

# F.A.S. PUBLIC INTEREST REPORT

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## NORTH KOREA: HERMIT KINGDOM FACES HARD CHOICES

President George Bush made a splendid, sweeping unilateral arms control proposal on September 27 which, no doubt by sheer coincidence, contained some actions that FAS had urged on the Administration in a letter of late August. The Bush proposal included removing unclear weapons from North Korea.

By another coincidence, I was scheduled to leave for North Korea the next morning. Since the proposal seemed to eliminate a major stumbling block in Washington-Pyongyang relations, I read the morning papers with mounting excitement and bought three copies of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* to take along.

### Proposal Moots Complaint

For some time North Korea has had a program to build a nuclear bomb. For the Federation of American Scientists, founded by Manhattan Project Scientists, this is a major issue. Within a week of the President's proposal it became clear that the offer included all nuclear arms that the U.S. has deployed in South Korea. These have been the major nuclear-related complaint of the North Koreans.

Given their withdrawal, the question is: Will Pyongyang permit the International Agency for Atomic Energy to inspect its nuclear facilities and eliminate its nuclear bomb program?

North Korea signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1985 and should have allowed inspections to begin within 18 months. But, stalling for time, it has, on one pretext or another, delayed fulfilling this legal obligation for six years.

North Korea is a country under the total control of its "Great Leader" Kim Il Sung and his son, the "Dear Leader" Kim Jong Il. Working through the Communist Workers Party, Kim Il Sung has controlled the North for more than forty years. The cult of personality there has exceeded that anywhere. It is popularly viewed as the nearest thing to Orwell's "1984" in the world.

FAS goals also include seeing if we can help reunify the North with the South through the establishment of scientific relations between the two Koreas or just helping improve relations between North Korea and the U.S. There is also our concern over the right to intellectual freedom in a country as controlled as Russia was in the 1930s or China during the Cultural Revolution.

Within an evolving world, Pyongyang has lost the ability to play off the Soviet Union and China. Indeed, both have been demanding that trade with North Korea move to a dollar basis. Thus, the subsidies that have helped the North

### Why FAS Went to North Korea

From October 2 to October 8, FAS sent its president to North Korea at the invitation of the president of the Korean Association of Social Science, Hwang Jang Yop.

Professor Hwang is also Secretary of the ruling Worker's Party for Academic Affairs.

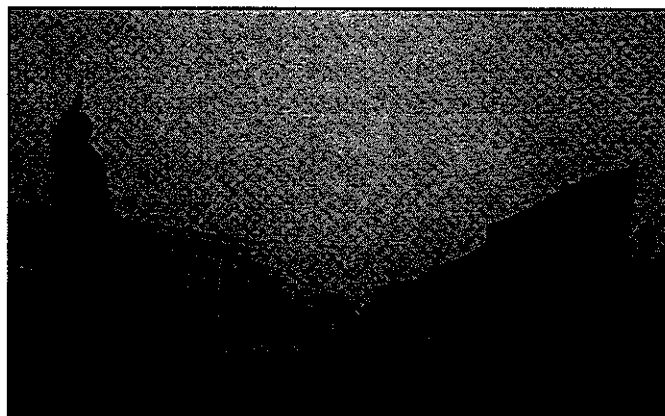
The Federation's relevant interests include non-proliferation, improvement in U.S. relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, reunification of Korea as a whole, scientific exchange and human rights. What follows are excerpts from a trip report. ■

get through various financial difficulties have come to an end. Moreover, it has seen negative growth in the last few years and reached the limits of economic growth to which its 20 million people, acting alone, can take it. Accordingly, this modern day "Hermit Kingdom" has to reach out.

Its "Great Leader" will, next year, celebrate his 80th birthday. Control is shifting to his anointed successor, Kim Jong Il, who may not be able to maintain his position if he does not move the country toward economic prosperity. He, unlike Kim Il Sung, cannot be credited with leading the fight against the Japanese during World War II and has not been in charge for 40 years.

### Beijing: The Jumping-off Point

One gets to North Korea by way of China or the Soviet Union. The gate-keeper in America is Ambassador Ho  
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The 66-foot tall statue of Kim Il Sung dwarfs tourists on a plaza.

Jong, the second-ranked official in the North Korean U.N. mission, who arranged for me to pick up my visa in Beijing. I picked up the visa without incident but, arrived at the airport to discover that plane reservations had not been made. Both flights to Pyongyang that day were fully booked with 44 on the waiting list. There were quite a few Korean-Americans traveling. For a country that had not since 1953 permitted any direct communications between relatives living in the North and South, this scene illustrated that things were indeed changing.

With help from the North Korean Embassy, I managed to get on one of the flights and was met at the Pyongyang airport by Professor Sok Chang Sik, vice president of the Korean Association of Social Scientists (KASS); Pak Mun Hoi, his associate, and Li Ok, an interpreter.

These three served as my guides while I was in Pyongyang. But I considered my real host to be Hwang Yang Jop, president of KASS and, even more interesting, chief interpreter of Kim Il Sung's "Juche" philosophy—a home-grown version of Marxist Leninism that dictates, so it is said, everything that is done in North Korea.

It was Hwang who, in Japan in late 1987 and upon first shaking hands with me, had invited me to visit. A scheduled trip in 1988 was called off by the North Koreans after they closed the border to Americans in the wake of their terrorist bombing of the South Korean airplane. And it was I who postponed the second trip when, after Tiananmen, I decided to boycott a disarmament conference in China.

But now seemed a perfect time, when everything was breaking open.

### Day One: An Optimistic Beginning

That first evening in Pyongyang, I explained to my "standing-in-for-Hwang" hosts that the time had come to improve relations between our countries. If my trip were successful, I said, I would try to fulfill the agreement with Hwang to invite him to the United States. But not until my fourth day in the country did I meet with Hwang himself, who I later learned had accompanied Kim Il Sung to the Chinese border on a trip by the "Great Leader" to Beijing.

Whether I could succeed in getting Hwang to the U.S. was most unclear. Two conversations with the State Department before departing the U.S. had assured me that Hwang, now the Secretary of the Workers Party for Academic Affairs, was too high to fit into their academic exchange program. For good measure, a conversation with the South Korean Embassy had shown that it might try to prevent such a visit; they often exercised a veto over U.S. policy in Korea.

But I had good, and recent, reason to believe that these things are not settled by low level officials. Just the week before the visit to Pyongyang, the State Department had permitted me to host Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong in Washington despite long-standing prohibitions of a similar kind.

Later in the evening, I went for a walk near the Koryo Hotel. Even at a railway station, not one North Korean

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*Interpreter Li Ok and KASS researcher Pak Mun Hoi*

dared approach me to practice his English or say anything. Quite obviously, they needed authorization to speak to a foreigner and had been warned to stay clear.

### **Day Two: Assessing Pyongyang**

In the morning, I began to realize how good North Korea must look to the Third World nations with which Pyongyang often works. The city has huge, and beautiful, buildings and large monuments to the Great Leader. Socialist realist murals abound in a city that is "spic 'n' span." The people are adequately, though not in Western terms fashionably, dressed. Resident Westerners say there is no crime, no malnutrition. There is a 99% literacy rate, life expectancy of 65 years and a per capita income between US\$ 800-1200. To the great leaders of Africa, and even to officials from Latin America and India, Kim Il Sung's approach must seem very appealing.

It is the intellectuals from the West—of which group I am a card-carrying member—who find the regimentation impossible to accept. There was nothing in the hotel bookstore other than rambling accounts by and about the "Great Leader" and the "Dear Leader." Clearly, this is an intellectual desert.

Everyone wore Kim Il Sung buttons in a city with no bicycles and only a few cars—typically, Mercedes or expensive Japanese cars. While guides said that "the people of Pyongyang do not like bicycles," the real reason seemed to me to be that Kim Il Sung built this city to be a model of orderliness for world leaders everywhere. And bicycles would make it look messy. [They do have them elsewhere in North Korea.]

Taking meals in the hotel reminded me of the treatment I experienced in Moscow ten years after Soviet society opened up to the West. Seated in a special dining room for foreign guests, isolated from Koreans and even guides, one got better fare.

The waiters, wearing black silk jackets, were pleased when one said one preferred Korean food. But saying a cake was bought in the middle of the night to ward off hunger is a mistake. Instead of understanding that one can merely be "off his time zone," they take it as a complaint of being been inadequately fed. For the rest of the trip one gets more food than one wants.

### **North Korean Nuclear Program**

According to an article by Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr. in *Jane's Intelligence Review* (September 1991), the North Korean nuclear program was stimulated, originally, by threats by the U.S. to use nuclear weapons to end the Korean War.

The North got training in basic nuclear technology from the Soviet Union, starting in 1955, and from China, starting in 1959.

In 1965, the North received a small (2-4 megawatt) research reactor and installed it at Yongbyon, which was designated a "Special District" requiring a special passport to visit. This reactor has been under IAEA monitoring since 1977. [It is now believed that there are underground facilities at Pakchon, 38 miles north of Pyongyang.]

In the early and mid-seventies, it is believed that the North stepped up its interest in nuclear weapons—possibly as a reaction to a South Korean nuclear weapons program that was promptly aborted under U.S. pressure.

From 1980 to 1987, the North Koreans constructed, and brought on stream at low power, a 30-megawatt reactor built primarily without foreign assistance and using natural uranium and graphite.

In early 1989, U.S. reconnaissance satellites detected construction of a third reactor in the 50-200 megawatt class, as well as a reprocessing facility and a nuclear detonation test site. Since the reactor is not connected to a power grid, it is apparently dedicated to weapons production. The reprocessing facility is thought to be capable on going on line in 1994-95.

It was Soviet pressure on the North that led it to accept the NPT, in return for a promise that the Soviets would install a 1760-megawatt, 4-reactor power plant. [But it will not be provided until the North accepts the full-scope safeguards agreement with the IAEA.]

The North is believed to have secret nuclear-related connections with Egypt, Iran, Libya (possibly for financing) and Syria. ■

In general, everything one says or does there is recycled; what social psychologists call "looping" occurs, and one feels one is in an intellectual space capsule.

My guides, Li and Pak, emphasized that the North was totally destroyed in the Korean War and was rebuilt from the ground up. They did not agree—perhaps did not know—that South Korea, with its 42 million people, is far ahead economically with five times the GNP per capita. Instead, they repeated the polite comment of a South Korean businessman—that the economies were comparable but different, in that the South's is export led. When I told them that the South builds and exports a car that competes in the U.S. with Japanese autos, they seemed dumbfounded.

*(Continued on next page)*

## A Guide at the Juche Memorial

At a monument to the Juche philosophy—a tower festooned with bricks from obscure foreign organizations extolling Juche as the world's most important and fastest growing philosophy, and all a complete fantasy in fact—a guide talked about herself.

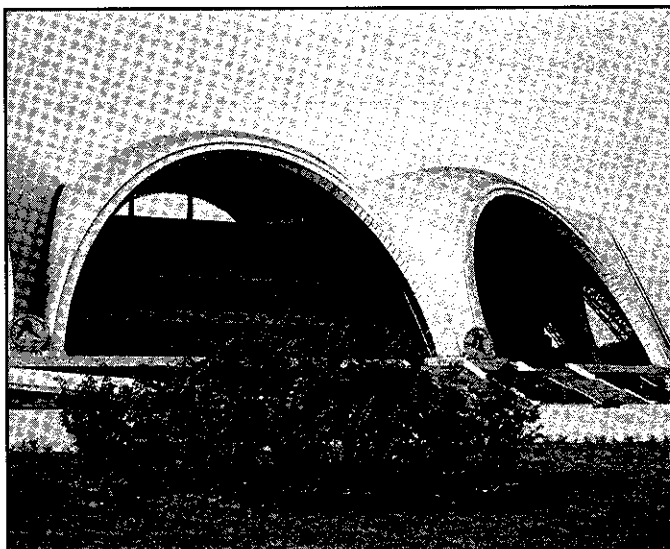
She said she earns 90 won (about US \$45 at the official rate) per month. Her husband earns 110 won. Since rent, medical care, education, pension and even rice are free, she said, it was enough. [Apparently, monthly wages range from around 90 to 210 won, although persons working in various hazardous work such as mining could earn up to 5,000.] Clothes are the major expense. Indicative of changing aspirations there, she said she would like her son to be a "sportsman!"

When asked if she had any questions about America, she asked "How many U.S. troops in South Korea?" and "What are the main problems of reunification?" Virtually no one on the entire trip was willing or able to ask any question about America that did not involve foreign policy with South Korea. But everyone was confident and well-indoctrinated in the official line on reunification.

This does not mean that they were not sincere in expressing their concern about "1000 nuclear weapons" in South Korea that could kill them if dropped. The North Koreans go into air raid shelters every year at the time that U.S. forces, along with South Korean forces, hold their "Team Spirit" exercise.

One Western observer said that this exercise, much complained about by President Kim Il Sung, is perhaps the best thing the West does for him, since it helps justify the isolation of North Korea and maintains the war fervor.

North Koreans believe that their isolation is the result of hostile powers, such as ours. But a Russian military attache at their embassy in Pyongyang for four years once told me that he never even found out where their defense ministry was, much less visited it, and never had the phone number of any Korean defense official except the duty officers at the defense ministry.



*Sports complex, with its futuristic architecture*

## Time Running Out For IAEA Inspections

As senior State Department officials are advising *The Washington Post*, "time is running out." Further, these officials say, in a "year or two" North Korea will have a functioning uranium enrichment or reprocessing facility capable of producing the fissionable material necessary for a bomb.

On September 28, South Korean President Roh Tae Woo suggested that Seoul and Washington threaten to have the UN Security Council recommend forcing an international inspection on North Korea akin to that imposed on Iraq. [But would China not veto that?] ■

## Grand People's Study House

The Grand People's Study House is a large impressive collection of study rooms of all kinds. There are rooms where women watch televised cooking lessons and people listen to tapes of modern music, foreign language reading rooms and so on.

But the place gave the impression of a Potemkin Village of some kind. Like the TV detective Columbo, I asked a last minute, "oh by the way" question: "Where are the people?" The guide responded that most people were at work and would come in greater numbers after work. Asked when they closed, she said 8 pm. Without bicycles for these workers to get around, it seemed the library would not be much used.

It was not, of course, completely empty. But there were weird aspects to the people who were there. A few people gathered around the foreign language card catalogues appeared to be busily looking through the files. They did not look up to exchange a word with the foreigner, even though they were at the English section and presumably spoke it. So they gave the impression of being hired hands. When I got an opportunity to look more closely at the English catalogue, the drawers of cards were completely out of order.

A lecturer, an expert in "Modern Korean Philosophy," waited at his station to help students by answering their questions. Asked if *he* had any questions about America, he said "I just hope that you have a correct understanding of our philosophy." He then went on to describe the North Korean political view of South Korea.

"Does everyone here agree that Americans are the problem for reunification?" He responded "Yes, because it is correct. And the demonstrations in South Korea, every day, show it is."

"Has there ever been a demonstration here on any subject?" "No," he answered, "because we have a people-oriented government."

Had his government "ever made a mistake?" He said "No, never. There were some individuals who had wrong ideas, but we found out in time." Told that Americans would never believe that no mistake had ever been made

*(Continued on page 6)*

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORTH KOREA

Born on April 15, 1912, Kim Il Sung is believed to have been a captain during World War II, commanding about 20 people in a 200-man reconnaissance unit under the Soviet Far East Forces.

The peninsula was divided, on an interim basis, in 1945 at the 38th parallel to separate U.S. troops advancing from South and Soviet troops advancing from the North. The Soviets installed Kim Il Sung, then 33 years old, as Premier and Chairman of the Korean Worker's Party (KWP) in the North.

In the period 1945-1950, working with pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese factions, Kim Il Sung purged a faction composed of domestic North Korean Communists.

In 1950, after the U.S. had withdrawn its forces from South Korea and announced that Korea was outside its defense perimeter, he got Soviet backing to seek to reunify the country by force. His forces overran all but a small enclave at the bottom of the peninsula. According to Khrushchev's memoirs, a little more help from the Soviet Union and Kim Il Sung would have succeeded. But Stalin declined to become too involved. President Truman reversed U.S. policy, put troops in the enclave and stopped the advance.

General MacArthur's Inchon landing forced the North Koreans to withdraw to positions within their own country. Despite Chinese warnings, MacArthur pursued the retreating army right up to the Yalu. The Chinese then entered the war and pushed the Allied army back to approximately the 38th parallel where an armistice was finally signed.

### All Other Communist Factions Purged

After the armistice, Kim Il Sung purged the pro-South Korean communist faction, treating them as scapegoats for the war. And in 1956, his Kapsan faction was strong enough to purge both the pro-Chinese and the pro-Soviet communist groups. It was about this time that his independent minded philosophy, Juche, was introduced.

As a result of his success, and the creation of a personality cult that is without parallel in Russia or China, Kim Il Sung is thought to be "something of a loner, confident of his own skill, and wary of trusting his fate to others . . . extremely self-confident and arrogant [with] a megalomaniacal estimate of the importance of his undertakings." He is not "impulsive, mad, irrational or reckless." But politics in North Korea has become "a highly personalized family affair built around the personality cult."

Kim Il Sung's movement is intensely nationalistic to the point of xenophobia. He stayed aloof from the Sino-Soviet split and, in July 1961, signed separate treaties of friendship and mutual military assistance with Russia and China. He defines Juche as:

" . . . to have an attitude of a master toward the revolution and construction of one's own country. Abandon dependence on others, and think with your own head. We should be responsible for resolving our own problems with a self-reliant posture and in the spirit of revolution for self-rehabilitation. Doctrinairism is rejected, while the general principles of Marxism-Leninism and the experience of other countries will be applied in a way that would suit the historical conditions and national idiosyncracies of one's own nation. Maintaining such a creative position means juche."

Juche in defense means maintaining a self-reliant, strong and credible military capability. It also means avoiding "warphobia" and "never being captivated with a pacifistic mood."

In 1976, Kim Il Sung told a Japanese magazine: "We have no intention of arming ourselves with nuclear weapons. We have not enough money to produce nuclear weapons or adequate place to test them." He went on to say that such weapons, in Korea, would be unusable because they would kill friend and foe alike.

### Kim Il Sung Treated As A God-King

The personality cult has reached semi-religious levels in which the regime says that it is "immense glory, paramount happiness and holy duty to submit themselves totally and unconditionally to the Great Leader . . . by carrying out his 'teachings' unconditionally and by accepting his authority absolutely."

The creation of Juche is said to be an event heralding a new era in human progress. He is called the "greatest philosopher-politician in the annals of human history" and the "most profound revolutionary genius of all time."

On Kim Il Sung's 60th birthday, in 1972, a 66-foot high statue was erected and coated with about 40 pounds of gold. But the gold was removed in 1978 apparently because Deng Xiaoping, then a Deputy Prime Minister, had visited Pyongyang and said that things could not be so bad there if they could spare gold for this purpose.

In the late 1960s, it seemed that Kim Il Sung's younger brother, Kim Yong Sun, would be the anointed successor. But by early 1974, attention turned to Kim Il Sung's son. Married, with one daughter, Kim Jong Il was born on February 16, 1940 and is now 51 years old. By 1974 he was a member of the Politburo of the Korean Workers Party and, reportedly, was in charge of North Korean operations toward South Korea and Japan.

—This material is drawn from an excellent book, *North Korea in Transition* by Tai Sung An, Greenwood Press, 1983. Dr. An is Chairman of the Department of Political Science at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland. ■

(Continued from page 4)

by the government, he said "If they come, they will see."

It was the same question I had asked of Chinese in Shanghai during the Cultural Revolution. Asked then whether "Chairman Mao had ever made a mistake," my guide—in the area then controlled by the Gang of Four — said "This is an abusive question."

In contrast, throughout North Korea, the officials I questioned seemed too brainwashed even to resent the question. They gave a greater impression of believing.

### Day 2: Dinner with Professor Sok

Dinner with Professor Sok was held in a private room. I had to say, repeatedly, "May I respond?" just to get a word in edgewise as he gave the Korean point of view, making the following points:

1. North Korea signed the NPT in order to get the benefits of the U.S. "Negative Assurance" policy. [This, however, seemed false on two grounds. The policy is that the U.S. will not use nuclear weapons against a nation that signed the NPT and did not ally itself with Nuclear Powers. But North Korea (or any signatory nation) does not get the protection of this policy if it does not follow through and permit the related inspections. This, North Korea has not done. Second, it appears that North Korea signed the NPT to get a Soviet reactor, which has yet to be delivered.]

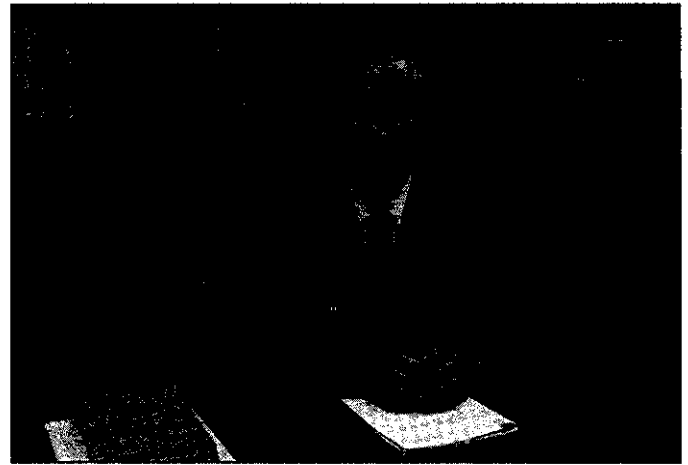
2. The North Koreans were attacked in the Korean War all along the front and their invasion only responded to those attacks. [It is absurd to imagine that a North Korean "counterattack" could go all the way down to the end of the Peninsula. What happened was that the U.S. had removed all its troops in 1949 and Secretary of State Acheson had given an unfortunate speech describing our defense perimeter. Noticing that Korea was not within it, Kim Il Sung decided to reunify the country by force.]

3. It was strange for the U.S. to get so excited by a few possible North Korean weapons since America had so many. [I explained that we feared that the South would then build nuclear weapons and then the Japanese and then, after the Americans withdrew, there would be a nuclear war in the Korean Peninsula.]

He said he has relatives in the South but does not know where they are. And, in answer to questions, he said he tried to contact them with four or five letters. [I wondered how he could try to contact if he does not know where they are. Knowing that he had made a rare trip to Hawaii, I asked if he had tried to call from there. Sok said "No," because he was advised by a Korean-American there that all correspondence with North Korea goes to South Korea—but that was a non-sequitur.]

### Day Three: Getting Western Points of View

At breakfast, I "crashed" a different dining room and talked further to a Korean-American whom I had previously "chatted up" in the elevator. He sensed that the "Dear Leader", Kim Jong Il, had people around him who were more intellectual and more liberal than those surrounding the "Great Leader." The visitor thought Kim



*A library's student adviser blandly asserts that his government has never made a mistake.*

had done some bad things formerly because he had no experience and now worked primarily on economic matters.

Only in the last two years has the North let Korean relatives in from America. Sometimes, North Koreans communicate with their relatives in the South through these Korean-American contacts.

After breakfast, I visited the "Barrage" at Nampo with my guide. A barrage is a kind of low level dam built to prevent the sea water from invading an estuary on the high tide. The dam has locks for ships. And the purpose is to preserve the fresh water from salt so that it can be used for irrigation. The guide asked if I had "ever seen anything like it." Since I had not, she went away reinforced in the belief, no doubt, that North Korea was, indeed, the most advanced country in the world.

I had lunch with Peter Hayes, the Australian who has been working the Korean arms control field intensively, and met his guides. They were the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Korean Anti-Nuclear Committee. The former is a French speaking official named "Pae", pronounced "Bei." Born an orphan, he owes everything to the regime and is completely in support of it. The Deputy Secretary General, Kim Song, is a most unusual and able person. He speaks English with complete fluency, and French also.

Hayes was already known to me as one of the approximately 40 graduate students on whose dissertations I had been a kind of second thesis adviser at Herbert York's Institute for Global Conflict and Cooperation.

Hayes and I discussed the way the DPRK bureaucracy works. [One Westerner later told me the bureaucrats have too little work to do and try to make themselves important by placing conditions on every situation that comes their way.]

The North, said Hayes, claims the IAEA is handling the inspection question in a way that insults their national dignity. Until the issue is settled, no foreigners like Peter will be allowed into the Yongbon facility. [In fact, this facility is so secret that it requires special passports for even Korean scientists.]



Hayes believes the North signed the NPT in the "expectation" that the Americans would "do something" about their bombs in the South and, this expectation not having materialized, the North has not wanted to go through with the required inspections.

At dinner and for some time that evening, Hayes and I again exchanged ideas about the North and bits of analysis. He has been studying closely both South Korea and arms control in the Peninsula. But this was his first trip to North Korea. His guides from the Korean Anti-Nuclear Peace Committee [not to be confused with the Korean Peace Committee] worked hard on his behalf, and he had appointments with the Atomic Energy Commission of the DPRK (where he was to show them French "SPOT" photos of their nuclear installations) and also with a high-ranking general who was trying to figure out whether "Team Spirit" might continue to involve nuclear weapons from B-52s.

#### Day Four: Ideas for Economic Development

On the fourth day in Pyongyang, I went to see a Western representative of the United Nations Development (UNDP) who works on rice growing, soil, tidal land reclamation and integrated circuit research. He told me that the North Koreans want foreign technologies and are anxious to readjust trading patterns. Because they need help in organizing joint ventures, this development official brings in lecturers.

From the conversation one got the impression that while North Koreans are full of pride, their proposals are often naive, and they suffer from a reputation of not being reliable in their business dealings, in particular from having repudiated their foreign debt. Their big new idea, he said, is a free trade zone in the upper northeast of the country where Russia has a border with them as well as China. Thus, they could give China a route to the sea through North Korea.

Although the Juche philosophy is, above all, one of self-reliance, the followers of Kim Il Sung justify using foreign

#### North Korean Economy Deteriorating

According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of October 10, North Korea badly needs new sources of foreign income to offset "severe cuts in Soviet and Chinese assistance."

*FEER* says that, recently, "work units have had their food supply cut from 30 days to 10 days," and North Korea is now importing rice—perhaps as much as one million tons from Thailand projected over the next two to three years. The GNP dropped 3.8% in 1990. One hundred thousand pro-Pyongyang Korean residents in Japan are being urged, if not extorted, to provide still more gifts to their homeland.

Pyongyang owes Moscow \$4.8 billion. Trade with China fell 33% last year to \$124 million. The North Korean government has admitted that a reduced coal supply has "affected all our economic sectors." ■

technologies on the grounds that these are the "common property of mankind." The North Koreans are satisfying basic needs and there is no serious malnutrition even in rural areas. Until 1976 the North was ahead of the South, in fact. But now the South is far ahead.

I asked him if radicals in the South would prefer the North if they saw the kind of society it is? In the sixties, students in West Germany had romantic notions of socialism but when they saw it, they didn't like it.



*At recess, children smile through a schoolyard gate.*

Next, I visited the home of Prof Hong Sung Un, an economist from the Juche Institute headed by Professor Hwang.

Thanks to the Colonial rule when all Koreans were forced to take Japanese names and learn Japanese, he speaks Japanese. But, while he knew the name John Maynard Keynes, he did not know Paul Samuelson. Nor did he recognize any of the leading economists on the FAS letterhead—which lists six past presidents of the American Economic Association including John Kenneth Galbraith. He knew only, in America, Paul Sweezy, a socialist economist. He did not know linear programming.

His two grownup children could think of no questions about America they dared ask. Professor Hong, who has been to Japan, said he had told the Japanese that North Korean isolation was due to others and that, historically, isolation of Korea had been forced on it by others. [Obviously, this does not explain the social isolation from China and the Soviet Union.] He complained that CoCom rules restrict strategic trade with North Korea.

On the whole, people are happy in North Korea, he said. Life is stable and equal and people are grateful for this, he thinks. Asked whether they would continue to be happy if they were not isolated, he said "In my case, I saw my parents worry about food. But my children do not know it."

Professor Hong wants reunification for, among other reasons, a 12% reduction it would bring in the State Budget he feels is due to the size of the armed forces. [The West thinks the percentage is 25% of the GNP!]

*(Continued on next page)*

### Other Issues—What The Players Want

The North wants a non-aggression agreement with the South. It wants the Armistice agreement replaced by a peace treaty. It wants the withdrawal of American troops. It seeks to normalize relations with Japan, contingent on reparations to be made by Japan for its treatment of Korea before and during World War II.

The North wants better relations with the United States that will lead to diplomatic recognition, a dropping of COCOM restrictions, scientific exchange and the like. It wants to maintain its own economic system and puts forward grand schemes that seem consistent with its fears that too much openness may imperil the regime.

For its part, the South, after watching the difficulties the West Germans have had in coping with the East German economy, and being sobered by the sight, is coming around to the opinion that separate economic systems would be better than having the North self-destruct and leave Seoul holding the bag.

The South wants confidence building measures. And, indeed, indirect trade of rice (to the North) in return for raw materials (to the South) has taken place.

Both North and South are under mandates from their populations to adopt stances in favor of reunification and free exchange of people. But, in fact, both governments are nervous about it, and little of it occurs.

The U.S. and Japan want to avoid getting too far in front of the South Koreans politically and urge improvements in the North-South dialogue. The U.S. and Japan also want IAEA inspections.

North Korea is now surrounded by countries that are increasingly hostile to its nuclear program and increasingly indifferent, at best, to its economic difficulties. ■

### Korean-American

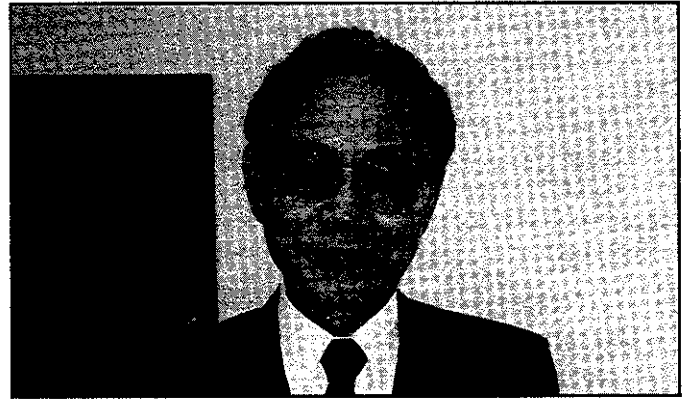
Back at the hotel, I ran into another Korean-American of considerable interest. David J. Cho of the Institute of Korea Studies of the William Carey International University in Pasadena said his father had been engaged in the struggle for liberation from the Japanese and had even been sentenced to life imprisonment at one time.

Cho, who lectured on Christianity in 1990 at Kim Il Sung University, was there, with his wife, to visit relatives. [Korean-Americans pay \$600 for a two-week visit, three days of which are with their relatives who come from all over to stay with a single relative for the purpose.] He said that Pyongyang has about 50 Protestant house congregations, one church building and a small seminary.

He said he considers himself a "missionologist," non-denominational, who trains people in pastoral care. He donates about 3,000 volumes a year to the North on religion, anthropology and the like. Cho thought that there

must be many hidden Christians among people over 60.

North Korea, he said, was struggling to open up and wanted to open but did not know how to do it without the regime losing power. And, he added, one should not forget, secrecy has been a method of defense resistance to the Japanese; Korean society has become addicted to secrecy. He felt the North should be treated carefully because, if squeezed enough, "even a mouse will bit the cat."



*Hwang, President of the Korean Association of Social Scientists (KASS) and Secretary of the Party for Academic Affairs*

### Hwang Jang Yop

In the afternoon I met my host, Hwang Jang Yop, for the first time since arriving. He thanked me for "making an effort to improve relations," which he said they wanted. He said that his country is small and cannot damage the U.S. or influence it. So, it was his conclusion, that all questions of improving relations really depend on the U.S.

He made no secret that reunification is their goal and that U.S. support of the South as a military base is for the North the major obstacle. He said that just as the shrimp, it is said, was damaged in the struggle between whales, so is Korea fated. Since the U.S. has become the only superpower in the world, there is, he thought, no more excuse for U.S. forces to protect against the threat from the North. The U.S. should act boldly.

I said FAS wanted to raise the level of dialogue and, at the same time, make it more informal in an effort to improve the situation.

Returning to the hotel on the subway, one sees a Moscow type facility, with even wider platforms but much shorter trains. Like everything basic in the city infrastructure, it was laid out in the 1950s and 60s with Soviet help and so looks Soviet.

A sweet faced maiden of 18 was a subway platform guide. Asked if she had any questions about America, she said "Get your troops out of South Korea."

The city was festooned with banners. One read "Warm Welcome to Participants in International Solidarity Marches For Korea's Unification." After dinner, loud shouts were heard, and two South Korean students, who have dared to oppose the national security law in the South against such visits, were carried on shoulders by supporters to a press conference. They had attended a European peace conference and were the honorees of a 40-day fete.



### Day 5: Meeting with Minister Chon

In the morning my guide, Pak, announced that no one was available to see me in either the Foreign Ministry or the Party because no one of "suitable stature" was still around. I asked to see the officials of the Korean Anti-Nuclear Peace Committee who had been so effective for Hayes.

In a morning discussion over beers, Secretary General Pae Chang Kyu asked "Why is the U.S. so concerned with distant countries to send forces there? Why is the U.S. so hostile to North Korea?" And he noted that President Kim Il Sung, though almost 80, still visited the provinces and tasted the soybean curd to see that it has been made properly.

After lunch, my guides announced they had arranged a meeting with Vice Minister Chon In Chol, who was in charge, among other things, of the talks with the Japanese on normalization. At this point, he was the acting Foreign Minister.

In a two-hour, widely ranging interview, I came to like Minister Chon. His position was that relations are tense between our two countries and it is high time to change it. The U.S. should abandon its policy of strength, he said, and, if it did so, it would "open bright prospects." Even though a country is small, he said, it should have a very independent spirit; North Koreans want mutual respect and equality.

Chon told me he is in favor of higher level contacts, even if they are informal. He agreed with others in the North that the nuclear question is the most important issue. He said "We clarified that if all the nuclear weapons are withdrawn, there will be a way forward."

[This is a standard formulation which I came to understand in the following way: The entire Government bureaucracy operates without instructions on major issues because only Kim Il Sung makes the final decision. Accordingly, the bureaucracy generates vague phrases such as "the way will be opened" or "there will be a way forward" to encourage Western concessions without committing themselves to do anything in particular. Moreover, the North Korean bureaucrats are as adept as Jesuitical scholars in coming up with new reasons for their policies and, where logic is unable to bridge gaps, they are also adept at blind leaps into implausible arguments.]

Their latest reasons for not signing of the IAEA agreement, after six years of stalling, are, I learned, that they can sign only when the nuclear weapons are withdrawn from the South, and simultaneous with that event. They will not sign under pressure, and they argued that the IAEA resolution urging them to sign is such pressure.

In my conversations, they had not yet linked inspection of their nuclear facilities to "Team Spirit" exercises, but Minister Chon constantly referred to "removal of the nuclear threat." I asked what this vague statement meant, considering, for example, that the U.S. would still have thousands of nuclear weapons in the U.S. after withdrawing them from South Korea. "Would this be a nuclear threat?" I asked. Minister Chon said they have never de-

### The Military Situation—South and North

The South has 650,000 men in an army deployed mainly to protect Seoul. The U.S. force of 43,000 men that is declining somewhat in size is being used as a "trip-wire" or, as its opponents would say, "a tethered goat." The U.S. is gradually turning over command to the Republic of Korea (ROK) forces. Since the South now has good relations with Moscow, the North would have to attack by itself and, accordingly, is considered a much lesser threat.

The North—despite a population only half as large—has about as many men under arms as the South. Approximately 80% of them are believed to be forward-deployed near the dividing line between the countries, the DMZ, under which the North has dug tunnels for rapid attack.

The North complains bitterly about the annual U.S.-South Korean "Team Spirit" exercises and sends its population into air raid shelters when they are held. The South complains that the North holds unannounced exercises that simulate invasions of the South, whereas, it says, "Team Spirit" exercises move east to west rather than in a threatening, northerly, direction. ■

manded that the U.S. destroy all its nuclear weapons. What then? It was not clear.

I emphasized that the problem is not really an American one. If their program starts bomb programs in Seoul and Tokyo, they will soon regret it. Indeed, they would regret it if the Americans left South Korea, because they would find the South Koreans far less responsible. [Indeed, the North is finding it difficult to accept the fact that the U.S. wants to withdraw from the Armistice Line which forces them to deal with South Korean soldiers who represent a country they do not recognize.]

One of the things the North wants that would "remove the nuclear threat" is a declaration in writing from the U.S. that North Korea would be covered by the U.S. "negative



Pyongyang Skyline

security assurance." Minister Chon seemed not to know that the U.S. had offered to provide a letter to IAEA in which it would be stated that countries "such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" will be covered by it if they fulfill the IAEA conditions.

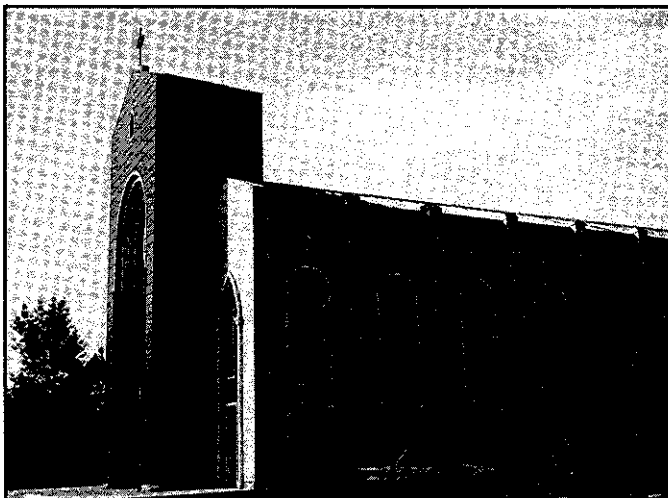
I asked him why they are so interested in a nuclear free zone when, in fact, this will not guarantee their security against a country twice their size and with a much larger GNP. Why do they not want security guarantees from the surrounding countries in a kind of 2 plus 4 talks? His answer was that they want neighboring countries to guarantee the nuclear free zone.

But isn't it better to guarantee the borders of both North Korea and its neighbors rather than the nuclear free zone? He said they want reunification rather than guarantees of borders. Well, what about a transitional guarantee that would guarantee the existing borders and, later, the reunified borders? He said they have been thinking so long about nuclear free zones that it seems obvious to them that it is the thing to do. And he noted that they have proposed non-aggression declarations and that the armistice agreement be replaced by a peace agreement as well as arms control, which to my thinking are but two pieces of paper and a reversible process.

The Minister seemed to share my fears of a nuclear arms race on the peninsula. He said he told the Japanese during his negotiations that the scare about North Korean nuclear weapons was just a way to help the Japanese get nuclear weapons.

Answering his point that his government has always said it had "neither the capacity nor the intention" to deploy nuclear weapons, I pointed out that the Israelis had noted that they "would not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East" but obviously had. One American had become famous by saying "Governments always lie."

Though he laughed agreeably, he said "We have made it perfectly clear that we will sign the IAEA agreement if the other side removes the nuclear weapons." But he also said, in seeming contradiction, "We did not sign in September because we will never do anything under pressure."



*The sole Catholic church, built in 1988*

I emphasized that the situation could get worse. At the moment, the IAEA agreement could cure the problem. But if they wait until others believe they already have a few bombs underground, the situation might be beyond repair and the arms race might start. If this arms race started, and especially if the Americans left, there would likely be a nuclear war in the region. In fact, to their amusement, I told them they might later much regret the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

Chon told me that an unspecified "they" have "asked us to stop anti-U.S. propaganda." If there are controls over nuclear weapons and exchanges, then we will stop, he promised.

At the end of the meeting, one participant, Li Gun, Senior Researcher of the Institute for Disarmament & Peace, which seemed to work for the Foreign Ministry, asked to talk to me about the "mechanics" of the scientific exchanges FAS wanted.

### **Days 6 and 7: Church, Consumerism and Hard Liners**

On Sunday I visited the one Catholic Church. When asked how old the church was, a priest said: "They began to respect God on June 30, 1988." He said there had been more than 50 churches before 1950 but, after the war, only ashes remained. There are 200 members in their congregation. And he said their biggest need is "believers; we do not have many."

To build the church had cost 300,000 won of which 100,000 had been a loan from Government. [In other words, about 200 families had put up a year's income each.] He added that they could use a car to get around to see the faithful in other parts of the country. But, in general, they wanted to "walk on their own." The Vatican had sent two priests when they opened their doors. As far as contacts with the South, priests from South Korea had visited, he said.

There were 110 worshippers that day, the women with heads covered with veils. The church was neat and simple with plain rather than stained glass windows but with 14 religious pictures hung around the front and sides of the Church and with small red, green and yellow lights and small chandeliers. There was also an ancillary building for offices.

Later that day, at a hard currency store large numbers of Koreans, as well as foreigners, were buying up foreign goods including short wave radios, which have been sold there since the store opened in 1986. Apparently, Koreans working abroad or getting foreign currency from foreign relatives can come there and, with no questions asked, purchase items not available on the open market. Consequently, the urban populations at least are now aware that North Korean goods are not the best in the world.

The next day, Monday, I met with Li Gun and his assistant Mrs. Rim Kyhong Hi, researcher at the Institute for Disarmament and Peace. Among the points Li made were:

- a. We want simultaneous actions [on such issues as removal of bombs and IAEA adherence].
- b. We want a separate statement providing the negative assurance agreement.

During our talk I told him that, in my opinion, the North was stalling on the bomb and, also, acting as if every demand they could think of had to be handled exactly as they wanted it. ["You act as if the document has to have Kim Il Song's picture on top and Bush's picture also but Bush's picture should be somewhat smaller and lower down on the document and on and on and on."]

I told him and Mrs. Rim that their government sometimes accused us of giving the South a "veto" over what we did and then, at other times, expected us to act as if there were no "veto" at all. If they were not building a bomb and this was all a trick [which I don't believe] then they were taking too long. In general they were risking being "too smart by half."



*Students marching and singing*

### **The Background of Hwang Jang Yop**

Early on in my visit, it became obvious that I would not have enough time with Professor Hwang to get to know him well.

I invited Pak Mun Hoi to discuss my host.

Hwang, Pak told me, is 69 and was born on the east coast of Korea. He studied in Moscow, met his wife there, and visited China, India, Portugal, Thailand, Greece, Japan and France over a period of years. But he has not travelled to Great Britain or the U.S.

In the early 1950s, in Moscow, he studied philosophy. From early 1960 to 1979, he served as President of the North's biggest University, Kim Il Sung University, with its 10,000 students. He was in Japan during World War II. He was a lecturer at the University during the Korean War. Also, during that war, he was sent abroad to Moscow. He was not a soldier but was a typical scholar.

He became Secretary of the Central Committee for theoretical research in social science and history of the party and head of KASS in 1979; until 1984 he was Speaker of the Parliament, and from 1985 to 1989 he was Secretary of the Party for International Affairs. Professor Pak had been his student.

The 1970s and 80s were important periods for systematizing the theory of the Party. So an official who was

capable of helping President Kim Il Sung to enrich Juche was then quite necessary. Hwang was, in fact, the chief adviser on Juche.

Asked if the President would consult an expert on Juche when considering establishing relations with a Foreign Country, Pak answered yes. Do all decisions depend on Juche? "Yes, we can say so, because it is a guiding idea of our Government," Pak replied.

Can the President overrule experts on what constitutes Juche? "The president listens to the opinions of officials below him a lot. Sometimes the experts make a mistake. And then he corrects them. He is the final arbiter of what is Juche. This is why the people in the theoretical research regard the President as their teacher."

### **Hwang's Character According to Pak**

Hwang, Pak said, is "so profound in theoretical thinking that he cannot be compared with others. So I respect him as a teacher."

According to Pak, his theoretical research has characteristics different from that of others. Hwang consults with the President and then advises others what is the correct line. But, Pak said, he does not do work to make himself famous and, indeed, hates publishing books in his own name. The President likes and trusts him.

For example, in 1967, Hwang wrote a paper "On the Transition from Capitalism to Socialism and the Proletariat Dictatorship." It created a great stir; scholars and professors criticized him severely. The President called him to his home and explained that such and such was right and such and such was not. Now the President keeps himself informed of Hwang's works before they are published so that this [problem of criticism] will not happen again.

Second, he said, Hwang "treats everyone in such a fair way and likes to be on good terms with everyone. Even if people criticize him, he treats them fairly."

In general, says Pak, Hwang's conviction is that "evil should not be answered by evil but by justice and that justice should be tempered by love. This is his conviction of life while studying the Juche philosophy. For example, despite the treatment by Japan, he said we should not scold the Japanese."

Pak said, moreover, that "everyone wants to be on friendly relations" with Hwang and that he also has "very good" relations with the "Dear Leader." Indeed Kim Jong Il urged Hwang to take a holiday for a month when Hwang did not want to do so. Also, the President showed his affection for Hwang by sending him to China for three months for his hoarse throat. [Hwang has a certain hoarseness.]

Pak said that Hwang is interested in non-violence and hates nuclear weapons, war and the like. "When he was Secretary of the Party for International Affairs these questions of non-violence were discussed. Among foreign scholars," contends Pak, "he is on best terms with those who believe in non-violence."

In conclusion, Professor Pak agreed that one could describe Hwang as a "confucian sage."

### Juche and Nuclear Weapons

Would it be Juche to have nuclear weapons in the sense of their providing strength and independence? "Yes, of course," he said. "But if all people think and act in the same way, it is stronger than an atom bomb. One can't consolidate the system with atom bombs alone."

Is it possible, under the theory of Juche, to avoid building nuclear weapons? Pak's answer was "This is what the President is deciding now. Our President never lied. He expressed more than once that the DPRK would not build an atomic bomb. Last year and two years ago. So he has already decided that Juche did not require an atomic bomb."

"If we do build an atomic bomb," he continued, "it may be favorable for protecting ourselves. But if we do, the benefit is less than the loss. Because if we do, the South will. Then inevitably, a nuclear war will break out in the Korean peninsula. Because of the last war, we suffered and still are behind other countries. So if nuclear war breaks out, there will be ashes again. That is why, from olden times, our Republic agreed [on the policy of not building nuclear weapons.]

"If we build nuclear weapons, Japan will have an excuse also. And Japan is very well developed and knows how to construct atomic energy for electricity. So it will be easy for them to develop a bomb. Even without considering the U.S., if we compete with Japan and Korea, we will lose. If we build nuclear weapons, it will be as stupid as Iraq invading Kuwait. I hope that the U.S. understands that we are not Iraq."

I expressed the fear that the North might follow a strategy of building a few bombs in secret and that, thereafter, the secret would leak out. Professor Pak said that, if a secret strategy were followed, he might not know about it.

He noted, however, that the North was short of electricity and had been trying to build a nuclear power plant,



*Pictures of the "Great Leader" adorn public buildings.*

something they simply could not do. [The Soviets have so far refused to build one—because of the North's stance on IAEA inspections.] North Korean scientists have been criticized for their failure to build this electric power plant. Accordingly, Pak could not believe they could build a bomb.

Everything would become clear, he said, "when there is an inspection." He noted that Stalin blew up 100,000 tons of dynamite once to create the impression that he had a nuclear weapon.

#### **Final Evening: Farewell Dinner with Hwang**

My last evening in Pyongyang was spent at dinner with Hwang, who said "improving relations is very important; it would be an honor to contribute to better relations." But he told me "how to do it is what you should consider; on what grounds can I make a visit? Even though I make a visit as Chairman of KASS, not as a Secretary of the Party, there should be sufficient reasons."

As far as he was concerned, however, he said it would be enough to open his heart to one sincere professor and settle all matters in long talks.

*—Jeremy J. Stone*

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