higher levels. We have seen evidence of possible mutiny dating back to 1996 and the 6th Corps. One of the most important indicators can be summarized by this assessment by Dr. Bruce Bechtol:

-
4. Robert Kaplan, "When North Korea Fails," *Atlantic Magazine*, October 2006, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/10/when-north-korea-fails/305228/> Kaplan summarizes Robert Collins' Seven Phases of Collapse.
 5. Cheon Seong-Whun, "The Kim Jong-un Regime's 'Byungjin' (Parallel Development) Policy of Economy and Nuclear Weapons and the 'April 1st Nuclearization Law,'" KINU Online Series CO13-11, Korea Institute for National Unification, April 23, 2013, [http://www.kinu.or.kr/upload/neoboard/DATA01/co13-11\(E\).pdf](http://www.kinu.or.kr/upload/neoboard/DATA01/co13-11(E).pdf).

"Anecdotal incidents like this (and worse) also occurred under Kim Jong-il — including a corps-wide mutiny in 6th corps.

The difference is that now — and this is key — much of the corruption, confusion, and fear now exists at the very highest levels. This is as a result of the misjudged overcompensation and purges conducted by Kim Jong-un. His father always had the loyalty of the army and knew how to pay off or coerce high ranking officials to get the loyalty of those that mattered — despite the problems with maintaining a 1.2 million man military in a country of 25 million people, with an economy in the toilet. Kim Jong-un still has no real power base in the military. This may — may — be what brings him down."⁶

Dr. Bechtol's powerful and important assessment should be a wake-up call to the possibility of regime collapse and all the attendant consequences for the alliance and should motivate us to consider the importance of internal resistance in North Korea and the implications of such resistance both before and after regime collapse or conflict and especially as it might influence Korean unification.

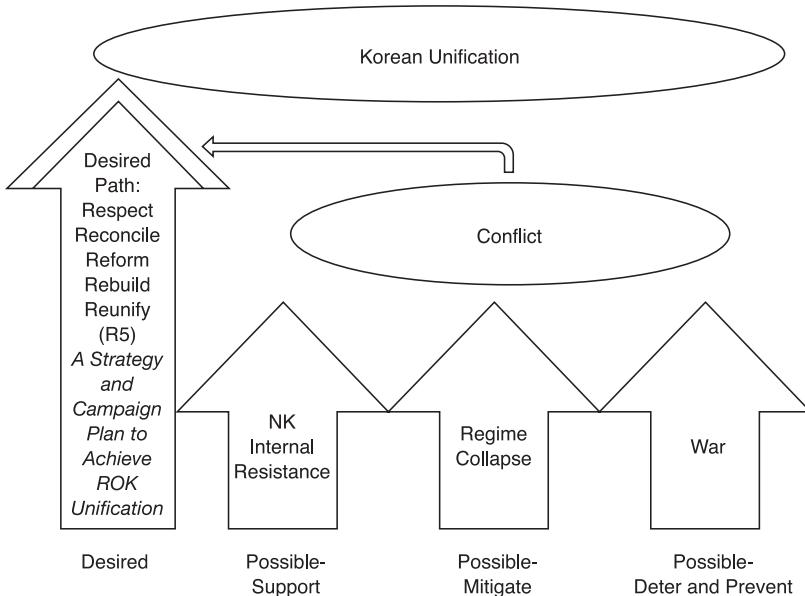
As I have previously written I believe there are four broad paths to unification (Figure 1).⁷

Certainly peaceful unification is the ideal and we would very much like it to follow the "5 R's" — respect, reconciliation, reform, rebuild, and reunify. However, as stated and as I think most recognize, Kim Jong-un is unlikely to follow such a path unless he was assured that the end result would be a Korean Peninsula dominated by the Kim family regime, something which the ROK government and 99 percent of the 48 million Koreans living in the South would never allow.

But the pursuit of peaceful unification is important though there has been relatively little planning for it. The first is that we are paralyzed by the thought that unification may only come through the catastrophic collapse of the Kim family regime or the re-initiation of

6. Email from Dr. Bruce Bechtol to the author, June 19, 2015.

7. David S. Maxwell, "Should The United States Support Korean Unification And If So, How?" *International Journal of Korean Studies* 18, no. 1 (2014), pp. 139-156.

Figure 1. Paths to Korean Unification.⁸

hostilities that will conclude the war that was suspended by the Armistice in 1953 (with a ROK victory this time). The second is that although it may seem counterintuitive, planning for peaceful unification is hard and complex and has been held back because of this complexity as well as the desire not to telegraph the desires of the ROK and the alliance.

Planning for peaceful unification is much harder than unification after war or collapse. It requires planning for the complete integration of the Koreans living in the north into a modern political, economic and cultural paradigm that has been virtually unknown by the people in the North and for which they have no experience. From a free market to free elections to integration and transition of existing bureaucracies as well as militaries to recovery and proper disposition of nuclear weapons (just to name a few) peaceful unification is going

8. Ibid.

to be very challenging and it is the realization of this complexity that has caused paralysis among many who should be planning for this and instead, we plan for deterrence and defense, defense against regime provocations and possible regime collapse. All of these contingencies prevent us from planning for the ultimate end state. What is missed, however, is that regardless of the path to unification, the basic requirements for integration and transition in a peaceful unification scenario will be required in various forms after war or collapse. This despite the fact that some view unification of Korea after war or collapse as easier because the North Korean political system, the military, and the infrastructure will be destroyed. The entire territory of the northern part of Korea will have to be rebuilt from the ground up.

This assumption that unification will be easier following war or collapse neglects the recognition that the Korean people living in the north, due to indoctrination, ignorance, fear, remnants of the North Korea regime and military, and various other reasons may in fact resist unification. Resistance by the Korean people living in the north is likely the most difficult condition that the ROK and the ROK-U.S. alliance will have to address.

I recently participated as a guest lecturer in a course at Fort Leavenworth called "The Special Operations Campaign Artistry Program" (SOCAP) which is based on the Army TRADOC G2's Red Team Leaders Course.⁹ A handful of students were asked to look at contingencies on the Korean Peninsula and after conducting a strategic analysis they understood that the long-term end state was unification of the Korean Peninsula.

They introduced me to a technique call pre-mortem analysis.

"Premortem analysis is a method for helping decision makers anticipate problems. The purpose of a Premortem is to find key vulnerabilities in a plan. In contrast to risk analysis, Premortem begins with the assumption that the plan has failed. The pull of groupthink, consensus, and a false sense of security is punctured, and is replaced by an active search

9. Red Team Leader Training, <http://usacac.army.mil/organizations/ufmcs-red-teaming>.

aimed at preventing trouble later on. The premise for the Premortem exercise is that people may feel too confident once they have arrived at the plan. Premortem analysis empowers the participants to question the premise of a proposed course of action, its assumptions, and tasks. It breaks ownership of a course through a divergent process that encourages objectivity and skepticism.”¹⁰

As they looked at the problem of Korean unification, they conducted the Premortem analysis and among other causes of failure and difficulty in achieving the end state (e.g., costs too high; China blocks unification, extended civil war and internal conflict), they determined that one of the biggest threats to unification could be internal resistance and insurgency waged by both remnants of the Kim family regime and the Korean people living in the north.

One of the reasons for such resistance might be because North Korea and the Kim family regime are a “guerrilla dynasty,” a phrase coined by author Adrian Buzo who gave that to his book on North Korea. He described the nation of the regime this way:

“In the course of this struggle against factional opponents, for the first time Kim began to emphasize nationalism as a means of rallying the population to the enormous sacrifices needed for post-war recovery. This was a nationalism that first took shape in the environment of the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement and developed into a creed through the destruction of both the non-Communist nationalist forces and much of the leftist intellectual tradition of the domestic Communists. Kim’s nationalism did not draw inspiration from Korean history, nor did it dwell on past cultural achievements, for the serious study of history and traditional culture soon effectively ceased in the DPRK [Democratic People’s Republic of Korea]. Rather, DPRK nationalism drew inspiration from the Spartan outlook of the former Manchurian guerrillas. It was a harsh nationalism that dwelt on past wrongs and promises of retribution for “national traitors” and their foreign backers.

10. *The Applied Critical Thinking Handbook* (Formerly the Red team Handbook), Version 7.0 January 2015, University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies, TRISA (TRADOC G2 Intelligence Support Activity), Ft Leavenworth, Kansas, pp. 167-169.

DPRK nationalism stressed the “purity” of all things Korean against the “contamination” of foreign ideas, and inculcated in the population a sense of fear and animosity toward the outside world. *Above all, DPRK nationalism stressed that the guerrilla ethos was not only the supreme, but also the only legitimate basis on which to reconstitute a reunified Korea.*¹¹ (emphasis added)

Because the Korean people living in the north have been indoctrinated with this “guerrilla ethos” remnants of the regime and the military, and as well as some of the population are likely to resist all outside intervention even from the ROK. We must not make the same erroneous assumption made in 2003 in Iraq: that the U.S. and coalition forces would be welcomed as liberators. In fact, although there was a positive welcome initially by many in Iraq, it is unlikely that there will be anything near that level in North Korea even after the collapse of the regime by whatever means. As I have written, I think resistance and insurgency in North Korea could make Iraq pale in comparison.¹²

At this point, we have two competing views of resistance in North Korea. On the one hand, we are seeing nascent resistance among the Korean people living in North Korea. The indications are small, e.g., the people are defying the regime in accessing outside information and using foreign currency, the decrease in defections may be a result of regime assessments that more people are trying to escape. There are cracks in the security apparatus as they become more concerned with gaining personal wealth than strictly enforcing the laws of the regime. On the other hand, we are concerned with the likelihood that there will be resistance to unification following war or

-
11. Adrian Buzo, *The Guerrilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1999), p. 1.
 12. David S. Maxwell, “Irregular Warfare on the Korean Peninsula,” *Small Wars Journal*, November 30, 2010 <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/irregular-warfare-on-the-korean-peninsula>. Also in Chapter Six “Thoughts on Irregular Threats from north Korea - Post-Conflict and Post-Collapse: Understanding Them to Counter Them,” in Confronting Security Challenges on the Korean Peninsula, ed. Bruce Bechtol (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Foundation, 2011).

regime collapse because of the guerrilla ethos. As we consider the Premortem analysis that resistance and insurgency could prevent or at least significantly hinder unification, we must determine a way to mitigate if not prevent resistance in the north.

One possible way to prevent resistance to unification is to co-opt the nascent resistance to focus its efforts toward resisting the Kim family regime now and for the ROK-U.S. alliance to assist in development of the resistance. In short, the ROK and the U.S. should consider conducting unconventional warfare that is defined as “operations and activities that are conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area.”¹³

If we recall the four paths to unification I postulated above; peaceful unification, internal regime change, regime collapse, and war we should consider that internal regime change resulting in a leadership willing to seek peaceful unification could be the optimal path to unification.

What we are really describing here is a fight for legitimacy among the Korean people living in the north to include second tier leaders who are not part of the Kim family regime core. Even if a resistance does not result in a regime change and there is catastrophic collapse or war the resistance that was developed and supported could play a key role in stabilizing the northern part of Korea during post-collapse or post-conflict. It could be instrumental in preventing an insurgency as well as in the transition to a unified Korea through assisting the integration of political, economic and security institutions.

There are five main objectives for a resistance force support by the ROK government and the ROK-U.S. alliance:

1. Undermine the legitimacy of the Kim family regime (KFR) in the eyes of the Korean people living in the north.

13. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, March 15, 2015, p. 255, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf.

2. Identify and assist in co-opting and coercing 2nd Tier Leaders¹⁴ who will be influential in the post-KFR period .
3. Identify and assist in securing regime scientists involved with nuclear weapons development after regime collapse.
4. Provide local leadership in a post KFR period.
5. Provide intelligence support to ROK forces and liaison between ROK Force, ROKG agencies, and Korean organizations and agencies in the north. (Note: A resistance force supported by the ROKG can be a key transition element leading to unification.)

The remainder of this paper will provide an overview tailored to Korea for how to assist a resistance among the Korean people living in the north with the objective of incorporating the resistance into support for unification. The focus will be on the outline of a campaign plan to support the strategic end state of unification but it will use the classic seven unconventional warfare phases to describe some of the campaign actions that will assist the ROK-U.S. alliance in developing resistance in North Korea. U.S. doctrine for unconventional warfare will form the basis for this overview; however, ROK and U.S. forces are interoperable within the special operations mission. Although the foundation is military, more than the military is required to be successful. Political leadership, intelligence, information and influence activities are required and in fact George Kennan first outlined the concept in 1948 in his call for political warfare:

Kennan called for “the logical application of Clausewitz’s doctrine in time of peace.” While stopping short of the direct kinetic confrontation between two countries’ armed forces, “*political warfare is the employment of all the means at a nation’s command … to achieve its national objectives.*” A country embracing Political Warfare conducts “both overt and covert” operations in the absence of declared war or overt force-on-force hostilities. Efforts “range from such overt actions as political alliances, economic measures…, and ‘white’ propaganda to such covert operations as *clandestine support of ‘friendly’ foreign elements,*

14. 2nd Tier Leaders defined as those who have regional political and military power and influence but who are not members of the core of the Kim family regime. An example is a Corps Commander outside of Pyongyang.

*'black' psychological warfare and even encouragement of underground resistance in hostile states.'*¹⁵

Today the U.S. Army Special Operations Command builds on this concept and describes political warfare this way:

"Political Warfare emerges from the premise that rather than a binary opposition between "war" and "peace," the conduct of international relations is characterized by continuously evolving combinations of collaboration, conciliation, confrontation, and conflict. As such, during times of interstate "peace," the U.S. government must still confront adversaries aggressively and conclusively through all means of national power. When those adversaries practice a form of Hybrid Warfare employing political, military, economic, and criminal tools below the threshold of conventional warfare, the U.S. must overmatch adversary efforts though without large-scale, extended military operations that may be fiscally unsustainable and diplomatically costly. Hence, the U.S. must embrace a form of sustainable "warfare" rather than "war," through a strategy that closely *integrates targeted political, economic, informational, and military initiatives in close collaboration with international partners.* Serving the goals of international stability and interstate peace, this strategy amounts to "Political Warfare."

... Political Warfare encompasses a spectrum of activities associated with diplomatic and economic engagement, Security Sector Assistance (SSA), novel forms of Unconventional Warfare (UW), and Information and Influence Activities (IIA). Their related activities, programs, and campaigns are woven together into a whole-of-government framework for comprehensive effect. In this regard, Support to Political Warfare is a novel concept in comparison to the last generation of national security thinking and military operational concepts. Yet, Political Warfare is not without recent precursors in U.S. policy and strategy, with the Cold War being a prime example of approaches foreshadowing the current conception."¹⁶

-
- 15. George Kennan, 1948 Policy Planning Staff Memorandum, <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/65ciafounding3.htm>.
 - 16. United States Army Special Operations Command, "SOF Support to Political Warfare White Paper," March 10, 2015, p. 1, <http://maxoki161.blogspot.com/2015/03/sof-support-to-political-warfare-white.html>.

Political warfare that encompasses unconventional warfare has unique applicability for supporting and shaping the outcome on the Korean Peninsula because it offers a holistic concept that provides a template to incorporate all the elements of national power of both the ROK and the U.S.

Although this is written from a strongly U.S. perspective we should keep in mind that the ROK-U.S. alliance has matured to one of a partnership. What happens on the Korean Peninsula and the outcome of unification are dependent on the strategic choices of the ROK. President Park has already established the final objective, unification of the peninsula. The U.S. has committed to supporting this in the 2009 Joint Vision Statement and reaffirmed the goal during President Park's White House summit in 2013.¹⁷ However, what is most important is while this is an alliance end state, the ROK government should be in the lead with the U.S. providing support to the alliance. So while U.S. doctrine and strategic concepts will be illustrated, readers must keep in mind that it is imperative that the ROK lead this effort.

Before proceeding, we should understand the concept of resistance. There is no commonly accepted definition of resistance; however, at its root, it is a phenomenon of human behavior found in individuals, organizations and movements. The U.S. military defines a resistance movement as "an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability."¹⁸

There are five attributes to a resistance:

-
17. Joint vision for the alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea, June 16, 2009, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/joint-vision-alliance-united-states-america-and-republic-korea> and TRANSCRIPT: President Park Geun-hye, Republic of Korea - Speech to Joint Session of Congress - May 8, 2013, available at: <http://woodall.house.gov/transcript-president-park-geun-hye-republic-korea-speech-joint-session-congress-may-8-2013>.
 18. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, p. 210.

Actors: The individual and potential participants in an organized resistance, as well as external contributors and either competing or cooperating resistance groups.

Causes: The collectively expressed rationales for resistance and the individual motivations for participation

Environment: The preexisting and emerging conditions within the political, social, physical, or interpersonal contexts that enable or constrain the mobilization of resistance, directly or indirectly.

Organization: The internal characteristics of a movement: its membership, policies, structure, and culture.

Actions: The means by which actors carry out resistance as they engage in behaviors and activities in opposition to a resisted structure. Actions can encompass both the specific tactics used by a resistance movement and the broader characteristics or repertoires for action (i.e., strategy)¹⁹

As can be seen the phenomenon of resistance is complex and requires deep understanding of the civil population. Although such analysis cannot be the focus of this paper there are some important resources that can be consulted to develop a foundation of knowledge in order to developing the strategy to develop and support resistance among the Korean people living in the north.

First, I would recommend Robert Collins important work on Songbun.²⁰ This provides a critical understanding of the social structure and describing the environment in which a resistance must develop and be sustained. It will assist in determine ways to identify potential actors.

Next, I would recommend the United States Special Operations

19. These attributes are derived from the draft work of a resistance working group that continues to study the phenomenon of resistance for the US Army Special Operations Command. This is draft work and not finally approved.

20. Robert Collins, "Marked for Life: Songbun, North Korea's Social Classification System," Committee For Human Rights in North Korea, 2012 http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_Songbun_Web.pdf.

Command study on engagement with the Korean people living in the north. It covers such topics as identity, social constructs, the North Korean narrative; outlook, implications, and opportunities, and engagement with North Korean culture today and beyond.²¹

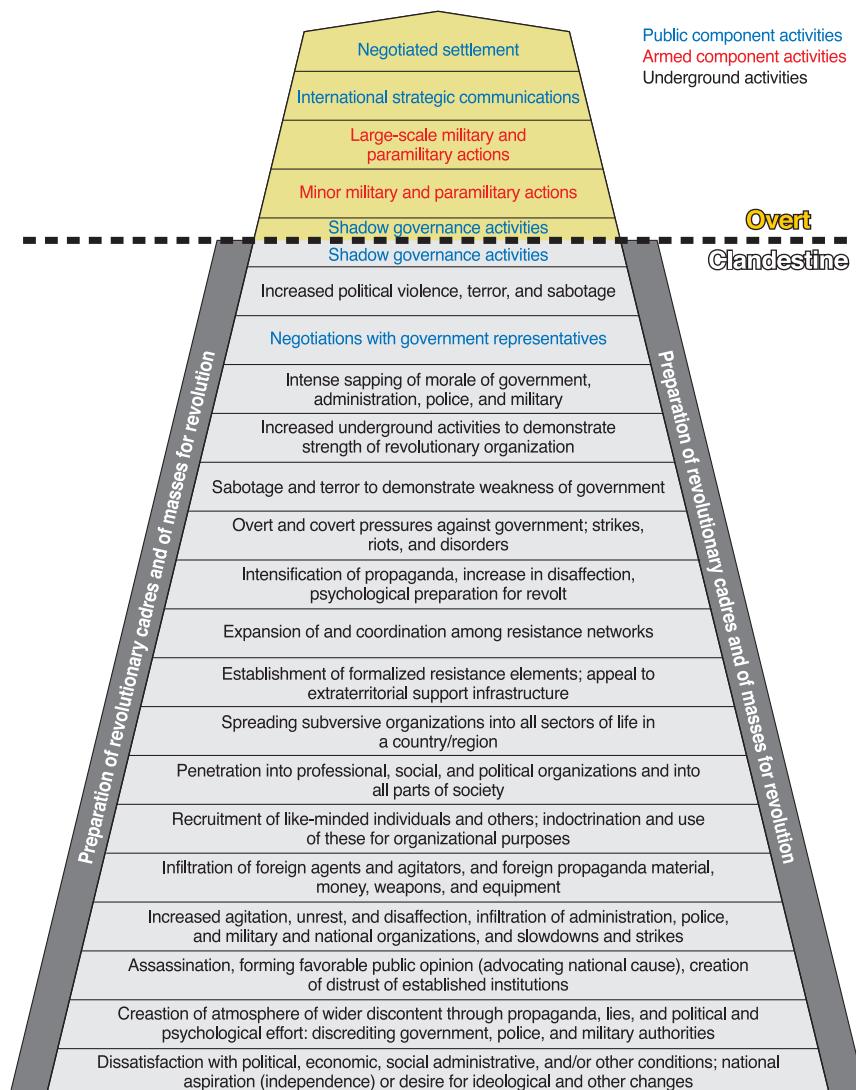
Lastly, the work of Ralph Hassig and Kongdon Oh provides a comprehensive look at the life, environment, economy, propaganda and external information and effects, essential what is happening inside North Korea.²²

These three works provide the starting point for understanding North Korea for English speakers and determine resistance potential and how to develop it. South Korea has comprehensive studies that include numerous defector interviews (though Robert Collins conducted first person interviews in the North Korean dialect for his work on *songbun*).

The most important aspect of any resistance is the underground. The underground is the central organization that links recruitment, organization, intelligence, subversion and propaganda, strategy development, logistics support and when employed support to a guerrilla force. However, even if a guerrilla force is not raised or employed in combat operations, the underground is the element that will achieve the most desired effects for the ROK-U.S. alliance. It will also establish the most important element of a resistance, the shadow government. It is the shadow government that is most promising for assisting in unification. This can provide the transition mechanism for integration of the political and security functions between north and South. The graphic below (Figure 2) illustrates many of the functions of the underground and while every aspect of the pyramid may not be appropriate unconventional warfare planners will assist the underground with the necessary functions that are necessary for the conditions in the north. Establishing and employing a

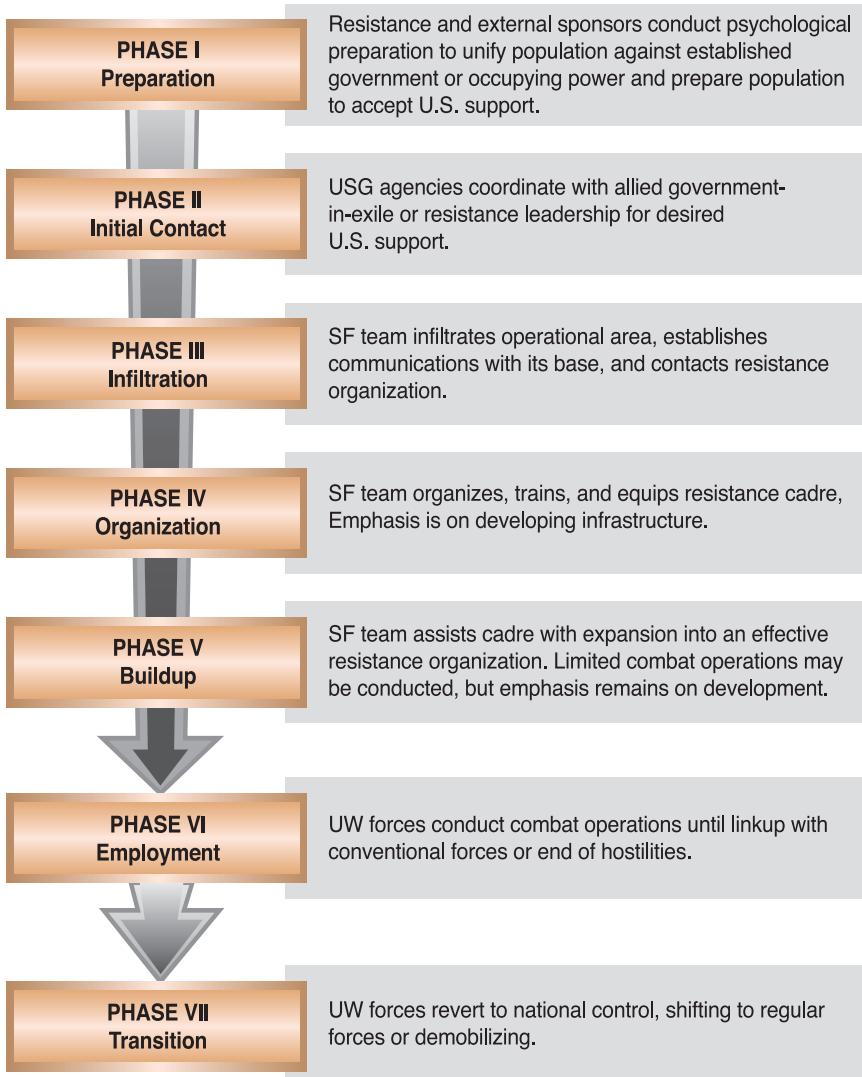
-
21. North Korea Population Engagement Study, Irregular Threats Branch, Socio-Cultural Analysis United States Special Operations Command — Joint Intelligence Center, 2013. Available upon request from USSOCOM.
 22. Ralph Hassig and Kongdan Oh, *The Hidden People of North Korea: Everyday Life in the Hermit Kingdom* (London: Rowan and Littlefield, 2015)

Figure 2. Activities of an Underground in Revolution, Resistance, and Insurgency²³

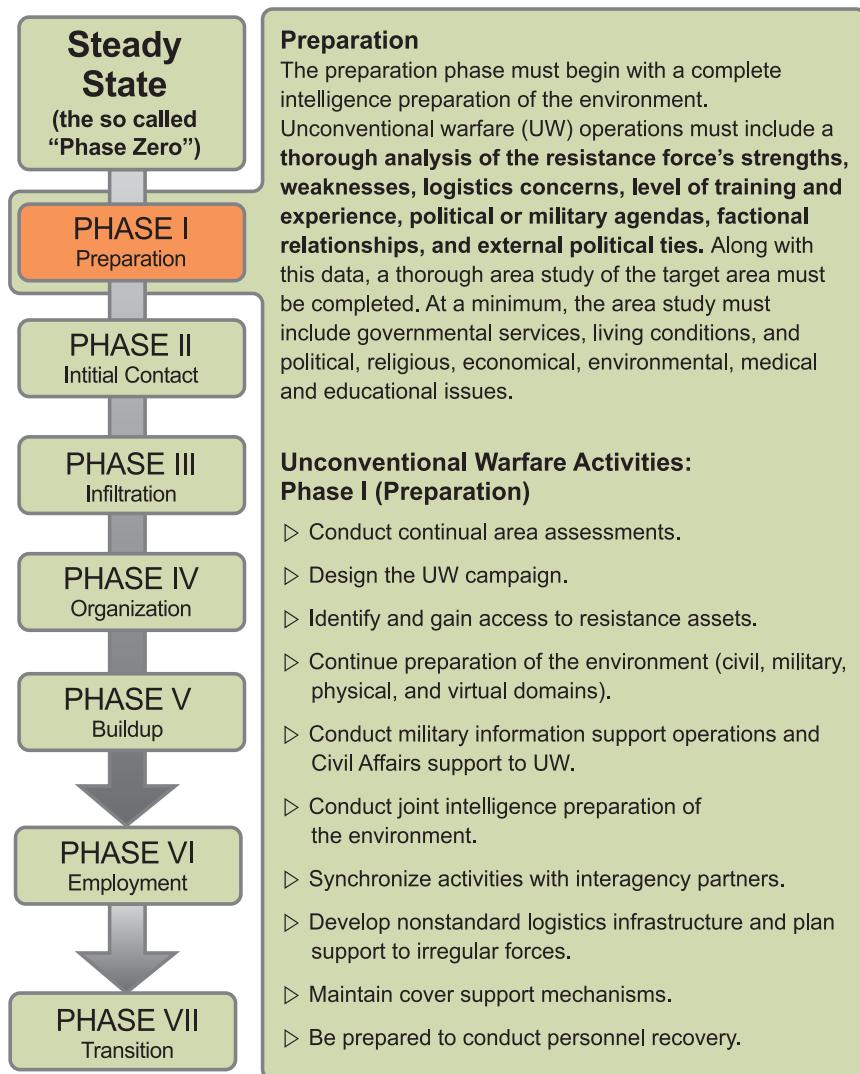


23. United States Army Special Operations Command, *Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies*, 2nd Edition, January 25, 2013, p. 6, <http://www.soc.mil/ARIS/HumanFactorsS.pdf>.

Figure 3. Seven Phases of Unconventional Warfare²⁴



24. Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, TC 18-01, November 2010, p. 1-9, <https://info.publicintelligence.net/USArmy-UW.pdf>.

Figure 4. Phase I – Preparation²⁵

25. US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, TC 18-01.1 *Unconventional Warfare Mission Planning Guide for the Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha, April 2015 (Final Draft)*, pp. 1-6, cited with permission.

guerrilla force may not be appropriate or necessary because the underground is the central focus of all operations and can achieve most of the effects desired by the ROK-U.S. alliance.

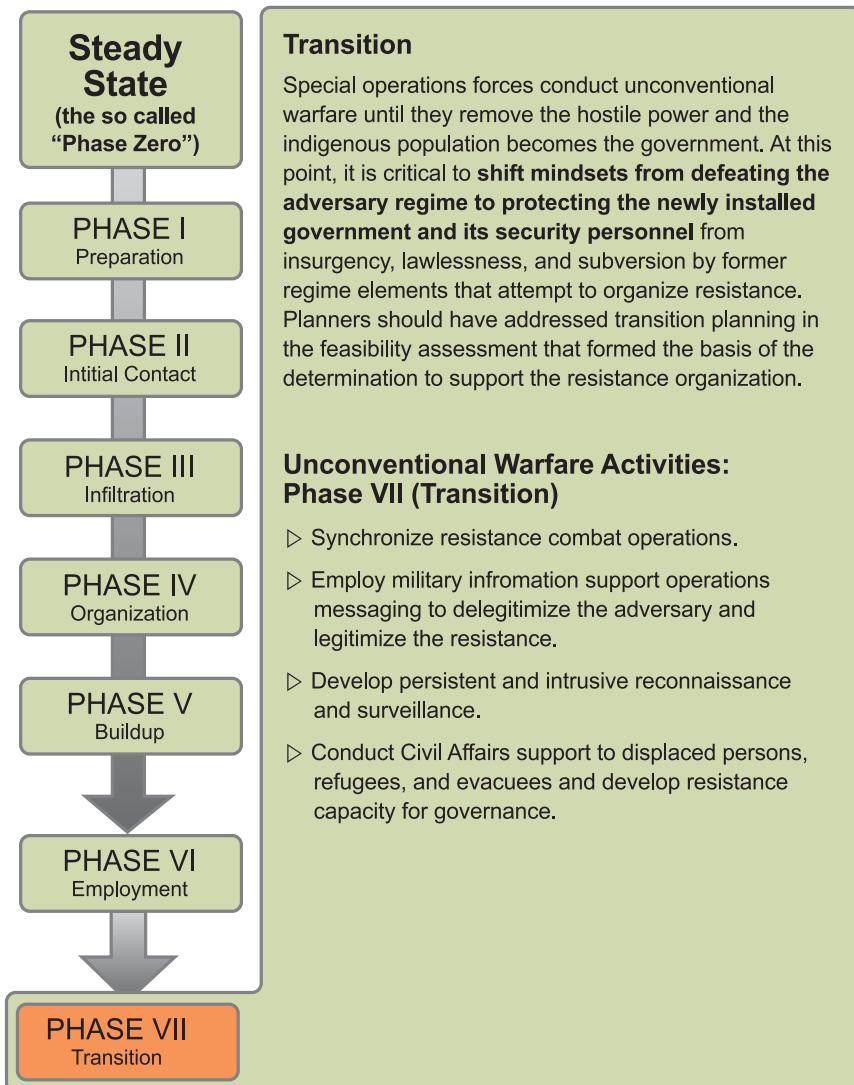
The Figure 3 provides an overview of the seven phases of unconventional warfare. It is necessarily tactical focused on the employment of Special Forces to support a resistance. When combined with the above graphic it outlines the major actions taken in an unconventional warfare campaign.

The two most important aspects of UW are Phase I Preparation (Figure 4) and Phase VII Transition (Figure 5). In the intersts of space I will only focus on those because they have most impact on unification.

Phase I Preparation is an example of Sun Tzu, “every battle is won before it is fought.” Preparation is the key to success in UW. It must begin with a comprehensive assessment of the entire situation and all the elements of resistance.

The second key element of preparation is information and influence activities or psychological operations to prepare the population in the north. The current efforts to get information into the north whether through Korean broadcasts U.S. and international media and defector organizations must be sustained. ROK and U.S. governments should increase efforts or provide support to non-government organizations. Creativity is important but it should be based on understanding of the culture of North Korea as well as the technological capabilities. Because it is so isolated electronically, new ways to penetrate should be developed.

It is imperative that the right themes and messages be developed. As an example the “second tier” leadership (those not in the core of the Kim family regime) and in particular military leaders should hear from the ROK government that policies have been established that those leaders who do not attack the ROK, maintain control of WMD and support unification will have a secure place in a unified Korea and be well compensated. Getting this message to key leaders could influence decision making at critical times during crisis. The population should know that they will be able to keep the land on which they live and work but will be free to pursue opportunities

Figure 5. Phase VII Transition²⁶

26. TC 18-01.1, pp. 1-12.

in a reunified Korea. But these types of themes and messages must be developed based on rigorous study of how the target audience, the Korean people living in the north is likely to receive them. And we should understand that it often takes time resonate.

Engagement in North Korea is key. The ROK government and ROK citizens should strive for as much contact with Koreans both in the north and in other countries. Every ROK citizen can carry messages to Koreans with whom they engage.

Thorough leadership and key personnel studies should be conducted. The purpose of this is to identify key communicators and assess whether they will support unification and therefore should be engaged and cultivated. Those that are not likely to support unification must be dealt with appropriately.

But if information and influence activities to have an effect in the north the alliance must practice its own “WMD.” This means the alliance must focus word, message, and deed or as I like to say word, mind, and deed. We must use the right words that will effect the minds of the target audience and be backed up with deeds. Actions speak louder than words. But a major weakness of the alliance and in particular, the U.S., is the inability or unwillingness to back up the words with deeds. The influence effort must be in total synchronization with actions and vice versa. Influence activities are the foundation of any unconventional warfare strategy.

One group that should be thoroughly identified and studied will be the regime’s scientists who develop its weapons of mass destruction. They will need to be protected and recovered by the ROK government to prevent them from selling their skills to the highest bidder. This is a key task for the underground as it can develop and operate a mechanism to locate, surveil, and if necessary exfiltrate them before or during any chaotic transition or regime collapse.

Another perhaps counterintuitive effort should be to focus intelligence operations around the world on the regime’s illicit networks. This is important to both prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials in time of crisis or regime collapse. All members of North Korea’s Office 39 should be identified and targeted. However,

these members also should be targeted for recruitment, as their knowledge and influence could be very useful during crisis and the process of unification.

These are just some of the areas that must be addressed during the preparation phase. In addition, the information and influence activities must be a key priority in every phase through transition and ultimate unification.

The transition phase is the key to unification. If the resistance with support from the ROK-U.S. alliance has been successful and the Kim family regime is no longer capable of exercising power, the shadow government developed by the resistance will be able to assume power and immediately reach out to the ROK to seek unification. At this critical point where there is a vacuum of power, the resistance will be able to step up and fill it and provide immediate leadership.

We have defined regime collapse as the inability of the Kim family regime to govern from the center and the loss of coherency and support of the military and security forces. We have always posited that when this happens instability, chaos, and conflict will occur. However, if an unconventional warfare campaign plan is designed and well executed by Korean people living in the north it is possible when this collapse occurs the resistance will have infiltrated key organizations within the North Korea government and military and developed an alternative structure, e.g., a shadow government. With support and the promised policies of the ROK, there will be a better chance to a transition to the unification process with a less likelihood of conflict.

This proposal is not without risk. First, there will be risk to the Korean people living in the north. It will be difficult to identify and make contact with potential actors who would assume leadership of a resistance. The North Korean suppression mechanism remains dangerous to the people and actions by ROK UW forces could compromise them.

Some will argue that this will reduce the chances for diplomacy to prevail. While that is possible, we should also keep in mind that the regime expects that we are trying to undermine its legitimacy to bring it down. We should not shy away from a course of action that

could achieve long-term positive effects especially when the alternative is regime collapse or war with no effective follow-on plan for unification.

This is also a campaign that cannot be executed by amateurs and it must have the full support of the ROK-U.S. alliance. If the decision is made to execute this course of action, it must be fully resourced and given the time to develop. Expectations must be managed, but it also will require support in successive administrations.

This course of action can also provide options during crisis. The larger the resistance grows, the more influence it can have over the people. Most importantly, it can serve the purpose of a transition government with which the ROK can work during the unification process.

Naysayers will argue that U.S. Special Forces cannot conduct unconventional warfare in an area that is so denied as North Korea because they do not fit in and would be easily compromised. However, U.S. Special Forces do not have to operate inside North Korea, at least initially and most likely for a long period of time until conditions are right. The critical tasks that need to be taught to a resistance force can be provided to the right Koreans, and in particular those Koreans who have escaped from the north, and they in turn can infiltrate to assist in the organization, training, and operations of a resistance. There are many new and innovative ways to conduct modern unconventional warfare to support a resistance; however, I will leave that to the professionals at Fort Bragg, Fort Lewis, and Seongnam and the Special Warfare Command in the Republic of Korea.

This paper has only provide a very rudimentary overview of the potential for unconventional warfare in support of the ROK-U.S. alliance and unification. In-depth planning is required to design the necessary comprehensive strategy and plan

What should have next is for ROK and U.S. military experts to conduct a feasibility assessment for an unconventional warfare campaign. If they determine it feasible, the national security councils of the ROK and U.S should begin the process of developing a plan with the ROK in the lead and the U.S. in support. This will need to be a

whole of government plan and require the national security council to synchronize or orchestrate all the elements of national power.

The national security councils should consider establishing a permanent combined strategy working group to manage the actions of both nations. Details for such an organization can be found in a National Defense University paper, "Beyond the Nuclear Crisis: A Strategy for the Korean Peninsula."²⁷

In conclusion, if we believe that there is a significant threat of a resistance and insurgency that will prevent or hinder unification, we should consider developing and shaping that resistance now to prevent it from challenging unification. An effective resistance against the Kim family regime could provide increased options for the ROK-U.S. alliance and provide support in innumerable ways some of which have been described here but these have only been the tip of the proverbial iceberg. A combined ROK-U.S. strategy group could develop a supporting plan based on resistance and unconventional warfare that could mitigate the threats to and support unification.

■ Article Received: 7/1 ■ Reviewed: 7/15 ■ Revised: 8/19 ■ Accepted: 8/20

Bibliography

- Buzo, Adrian. *The Guerrilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1999.
- Collins, Robert. "Marked for Life: SONGBUN, North Korea's Social Classification System." Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. 2012.
- Department of Defense. *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, JP 1-02. March 15, 2015.
- Hassig, Ralph and Kongdan Oh. *The Hidden People of North Korea: Everyday Life in the Hermit Kingdom*. London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015.
-
27. David S. Maxwell, "Beyond the Nuclear Crisis: A Strategy for the Korean Peninsula," April 2004, National War College of the National Defense University. <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/6891151/FINAL%20Korea%20Strategy%20Paper.pdf>.

- Kaplan, Robert. "When North Korea Fails." *Atlantic Magazine*. October 2006.
- Kennan, George. "1948 Policy Planning Staff Memorandum." United States Department of State.
- Maxwell, David. "Should The United States Support Korean Unification And If So, How?" *International Journal of Korean Studies* 18, no. 1 (2014): 139-156.
- _____. "A Strategy for the Korean Peninsula: Beyond the Nuclear Crisis," *Military Review* 84, no. 5 (2004): 103-108.
- _____. "Thoughts on Irregular Threats from North Korea - Post-Conflict and Post-Collapse: Understanding Them to Counter Them." In *Confronting Security Challenges on the Korean Peninsula*. Edited by Bruce Bechtol. Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Foundation, 2011.
- Park, Geun-hye, "Transcript: Republic of Korea - Speech to Joint Session of Congress." May 8, 2013.
- The White House. "Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea." June 16, 2009.
- United States Army. *The Applied Critical Thinking Handbook (Formerly the Red team Handbook)*. Version 7.0, University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies, TRISA (TRADOC G2 Intelligence Support Activity), Ft Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2015.
- United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. *Unconventional Warfare Mission Planning Guide for the Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (Final Draft)*, TC 18-01.1. April 2015.
- United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, TC 18-01. November 2010.
- United States Army Special Operations Command. *Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies*, 2nd Edition, Fort Bragg, NC, January 25, 2013.
- United States Special Operations Command. *North Korea Population Engagement Study*. Irregular Threats Branch, Socio-Cultural Analysis — Joint Intelligence Center, 2013.