

Chapter 3

North Korean Force Structure and Formations

This chapter addresses North Korean force structure and command and control (C2) of formations. It reviews Korean People's Army (KPA) service component organizations, command and support relationships, and C2 of military forces. A concise description of force structure at the tactical echelon addresses regular and irregular forces, with the former primarily at the tactical echelons of division, brigade, regiment, battalion, and company.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF NORTH KOREAN FORCES

3-1. As discussed in chapter 1, the KPA forces are organized functionally and named accordingly. At regimental and higher headquarters, units performing these functions are referred to as forces. At battalion and subordinate headquarters, units are called elements. When applicable to both forces and elements, the term used is unit.

SERVICE COMPONENT ORGANIZATIONS

3-2. All North Korean military forces, except the internal security forces, belong to the KPA. There are no separate military services per se. KPA armed forces are typically structured into six service components and various types of paramilitary reserve personnel, as indicated in figure 3-1.

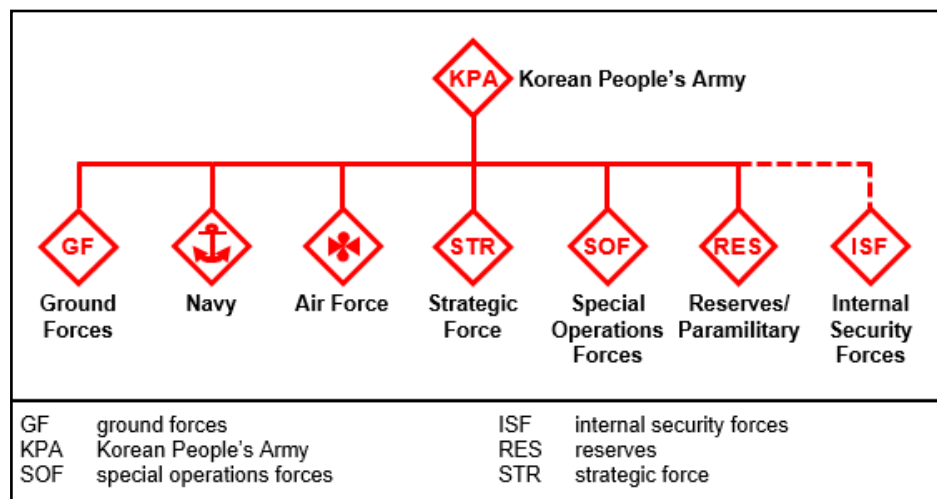


Figure 3-1. KPA armed forces service components

Note. The order of battle illustrations throughout this document are representative examples of KPA units. Due to the tiered nature of the KPA, where frontline and higher-priority units receive the most modern equipment and reserve units operate less-capable equipment, the same type of KPA unit may not operate the same type of equipment. For example, units along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) may field T-62 or even newer domestically produced tanks, while reserve units may operate T-54 or even vintage T-34/85 tanks. Any change to a subordinate organization would change the composition of the represented unit.

ARMY

3-3. The army is the largest of the six services, and relies on mobilization of reserve and militia forces to conduct sustained military operations. To avoid the confusion between the overall military forces and the ground forces, the army units will be called the Korean People's Army Ground Forces (KPAGF), while the entire military will be called the KPA. The KPAGF are composed of approximately 1.02 million active duty and 600,000 reserve personnel.

NAVY

3-4. The navy includes naval forces for both oceanic and littoral missions. The Korean People's Army Navy (KPAN) is composed of 60,000 active duty personnel with no reserve.

AIR FORCE

3-5. There are approximately 120,000 active duty personnel supporting 1,600 aircraft. There are no reserve units within the Korean People's Army Air Force (KPAAF).

STRATEGIC FORCE

3-6. The Strategic Force, formerly the Strategic Rocket Forces Command, is now on the same level as the army, navy, and air force. This command fields 7–8 brigades of surface-to-surface missiles of different types with various ranges.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

3-7. There is no single command responsible for KPA special operations forces (SOF). Command of SOF units is divided between the Reconnaissance General Bureau (RGB), the Light Infantry Training Guidance Bureau, and the Strategic Operations Forces. The latter is also responsible for the SOF that will call in deep fires for the artillery. There are also SOF units that receive their training guidance from the RGB, but are assigned on a habitual basis to train with the four KPAGF forward-deployed corps. While many military forces field SOF and commando units in their military, the KPAGF do not use commando units; however, several of the light units belonging to the SOF forces would contain characteristics normally found in such units. The North Korean armed forces field approximately 200,000 SOF personnel divided among the KPAGF, KPAN, and KPAAF, with most belonging to the KPAGF.

PARAMILITARY FORCES

3-8. The Worker-Peasant Red Guard and People's Guard—also known as the Red Guard Army—is a militia of approximately 5.72 million personnel organized by military district with units down to the village level. While some of the units are armed, many do not possess weapons and would be used as a labor force or as replacement soldiers. These personnel receive approximately 160 hours of annual training. The Red Youth Guard is just under one million secondary-school students who regularly receive basic military instruction and marksmanship training. There are also approximately 620,000 members of reserve military training units—also known as the Instruction Guidance Units—who normally serve as instructors.

INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES

3-9. These 189,000 personnel serve as a national police force and border guards that are subordinate to the Ministry of People's Security in peacetime, but could be used for military purposes in time of war. Internal security forces personnel possess light arms to use in their work. There is also a Guard Command, sometimes called General Guard Bureau, responsible for the protection of Kim Jong Un, his family, and other senior officials. Composed of approximately 100,000 personnel, the Guard Command contains three combat brigades, several bodyguard divisions, and a single construction battalion. It is equipped like military units, with anti-aircraft artillery (AAA), multiple-launch rocket systems, armored vehicles, tanks, limousines, and trucks.

3-10. In wartime conditions and when subordinate to a military force commander, internal security forces can be assigned tactical combat or combat support mission tasks within organizational capabilities. Mission tasks can include limited offensive and defensive actions, but are typically more oriented to security and civilian population control. Other related tasks can include tactical support to prisoner-of-war processing and control missions, or support to traffic control and regulation. Intelligence collection can also be assigned to internal security forces, as the units operate within the North Korean population and would work within the South Korean populace if war were to occur on the peninsula.

COMMAND AND SUPPORT RELATIONSHIPS

3-11. Each of the KPA units, even when it involves a grouping of multiple units, organizations, or cells, has an identified leader or commander. These command and support relationships may change during the course of an operation in order to best accomplish the assigned tasks. The general category for C2 includes constituent and dedicated relationships, and supporting and affiliated responsibilities. KPA units organize using four command and support relationships as summarized in table 3-1.

Table 3-1. KPA command and support relationships

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Commanded by</i>	<i>Logistics from</i>	<i>Positioned by</i>	<i>Priorities from</i>
Constituent	Gaining	Gaining	Gaining	Gaining
Dedicated	Gaining	Parent	Gaining	Gaining
Supporting	Parent	Parent	Supported	Supported
Affiliated	Self	Self or "parent"	Self	Mutual agreement

CONSTITUENT

3-12. Constituent units are those forces assigned directly to a unit and forming an integral part of it. They may be organic to the KPA administrative force structure forming the basis of a given unit, assigned at the time the unit was created, or attached to it after its formation.

DEDICATED

3-13. Dedicated is a command relationship identical to constituent, with the exception that a dedicated unit still receives logistics support from a parent headquarters of similar type. An example of a dedicated unit would be a specialized unit, such as an attack helicopter company, allocated to a maneuver brigade. The maneuver brigade does not possess the technical expertise or repair facilities for the aviation systems. The dedicated relationship, however, permits the company to execute missions exclusively for the brigade while receiving its logistics support from its parent aviation organization.

SUPPORTING

3-14. Supporting units continue to be commanded by and receive their logistics from their parent headquarters, but are positioned and given mission priorities by their supported headquarters. The KPA calls this administrative control. This relationship permits supported units the freedom to establish priorities and position supporting units while allowing higher headquarters to rapidly shift support in dynamic situations. An example of a supporting unit would be a multiple rocket launcher battalion supporting a brigade for a particular phase of an operation, but ready to rapidly transition to a different support relationship when the brigade becomes the division reserve in a later phase. The supporting unit does not necessarily have to be within the supported unit's area of operations (AO).

AFFILIATED

3-15. Affiliated status is mutually agreed-upon cooperation with an organization in support of another unit operating in a common AO. Affiliation infers the coordination to influence actions towards outcomes that

benefit both actors and is usually temporary in time and limited in scope. No command relationship exists between an affiliated organization and the unit in whose AO it operates. Affiliated organizations are typically nonmilitary or paramilitary groups such as criminal organizations, guerrilla units, or insurgent cells. In some cases, affiliated forces may receive combat support or rear service from a division or brigade as part of the agreement under which they cooperate.

Note. In organization charts, the affiliated status is reflected by a dashed line—rather than solid—connecting the affiliated unit to the organization with which it is affiliated. This dashed line is not to be confused with dashed unit symbols, which indicate additional units that may or may not be present. Although there is typically no formal indication of this relationship in KPA plans and orders, the acronym for affiliated (AFL) can be used as a free text description next to a unit symbol.

COMMAND POST COMMAND AND CONTROL

3-16. The KPA exercises tactical control over its wartime forces from an integrated system of command posts (CPs). The design of this system enhances the capability of uninterrupted C2 of forces.

3-17. The CPs are typically formed in three parts: a control group, a support group, and a communications group. The control group includes members of the command group or section and staff. The support group consists of the transport, logistics, and security/guard elements. Whenever possible, the communications group is remoted from the control and support groups in order to minimize C2 physical and electromagnetic signatures.

3-18. KPA military planners create a CP structure that emphasizes survivability through dispersal, stringent security measures, redundancy, and mobility. A CP system is organized to sustain damage with minimum disruption to the actual C2 process. In the event of disruption, subsystems reestablish C2 as soon as possible. Tactical CPs are typically designed to be mobile, with a physical and electronic signature smaller than comparable enemy CPs. The number, size, and types of CPs depend on the level of command and operational environment conditions.

COMMAND POST TYPES

3-19. KPA ground maneuver forces use several basic and special types of CPs. Not all levels of command use all CP types at all times, as shown in table 3-2. Redundancy provided by multiple CPs enhances resilient C2 operations. The KPA will allow a CP to move only after approval by its next higher commander. For brevity, acronyms are used for the various types of CPs.

Table 3-2. Command post types by command level

Command Post Type	Division	Regiment	Battalion	Company
Main	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Forward	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rear area	Yes	Yes	No	No
Reserve	Optional	Optional	Optional	No
Command observation post	Yes	Yes	No	No
Deception	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Airborne	Optional	Optional	No	No
Auxiliary	Optional	Optional	No	No

Main Command Post

3-20. The KPA main CP is normally located within the second echelon area, in a key sanctuary area, or in a fortified position that provides easy access, communications with higher and lower units, and defensibility. The main CP contains the majority of the staff, with the chief of staff directing its operation. The primary purpose is to simultaneously coordinate the activities of subordinate units not yet engaged in combat and plan for subsequent missions. Particular emphasis in the main CP is planning details of transitioning between current and future operations. The main CP is the central point to control mission execution. It is less mobile and much larger than the forward CP, and may use hardened sites when practical for a particular mission.

3-21. The chief of staff directs the staff in implementing the commander's decisions as plans and orders; coordinates the movement and deployment of all subordinate units not yet in combat; and monitors their progress and combat readiness in conjunction with the sustainment CP. In addition to the chief of staff, there is a political section, specialty staff sections, tactics section, unified communications section, counteraviation section, and the naval and air services. Additional staff personnel present at the main CP may include the liaison teams from subordinate, supporting, allied, and affiliated units, unless their presence is required at another CP.

3-22. The KPA main CP is often located in an accessible valley that encompasses 4–6 square kilometers and within 3–5 km of a landing strip. The main CP will contain communications equipment, including that necessary for retransmission operations.

Forward Command Post

3-23. A commander often establishes a forward CP with a small group of selected staff members. The forward CP is deployed at a point from which the commander can more effectively and personally observe and influence the tactical operation. Location of the forward CP provides the commander with current or near real-time information, intelligence, and effective communications that facilitate situational awareness and understanding and enhance command decisions.

3-24. The personnel at the forward CP are not permanent designations. Assignment of forward CP members to accompany the commander is dependent on the mission, situation, and availability of functional experts, communications, and transportation means. Officers who may typically accompany the commander may include the operations officer and the chief of reconnaissance. Other primary or secondary staff officers may also deploy with the forward CP, depending on the tactical situation. This may include a fires coordinator linked to the integrated fires system (IFS), signals and codes chief, branch of service chiefs, forward air controllers, the political commissar, operations section members, communications section, and sister-service liaisons. The secondary staff contains enough personnel to man the forward CP without degrading the ability to operate the main CP or IFS CP. When a forward CP forms, the commander is typically located where C2 of ongoing operations can best be performed. The chief of staff in the main CP has the authority to issue directives in the commander's absence.

Rear Area Command Post

3-25. The deputy commander for rear service establishes and controls resources and support of the force from a rear area CP. This CP operates from a position within the unit's rear area to permit the effective supervision and execution of sustainment procedures for all classes of supply, as well as transportation and movement of resources. The location should allow for ease of transportation of supplies into the area and the evacuation of wounded personnel. The rear area CP contains staff officers for subsistence; clothing and equipment; petroleum, oils, and lubricants; construction and barrier material; ammunition; major end item provision, repair, and maintenance; medical material and health service support; nonmilitary program support; and other miscellaneous support to the command's mission. The post coordinates with higher-echelon support headquarters and subordinate units to ensure sustained capabilities for combat, combat support, and rear service units. Multiple rear area CPs may be formed based on tactical requirements.

Reserve Command Post

3-26. The reserve CP, sometimes called an auxiliary CP by the KPA, is established by the KPA deputy commander for military affairs and consists of a few signal and staff personnel along with a fires section. It

is located in the best position to facilitate the movement of the antitank (AT) reserve, antilanding designated units, or the maneuver reserve. Normally, the reserve CP is to the rear or possibly the flank of the main CP.

3-27. If the KPA commander's CP becomes nonoperational, the reserve CP could serve as an alternate CP. The KPA commander establishes which CP will act as an alternate if the main (or forward) CP is destroyed or disabled. For situations that require reconstitution or major reorganization, a sustainment CP might be temporarily designated as the alternate command CP.

Command Observation Post

3-28. The deputy commander for artillery for each echelon of command down to the infantry regiment will establish a command observation post (OP) that is considered an IFS CP. From this post, the artillery commander and staff will observe the enemy situation, study the terrain and potential targets, perform fire direction duties, and coordinate indirect fire on the enemy.

3-29. The IFS CP possesses limited means to synchronize communications, airspace control, and automated fire control systems required to integrate reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA) means and execute long-range fires. Sections of the IFS headquarters and IFS CP typically locate in dispersed sites. The IFS CP is typically separated from the main CP. Each secondary staff subsection and some functional staff subsections have an element dedicated to the IFS CP. The IFS CP includes liaison teams from fire support, army aviation, and long-range reconnaissance or SOF elements.

3-30. At times, a KPA maneuver unit may establish command OPs. Such posts are usually composed only of reconnaissance and operations personnel. The command OP is established in a location for ease of observation of the entire front or important terrain.

Deception Command Post

3-31. While not specifically stated, it is expected as part of the overall electronic intelligence warfare (EIW) operations that the KPA will employ deception CPs. Capabilities must present realistic and robust multisensor signatures to deceive the enemy and support the commander in creating tactical opportunities to exploit for mission success.

Airborne Command Post

3-32. It is highly unlikely that a KPA commander will establish an airborne CP due to the likelihood of the enemy's control of the airspace. If this were to happen, however, it would be to maintain control in rapidly evolving tactical situations, when subordinate operations are dispersed over a wide geographic area, or when the other CPs are moving between locations. This capability for C2 situational awareness and understanding is at divisional and higher level commands. Helicopters are a typical mode for this mobility and effective communications.

Auxiliary Command Post

3-33. Only in the most remote circumstances will the KPA commander create an auxiliary CP to provide C2 over subordinate units, such as when operations are isolated or may be on remote axes. The commander may also use an auxiliary CP in the event of disrupted C2 or when adequate control cannot be maintained from the main CP.

COMMANDERS' DUTIES

3-34. The KPAGF place a stressful amount of responsibility on their unit commanders. The KPAGF expect their commanders to—

- Conduct detailed planning and preparation for all operations.
- Exploit the terrain, weather, and time to the KPA's advantage.
- Achieve surprise during the initial phase of each attack and at decisive times during the course of battle.
- Concentrate overwhelming forces at the decisive time and place.

- Conduct timely, fast, and daring maneuvers.
- Maintain control over subordinate elements' actions to ensure bold, determined, and exact execution of plans.

COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

3-35. While the KPA does have improved radio communications equipment, it is likely that it will routinely avoid using the radio for operational security reasons and because it has less communications equipment than most other militaries of its size and capabilities. In static situations, the KPA will likely use wire and fiber-optic communications, if available, to reduce radio traffic that is more susceptible for compromise. The KPAGF will likely use unsophisticated communications means such as signal flags, bugles, and whistles to communicate on the battlefield. However, some KPA units will have access to emerging technological capabilities and will use them for communications. In case of a communications break with higher headquarters, KPA units will continue operations within previously planned missions or prescribed alternatives.

TACTICAL-LEVEL ORGANIZATION OF REGULAR FORCES

3-36. KPAGF tactical units fight battles and engagements, with the largest organizations conducting tactical operations being divisions and regiments. The KPAGF field a limited number of brigades, primarily in their armor or mechanized forces. In peacetime, KPAGF divisions are subordinate to a corps headquarters. There are some units that remain under direct control of a North Korean governmental bureau during peacetime and some KPA units may report directly to their service headquarters.

3-37. Major tactical-level commands of the KPAN, KPAAF, Strategic Force, and SOF units often remain under the direct control of their respective parent component headquarters while supporting the KPAGF. The KPA retains centralized command or control of certain elite elements of the ground forces, including airborne and SOF units. This command arrangement permits flexibility in the employment of these specialized capabilities in response to mission requirements.

Note. The KPA may task-organize its forces for a particular mission down to the squad level, but does not identify this type of unit with a different term. Generic unit terms (squad, platoon, company, battalion, regiment, and division) or task-organized unit terms will be used throughout ATP 7-100.2. When there is no known KPA descriptive term, a U.S. term with similar meaning is used to provide a better understanding of the KPA unit's capabilities.

CORPS

3-38. The corps is a typical C2 headquarters above the division echelon for the KPAGF. Each corps headquarters is capable of controlling combined arms, joint, or interagency operations necessary to execute its mission. In peacetime, the four corps along the DMZ have permanently assigned divisions. Any division assigned to a forward corps is augmented with an additional artillery battalion and a military police battalion. The active duty KPAGF field two mechanized corps, 10 infantry corps, one capital defense (Pyongyang) corps, an air defense command, and a SOF corps assigned to the Light Infantry Training Guidance Bureau. The KPAGF maintain four infantry corps (I, II, IV, and V) along the DMZ in their first strategic echelon. The second strategic echelon contains their tank brigades and mechanized corps. The remainder of the KPAGF are scattered throughout the northern half of the country and along the borders with China and Russia. Table 3-3 on page 3-8 and figure 3-2 on page 3-9 show the peacetime locations of these various units.

Table 3-3. KPAGF corps and locations

<i>Major Army Unit</i>	<i>Headquarters Location</i>	<i>Province</i>
I District Command	Wonsan	Kangwon
I Corps	Hoeyang	Kangwon
II Corps	Hanpori	South Hwanghae
III Corps	Kaechon	South Pyongan
IV Corps	Haeju	North Hwanghae
V Corps	Huppyong-ni	Kangwon
VII Corps	Tongsin	South Hamgyong
VIII Corps	Tongrim	North Pyongan
IX Corps	Information not available	North Hamgyong
X Corps	Information not available	Ryanggang
XII Corps	Information not available	North Hamgyong
108 Mechanized Corps	Hamhung	South Hamgyong
425 Mechanized Corps	Chongju	North Pyongan
Pyongyang Defense Command	Soannae-san	Pyongyang
Air Defense Command	Pyongyang	Pyongyang
Reconnaissance General Bureau	Information not available	Information not available



Figure 3-2. KPAGF corps general locations

3-40. A corps consists of those division-, brigade-, regiment-, battalion-size, and other units allocated to the command to accomplish mission tasks. The units assigned to a corps will depend on its mission(s). If a particular corps has contingency plans for participating in more than one tactical mission, it could receive a different set of forces under each operational plan. Typical units assigned to a corps include—

- Infantry divisions.
- Mechanized divisions.
- Motorized divisions.
- Infantry divisions (partial reserve).
- Infantry divisions (reserve).
- Light infantry divisions.
- Tank divisions (105th).
- Tank brigades.
- Artillery brigades.
- Light infantry brigades.
- Sniper brigades (KPAGF, KPAN, KPAAF).
- Missile regiments.
- Engineer regiments (bridge).
- Signal regiments.
- AT battalions.
- Reconnaissance battalions.
- Long-range reconnaissance battalions.

- Engineer battalions (general and construction).
- Nuclear-chemical defense battalions.
- Signal battalions (wire, radio, or telephone).
- Electronic warfare/military intelligence companies.

COMBAT DIVISION FORCE STRUCTURE

3-41. In the KPAGF, the largest tactical formation is the division. Divisions are able to—

- Conduct operations as part of a corps or higher organization without being task organized.
- Sustain independent operations for a designated period of time.
- Integrate interagency forces up to brigade- or group-size formations.
- Execute all actions as directed by a higher headquarters.

3-42. The KPAGF field one armored division, four mechanized divisions, 27 infantry divisions, and 40 additional infantry divisions assigned to the reserves. Figure 3-3 shows the various types of divisions that the KPAGF field, and figure 3-4 on page 3-11 illustrates the structure of a KPAGF infantry division. Mechanized infantry divisions are very similar except the squads ride in armored personnel carriers (APCs) or infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), depending on the priority of the unit for equipment.

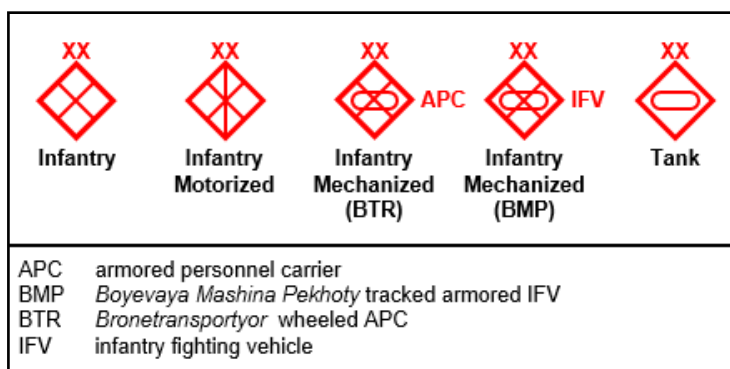


Figure 3-3. Different types of KPAGF divisions

3-43. A KPA infantry division would field approximately 12,800 personnel, including about 1,600 officers. Major equipment for the division includes the following:

- T-55/62 tanks: 31
- B-10 (82-mm) or B-11 (107-mm) recoilless rifles: 54
- AT-3 (Sagger) AT launchers: 27
- 76.2-mm AT guns: 48
- RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers: 630
- 152-mm howitzers: 24
- 122-mm howitzers: 72
- 107-mm multiple rocket launchers: 27
- 120-mm mortars: 54
- 82-mm mortars: 99
- 60-mm mortars: 12
- SA-7b man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS): 42
- S-60 (57-mm) AAA machine guns: 6
- 37-mm AAA machine guns: 12
- ZPU-4 (14.5-mm) AAA machine guns: 87
- Heavy machine guns: 370
- AK rifles: 9,085

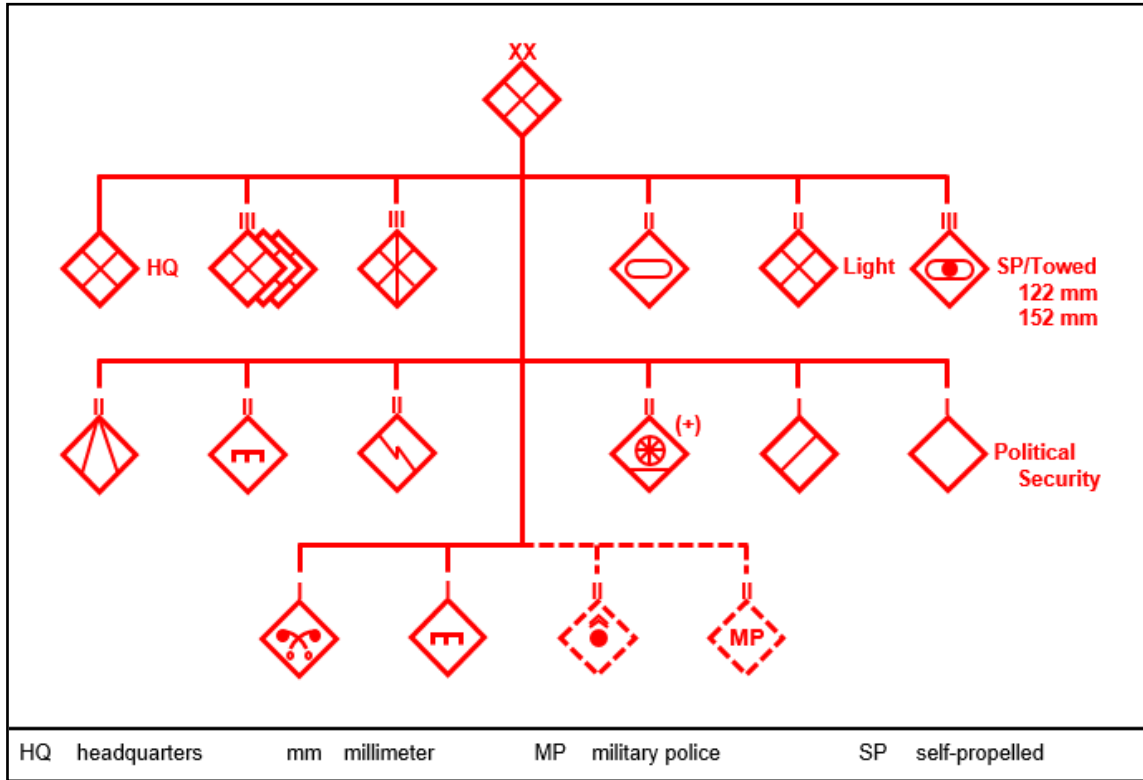


Figure 3-4. KPAGF infantry division structure (example)

3-44. Division structure will be dependent upon the unit's mission and location. Units along the DMZ will receive an additional artillery battalion and a military police battalion. Artillery could be self-propelled or towed, based on priority, location, and availability of equipment. KPA tank divisions will have less infantry, but the infantry will likely be mounted on APCs or IFVs. Mechanized divisions will be similar to standard infantry divisions, but with more vehicles with the infantry in APCs or IFVs. When dismounted from their APCs or IFVs, KPA infantry will likely operate in the same manner as a standard KPA infantry unit.

3-45. Besides the normal types of units found in most army divisions, KPAGF divisions contain a security company that focuses on internal unit security to ensure all soldiers are politically reliable. All units down to company level have at least a political officer that is separate from the unit commander. The size of this political security unit increases with parent unit size.

3-46. Selection to serve as a political officer is stringent and based on prior military service, party loyalty, and belonging to a politically reliable family. Political officers receive their training at various institutions in North Korea, including the Kim Il Sung Political College and the Kumsong Political College. The training focuses on politics, economics, party history, juche philosophy, and party loyalty. Upon graduation, the students receive a commission as a lieutenant and serve as a political officer in a KPA unit. Political officers receive advanced training as they move up in rank.

3-47. Political officers may have as much power as the KPA unit commander. They are to ensure that the soldiers in the unit remain supportive of the Kim family and the current regime. Political officers will conduct investigations of anyone accused of disloyalty—including saying negative things about the country or its leaders—and can have the individual arrested and charged with crimes. During combat operations, political officers must approve all the unit commander's plans and any subsequent changes. At the lowest level, company political officers will ensure that the unit's soldiers carry out their duties diligently, and will execute any soldiers that attempt to flee the battlefield or retreat without orders. Cowardice is not tolerated in the KPA, and the political officer is the enforcer.

3-48. Divisions in the four forward corps (I, II, IV, and V) receive additional augmentation beyond the standard units in the form of a second artillery battalion and a military police battalion. These forward corps also may receive additional reconnaissance assets that may be attached to subordinate divisions.

Integrated Fires System

3-49. The KPA uses an IFS based on the Soviet/Russian model of a regimental artillery group or division artillery group, and consists of a standing C2 structure and task-organized constituent and dedicated fire support units. While not specifically stated or named, most division-level and higher KPAGF organizations possess at least one IFS C2 structure—staff, CP, communications and intelligence architecture, and integrated/automated fire control system—at their headquarters, while brigade-level units and below do not. The unit commander will coordinate all available indirect fire resources through one leader, while consolidating the assets in a regimental or division artillery group for maximum effect. Figure 3-5 shows an example of a possible division IFS.

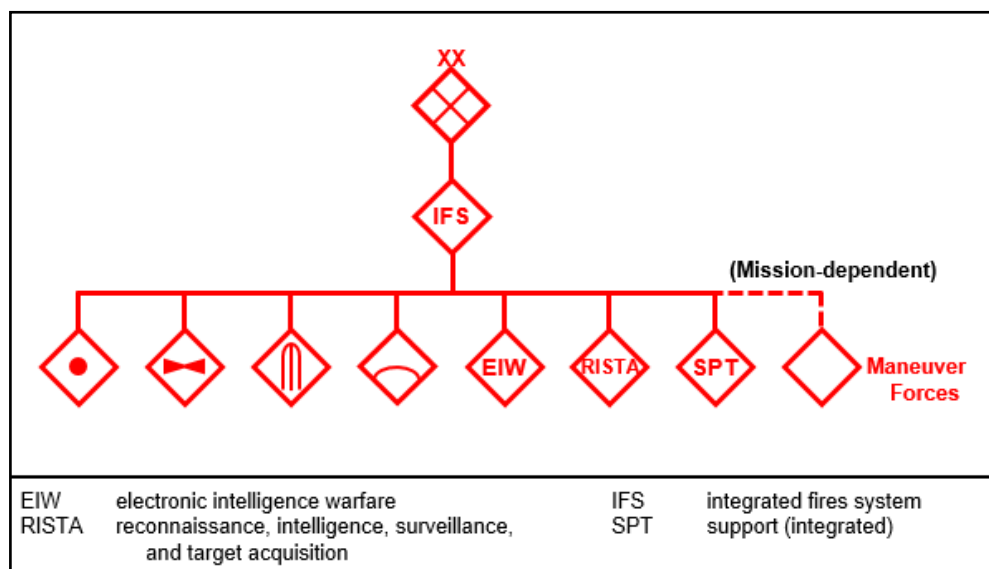


Figure 3-5. Division integrated fires system possible task organization components

3-50. The IFS exercises C2 of all constituent and dedicated fire support assets retained by its level of command. This can include army aviation, artillery, and missile units. It also exercises C2 over all RISTA assets allocated to it. EIW is a norm in all mission conduct, and such units are included in the IFS structure. See chapter 5 for more detail on IFS missions.

Note. The order of battle illustrations in this ATP are provided to give the reader the appropriate context for the tactical discussion in part II. For more detailed information on possible orders of battle and tables of organization and equipment, see the force structures available on the Operational Environment Data Integration Network (ODIN).

Integrated Support System

3-51. The integrated support system is the aggregate of rear service units, possibly some combat support units organic to a division, and additional assets allocated from higher headquarters to form a task-organized organization, as shown in figure 3-6. An integrated support system contains units that the division does not suballocate to lower levels of command. The division may allocate part of its integrated support system units as an integrated support group to support its IFS or one of its major divisional units. An integrated support system or group can also include units performing combat support tasks such as chemical warfare, engineer, or law enforcement.

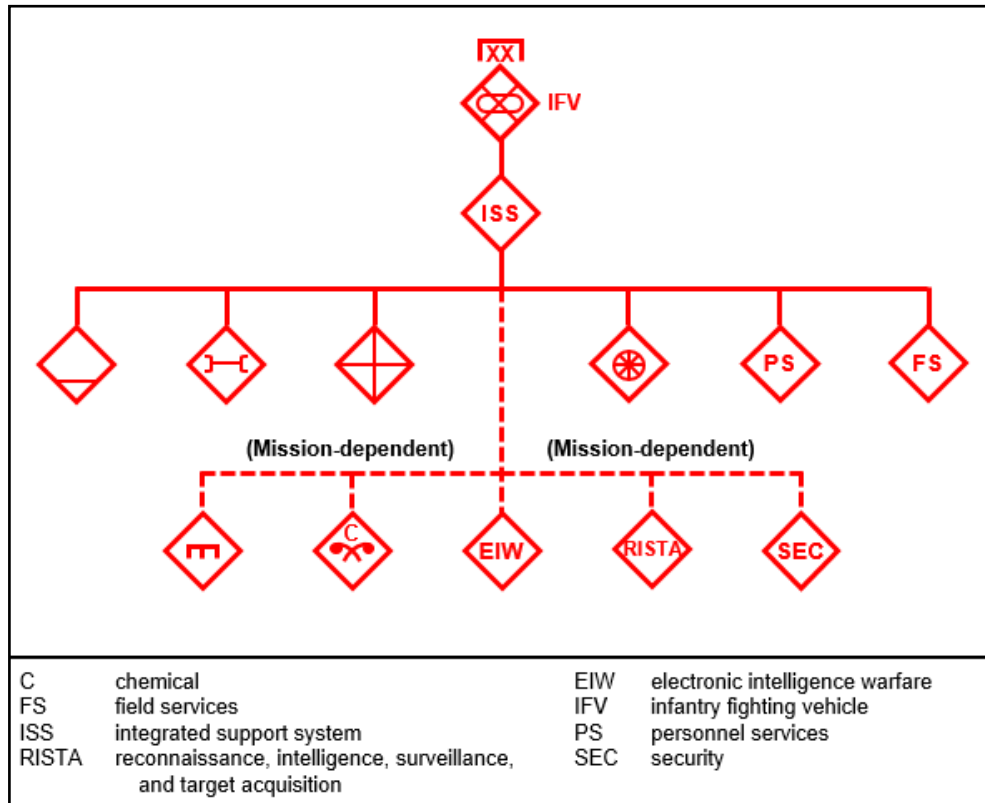


Figure 3-6. Division integrated support system possible task organization components

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

3-52. Difficult though it is to estimate exact numbers of North Korean SOF units and their personnel strength levels, most recent reports assign a figure of between 180,000 and 200,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen as part of North Korea's SOF units. See Appendix I for additional information on the SOF. Figure 3-7 illustrates the organizational structure of the KPA SOF units.

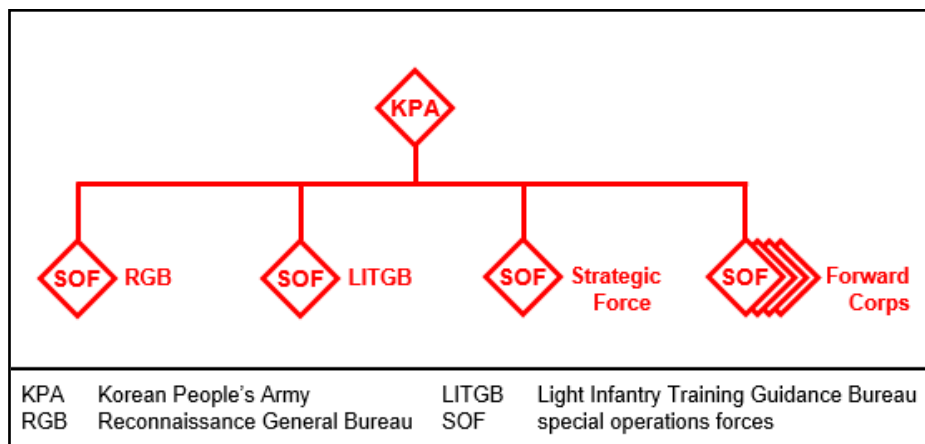


Figure 3-7. KPA special operations forces headquarters (example)

3-53. There are two primary organizations responsible for training and executing missions assigned to the KPA SOF—the RGB and the Light Infantry Training Guidance Bureau. The former is the new name for what

was once called “Second Bureau (Reconnaissance),” while the latter is also known as the “Training Unit Guidance Bureau.” The KPA SOF includes ground, air force, and maritime SOF units. In wartime or in transition to war, the KPA will maintain some SOF units under the C2 of their respective service headquarters or political bureau. Some SOF units that are under bureau or service-command control in peacetime, however, can also be provided to operational- or tactical-level commands during the task-organization process to perform designated missions or mission support.

3-54. SOF are not permanently subordinate to tactical-level units at divisional or subordinate headquarters. Relationships for C2 of SOF operating in a regular-force tactical commander’s AO vary. Command and support relationships for SOF may be constituent, dedicated, supporting, or affiliated. Relationships between SOF and paramilitary or nonmilitary personnel or groups are typically affiliation.

MANEUVER BRIGADES

3-55. The basic combined arms unit of the KPAGF is a regiment. The KPAGF, however, do field 15 separate armored brigades, 14 infantry brigades, and 21 artillery brigades. Normally when brigades are constituent to divisions, they are called divisional brigades. Brigades that are structured as separate brigades possess the ability to conduct independent missions without additional allocation of forces from higher-level tactical headquarters. Figure 3-8 illustrates the structure of a typical KPAGF tank brigade.

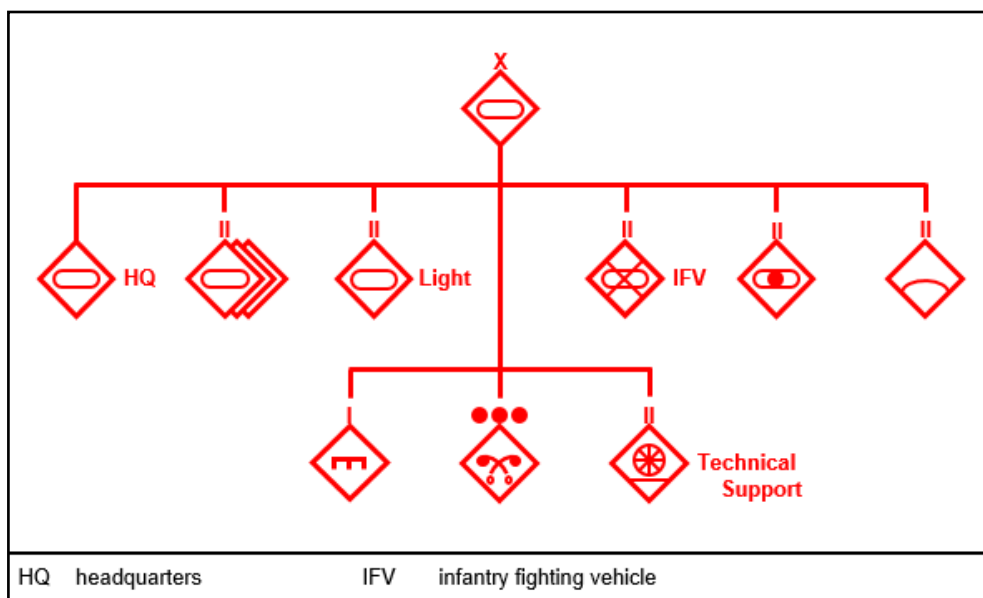


Figure 3-8. KPAGF tank brigade (example)

3-56. A KPA tank brigade would field approximately 2,500 personnel, including around 230 officers. Major equipment for the tank brigade includes the following:

- T-55/62 tanks: 93
- IFVs/APCs: 58
- BRDM patrol cars: 3
- M-1985/Type 62/63/PT-76 light tanks: 40
- 152-mm self-propelled howitzers: 18
- 122-mm self-propelled howitzers: 18
- AT-3 (Sagger) AT launchers: 3
- RPG-7 RPG launchers: 43
- 82-mm mortars: 9
- SA-7b MANPADS: 12
- M-1983/BTR-152 AAA vehicles: 6

- 37-mm AAA machine guns: 12
- Type 80/ZSU-57 (57-mm) AAA guns: 6
- Radar systems (FIRECAN or others): 3
- 2 1/2-ton trucks: 162
- Tank retrievers: 6
- Light machine guns: 70

3-57. Maneuver brigades are designed to be able to—

- Serve as the basic organization for forming a task-organized brigade.
- Fight as part of a division.
- Fight as a separate unit in a corps, as an organization from the AFS, or in subordination to a field army.
- Sustain independent combat operations over a period of several days.
- Integrate interagency forces of up to battalion size.
- Execute all actions as assigned.

REGIMENTS

3-58. The basic combined arms unit of the KPAGF is an infantry regiment. Figure 3-9 illustrates the structure of a KPAGF infantry regiment.

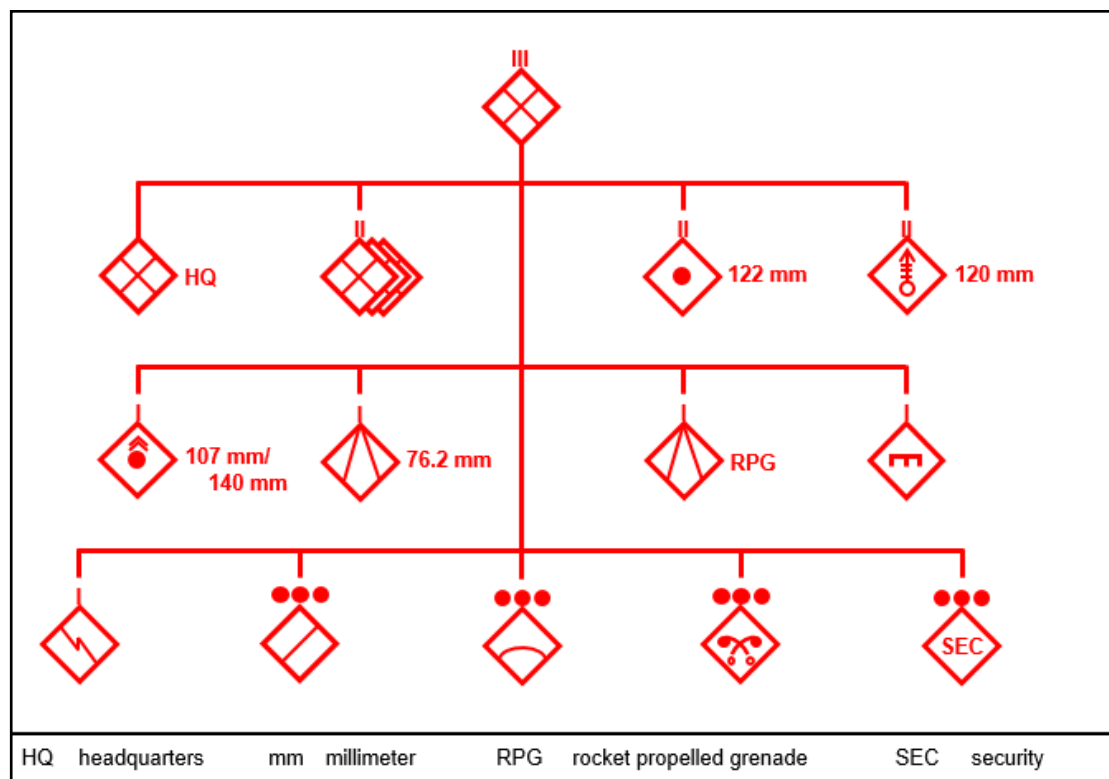


Figure 3-9. KPAGF infantry regiment (example)

3-59. KPA infantry regiments would field approximately 2,500 personnel, including around 185 officers. Major equipment for an infantry regiment includes the following:

- B-10 (82-mm) or B-11 (107-mm) recoilless rifles: 9
- AT-3 (Sagger) AT launchers: 12
- 76.2-mm AT guns: 6

- RPG-7 RPG launchers: 174
- SA-7b MANPADS: 12
- 122-mm howitzers: 18
- 107-mm multiple rocket launchers: 9
- 120-mm mortars: 18
- 82-mm mortars: 27
- ZPU-4 (14.5-mm) AAA machine guns: 27
- Heavy machine guns: 84
- AK rifles: 1,718

3-60. Besides infantry, the KPA infantry regiment contains artillery, mortar, AT gun, engineering, signal, air defense, reconnaissance, chemical, and logistics units. Maneuver regiments are designed to be able to—

- Fight as part of a division.
- Sustain independent combat operations for a short period of time.
- Execute all actions as assigned.

BATTALIONS

3-61. The basic unit of action in the KPAGF force structure is the battalion. An example of an infantry battalion is shown in figure 3-10.

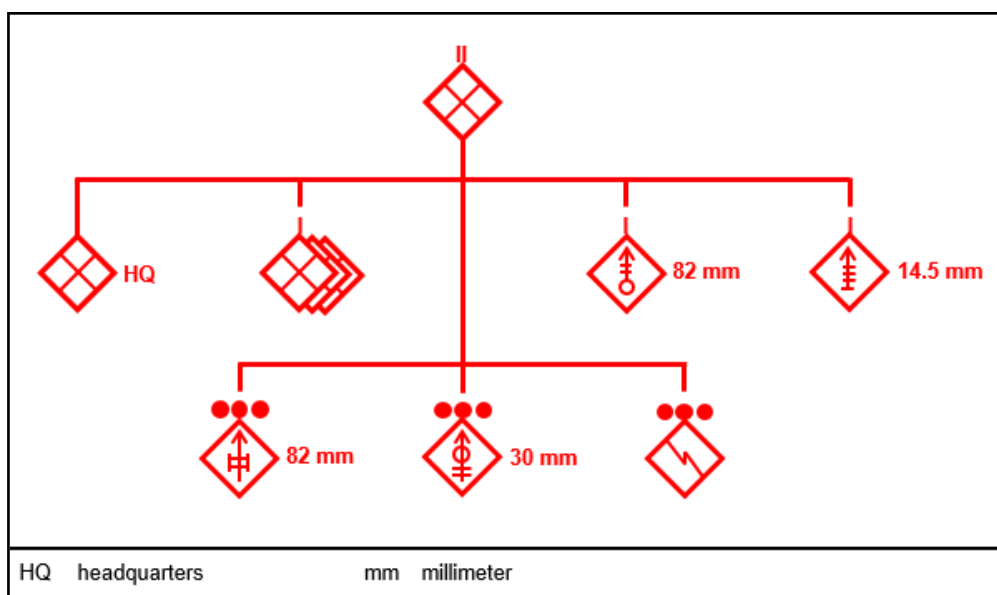


Figure 3-10. KPAGF infantry battalion organization (example)

3-62. KPA infantry battalions would field approximately 555 personnel, including around 30 officers. Major equipment for an infantry battalion includes the following:

- B-10 (82-mm) or B-11 (107-mm) recoilless rifles: 4
- SA-7b MANPADS: 3
- 82-mm mortars: 9
- RPG-7 RPG launchers: 54
- 40-mm underbarrel grenade launchers (40-mm): 40
- AGS-17 (30-mm) automatic grenade launchers: 6
- Heavy machine guns: 8
- Light machine guns: 81

- AK rifles: 412
- SVD sniper rifles: 27

3-63. Battalions are designed to be able to—

- Serve as the basis for forming a task-organized battalion-size unit.
- Fight as part of a regiment or division.
- Execute basic combat missions as part of a larger tactical force.
- Execute tactical actions as assigned.

COMPANIES

3-64. In KPAGF force structure, the largest unit without a staff is the company. An example of an infantry company can be seen in figure 3-11.

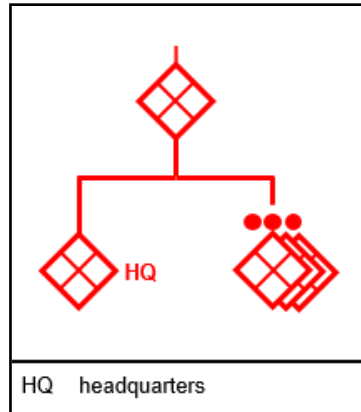


Figure 3-11. KPAGF infantry company organization (example)

3-65. KPA infantry companies would field approximately 120 personnel, including around six officers. One of these officers is the political officer. Major equipment for an infantry battalion includes the following:

- RPG-7 RPG launchers: 18
- Underbarrel grenade launchers (40-mm): 18
- Light machine guns: 27
- AK rifles: 75
- SVD sniper rifles: 9

3-66. In KPAGF fire-support units, this level of command is called a company, unlike U.S. doctrine where it is a battery. Companies are designed to be able to—

- Serve as the basis for forming a task-organized company-size unit.
- Fight as part of a battalion, regiment, or division.
- Execute tactical tasks. Of note, a company will not normally be asked to perform two or more tactical tasks simultaneously.

DETACHMENTS

3-67. A *detachment* is a tactical element organized on either a temporary or permanent basis for special duties (ADP 3-90); for the KPAAF this normally means the unit is augmented with additional forces to conduct a specified mission. Detachments are typically the smallest combined arms formations and are by definition task-organized. A detachment that is subordinate to a battalion headquarters is titled battalion detachment, and one at company level is termed a company detachment. Detachments can accept dedicated and supporting SOF, aviation (combat helicopter, transport helicopter), and possibly unmanned aircraft system units. While the KPAGF do not differentiate between a standard battalion or company and one that is task organized, the term detachment will be used throughout this publication to designate a unit that

contains assets different from its normal force structure. Figure 3-12, below, and figure 3-13 provide examples of a possible KPAGF battalion or company detachment. The capabilities allocated to a detachment can include—

- Artillery or mortar units.
- Air defense units.
- Engineer units with obstacle, survivability, or mobility assets.
- Heavy-weapons units including heavy machine guns, automatic grenade launchers, and AT guided missiles.
- Units with specialty equipment such as flame weapons, specialized reconnaissance assets, or helicopters.
- Interagency forces up to company size for battalions or up to platoon size for companies.
- Chemical defense, AT, medical, logistics, signal, and electronic warfare units.

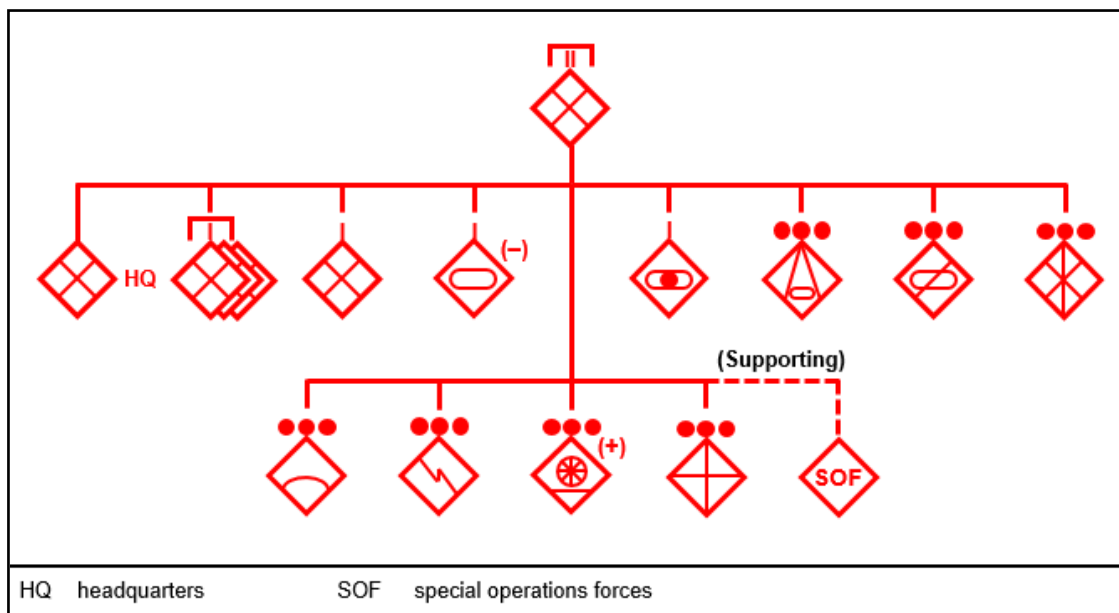


Figure 3-12. KPAGF battalion-size detachment (example)

3-68. A basic type of KPAGF detachment—whether formed from a battalion or a company—is an independent mission detachment. These detachments are formed to execute missions that are separated in space or time from those being conducted by the remainder of the forming unit. Independent mission detachments can be used for a variety of missions, such as—

- Seize key terrain.
- Linkup with airborne or heliborne forces.
- Conduct tactical movement on secondary axes.
- Pursue or envelop an enemy force.
- Conduct a raid or ambush.

3-69. Other types of specialized detachments and their uses are discussed in chapter 5. These specialized detachments could include—

- Counterreconnaissance detachment.
- Security detachment.
- Reconnaissance detachment.
- Movement support detachment.
- Urban detachment.
- Mobility obstacle detachment.

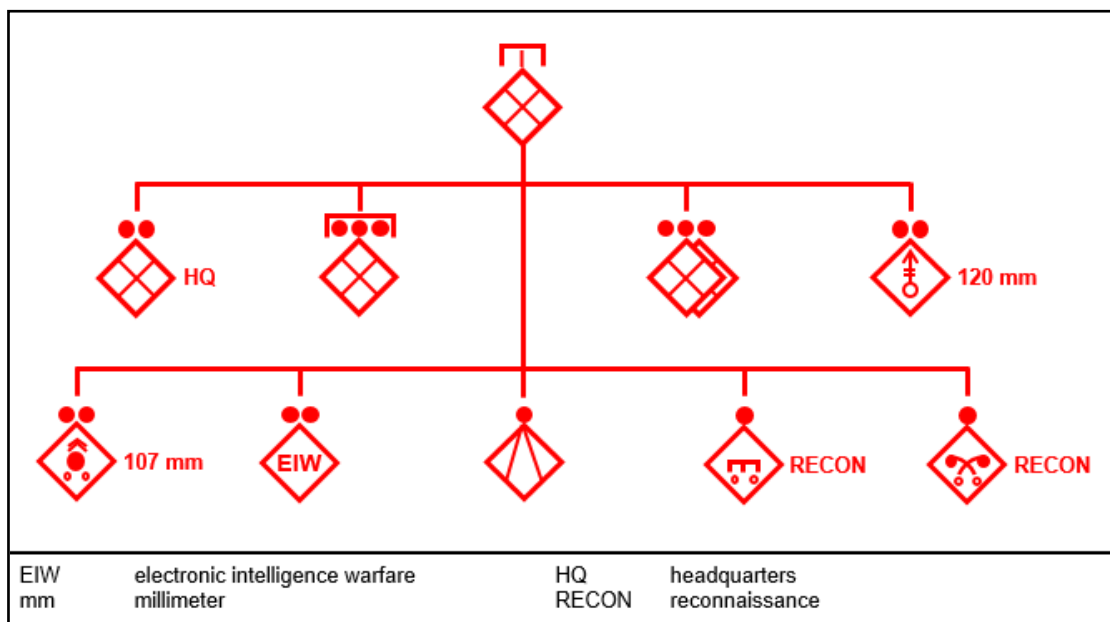


Figure 3-13. KPAGF company-size detachment (example)

PLATOONS AND SQUADS

3-70. In the KPAGF organizational structure, the smallest unit typically expected to conduct independent fire and maneuver is the platoon. Figure 3-14 provides examples of unit symbols at the platoon level and below.

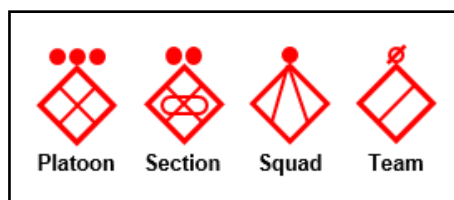


Figure 3-14. KPAGF small unit symbols

3-71. KPA infantry platoons are normally composed of 39 personnel, including a single officer. A typical KPA infantry platoon contains the following weapons:

- RPG-7 RPG launchers: 6
- Underbarrel grenade launchers (40-mm): 6
- Light machine guns: 9
- AK rifles: 25
- SVD sniper rifles: 3

3-72. Platoons are designed to be able to—

- Serve as the basis for forming a functional element or patrol.
- Fight as part of a company, battalion, or detachment.
- Execute tactical tasks.

3-73. KPA infantry squads are normally composed of 12 personnel, led by a sergeant. The duty positions and their standard weapons are shown below:

- One squad leader: AK rifle
- One deputy squad leader: AK rifle with G-25 (40-mm) underbarrel grenade launcher
- Three machine gunners: light machine gun (RPD)
- Three assistant machine gunners: AK rifle
- Two AT gunners: RPG-7 and AK rifle
- One grenadier: AK rifle with G-25 (40-mm) underbarrel grenade launcher
- One sniper: SVD rifle

3-74. Platoons and squads within a platoon can be task-organized by function for specific missions. Figure 3-15 displays examples of unit symbols for various types of KPAGF task-organized platoons and squads. This task-organized status can be temporary for a specified mission task, or semi-permanent for conduct of mission tasks during an extended period of time. A patrol is typically a platoon- or squad-size unit task-organized to accomplish a specific reconnaissance or security mission. A platoon or smaller element will not be ordered to perform two or more simultaneous functional tasks.

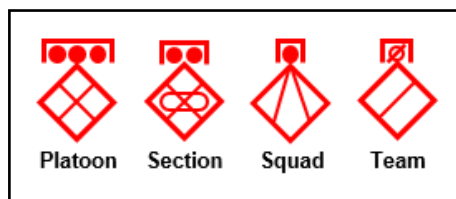


Figure 3-15. KPAGF small unit symbols with task-organized amplifiers

TACTICAL-LEVEL ORGANIZATION OF IRREGULAR FORCES

3-75. Irregular forces addressed as threats to South Korea and its coalition partners in ATP 7-100.2 are categorized in several primary groupings of insurgent organization/cells, guerrilla units, or criminal organizations. Terrorist groups can be distinct from other irregular forces in some situations, but are often linked to one or more of these paramilitary or criminal activities. Irregular forces can be individuals or groups, typically armed, that are not members of the regular armed forces, law enforcement agencies, or other forms of governmental organizations such as internal security forces. Nonetheless, the distinction of being armed or unarmed can include a wide range of people and groups capable of being categorized as potential irregular forces. After the threat of the massive KPA fires capabilities, strategic irregular forces may be the biggest threat the KPA can create on the Korean Peninsula.

3-76. Various organizations can be termed irregulars, correctly or incorrectly, by participants in a conflict. Any of these forces can be affiliated or associated with North Korean regular forces. The issue of who is a combatant or noncombatant, and who operates within lawful protection of international conventions and law of war protocols, is often a legal determination in a specific political and military setting and may be difficult to determine in North Korea, where all the people are directed to defend their country from outside invaders.

3-77. Militias, as a force, can acquire an identity at times of an irregular force based on actions, how the organization self-proclaims itself in EIW announcements, or how general social media portrays a naming convention for a group. In contrast to an irregular force connotation, militia as a category of regular forces is the mobilization of civilian, commercial, or paramilitary capabilities into the regular force structure of North Korean armed forces. For example, during mobilization, North Korean commercial trucking companies could be organized as militia transportation units subordinate to military authority in order to provide transportation of military cargo and personnel in support of military operations. Another example could be the mobilization of civilians, with or without previous military training, into an infantry militia unit, and incorporated into the C2 of a regular force.

3-78. Irregular forces can be augmented with support from regular forces, SOF, or other North Korean governmental agencies. Support can include training, RISTA, communications, fires support or other direct action assistance to plans, preparation, and conduct of mission tasks by irregular forces.

INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS

3-79. There are no known insurgent organizations operating inside of North Korea. It is very likely that there are North Korean clandestine operatives operating in South Korea that could be classified as insurgents against the South Korean Government prior to hostilities commencing, during combat operations, or during the post-hostilities phases. In the event that there is a war on the Korean Peninsula, it is likely that North Korea would activate these clandestine operatives to conduct their missions against high-value targets. It is likely that most of the clandestine cells are quite small, but South Korea did discover one such cell of five North Korean supporters in 2011.

3-80. It is likely that some KPA SOF personnel will be inserted into South Korea or that North Korea will activate clandestine operatives already living in South Korea before hostilities begin. Their task would be to help gain any North Korean advantage that would slow down the mobilization or movement of South Korean reserves. The SOF or clandestine operatives would likely perform counterstability actions to achieve this goal. See paragraphs 1-159–1-162 and chapter 8 for more information on counterstability actions.

GUERRILLA UNITS

3-81. While North Korea has no operational guerrilla units in South Korea, clandestine operatives currently operating in South Korea or SOF members operating in South Korea during a war could be considered guerrilla units under certain circumstances. A guerrilla unit organizes a paramilitary force structure, within its available resources, similar to that of a regular force military unit. Guerrilla units, however, have no standardized organizational structure. A guerrilla is a combat participant, and typically conducts actions in enemy-occupied or hostile territory. During a war, guerrillas in South Korea would most likely be clandestine operatives or North Korean sympathizers supported by KPA SOF personnel. If invaded by enemies, guerrillas in North Korea would likely consist of members of the Worker-Peasant Red Guard, People's Guard, and Red Youth Guard, along with a cadre of KPA SOF and/or KPA regulars from destroyed conventional units.

3-82. The force structure for guerrilla units is at brigade level and subordinate headquarters. Guerrilla forces can be as large as several independent or affiliated brigades or as small as independent guerrilla teams. Organization and capabilities depend on factors including physical environment, sociological demographics and relationships, economics, and support available from an indigenous or relevant populace, organizations internal to a geographic area, and states or groups external to a region in conflict. See figure 3-16 on page 3-22 for an example of a possible battalion-size guerrilla unit organization.

CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

3-83. There are no known major criminal organizations operating in North Korea, but there is criminal activity, including smaller gangs. North Korea is the second-most corrupt country in the world, mostly due to government officials taking bribes. It has become a way of life for those living in the country to give local officials small bribes to look the other way, whether it is to conduct entrepreneurial activities that are officially banned by the government or to cross the border into China. Bigger bribes are needed to obtain bigger favors from regional or national government officials. Due to the government's activities, there are several North Korean officials on the US Treasury Department's Transnational Criminal Organizations Designation list.

3-84. Violent criminal activity is relatively low in North Korea and is seldom seen in either urban or rural areas. Since the famine in the early 1990s, criminal activity has centered on smuggling, and a larger black market emerged as the people struggled to prevent starvation. The black market occurred more often in rural areas and in regions away from Pyongyang, as the governmental supply system continued to feed the elites living in the capital city.

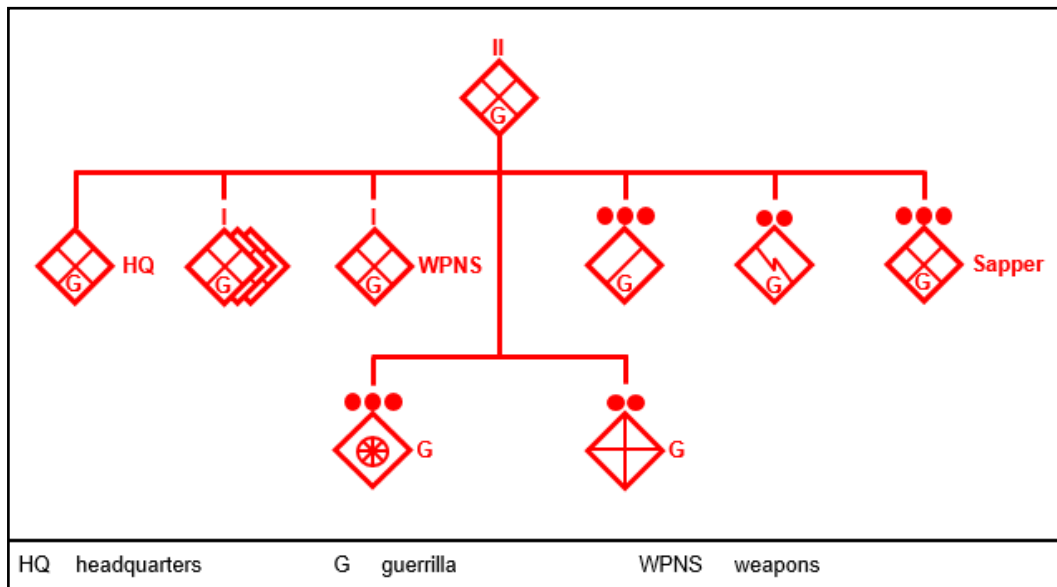


Figure 3-16. Guerrilla battalion organization (example)

3-85. A criminal organization is a group of individuals with an identified C2 structure engaged in illegal activities for purposes of obtaining power, influence, and monetary or commercial gains. Criminal organizations have no standardized structure. The organization protects its activities through patterns of corruption, coercion, or violence. Criminal networks vary in size, scope, structure, communications means, and commodity ventures. These networks can range within a local community, national/regional areas, or international/transnational activities. Due to the illegal activities that are sanctioned by Kim Jong Un, the North Korean Government could be considered a criminal network. The Kim regime is involved in drug trade, counterfeiting, human trafficking, and cybercrime.

3-86. Many armed forces recognize the utility of using criminal organizations at every level of society and every operational environment. Criminals may cooperate with either regular or irregular forces. Criminal organizations will almost always, however, pursue their activities independent of other actors' goals.

3-87. Criminal organizations, embedded in relevant populations, can create conditions for the active or passive support of criminal activities and other irregular force actions. North Korean civilians, as noncombatants, can be coerced to directly support irregular as well as regular forces. Other civilians may be aware of irregular-force activities and decide to remain passive and not report information to a governing authority. Other civilians may be sympathetic and know of irregular-force activities, but remain uninvolved in any overt activity. Other noncombatants may unknowingly support irregular-force initiatives. Some members of a relevant population may elect to willingly participate in or actively support criminal or other irregular-force actions. In these type of cases, status as a combatant or criminal may complicate how an irregular force sustains support within South Korea if North Korea launched a ground attack or in North Korea if the country was invaded. See figure 3-17 for possible forms of support within a relevant population to irregular forces.

3-88. A criminal organization establishes its hierarchy of C2 within North or South Korea. Mutual interests of criminals, insurgents, or guerrillas can include preventing extraregional or local government forces from interfering in their respective agendas. By agreement when interests coincide, criminal organizations may become affiliated with insurgents or guerrillas controlling and operating in the same geographic or functional areas. Such affiliations can provide security and protection against enemy forces or support to criminal organization activities. The amount of mutual protection depends on the size and sophistication of each criminal organization and its level of influence on a state's government, the local military forces, and the relevant civilian population.

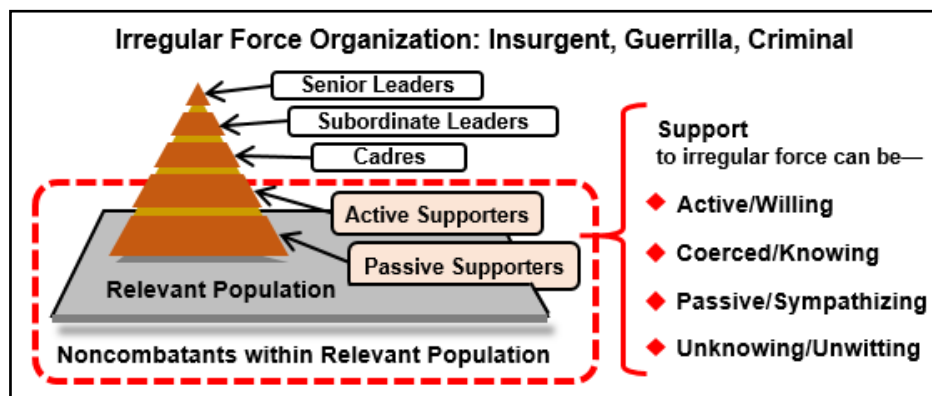


Figure 3-17. Relevant population relationships to irregular forces

TERRORIST GROUPS

3-89. Terrorism is a tactic. Acts of terrorism demonstrate an intention to cause significant psychological or physical effects on a relevant population through the use or threat of violence. Terrorism strategies are typically long-term commitments to degrade the resilience of an opponent in order to obtain concessions from the same. International conventions and law of war protocols on armed conflict are often not a constraint on terrorists. Whether acts of terrorism are deliberate, apparently random, or purposely haphazard, the physical, symbolic, or psychological effects can diminish the confidence of a relevant population in its key leaders and governing institutions. Social and political pressure, internal or external to a relevant population and governing authority, is frequently exploited by terrorists with near real-time media coverage in the global information environment. The local, regional, international, or transnational attention on acts of terrorism by state or nonstate actors can often isolate a government from its relevant population and foster support of organizations, units, or individuals who feel compelled to use terror to achieve their objectives. The themes and messages promoted by terrorists can accent anxiety, demoralize the resolve of a relevant population and its leaders, and eventually defeat an opponent.

3-90. There are no known terrorist groups active in North Korea working against the Kim regime. In November 2017, the U.S. President placed North Korea back on the list of state sponsors of terrorism for its nuclear and missile programs and assistance to the government in Syria. Previously, North Korea had been removed from the list in 2008. North Korea has conducted many acts that placed it on the list originally, such as:

- **1969.** Two North Korean MiG-17s shot down a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft that never violated North Korean airspace and killed 31 U.S. crewmembers.
- **1974.** A Japanese-born North Korean killed Yuk Young-soo during an assassination attempt on her spouse, South Korean president Park Chung-hee.
- **1976.** North Korean soldiers ambushed a United Nations team trimming a tree, killing two U.S. officers.
- **1983.** North Korean agents attempted to kill South Korean president Chun Doo-hwan with explosives during a visit to Rangoon, Burma.
- **1987.** Two North Korean spies planted a bomb on Korean Airlines Flight 858 that exploded, killing all 115 people on the plane.
- **2000.** North Korean agents crossed into China and kidnapped Reverend Kim Dong Shik, who was running several underground shelters for North Korea refugees. North Korea tortured and starved him to death.
- **2010.** According to South Korean and U.S. reports, North Korea sank the ROKS CHEONAN, a South Korean Navy ship, killing 46 sailors during a training exercise.

NONCOMBATANTS

3-91. Noncombatants are persons not actively participating in combat or actively supporting any of the forces involved in combat. Noncombatants can be either armed or unarmed. Figure 3-18 shows examples of various categories of noncombatants, and the complexity of identifying friend from foe in a relevant population. While military personnel are a small minority in most countries, the opposite is true in North Korea. In addition to large reserve and paramilitary forces, the civilian populace is subject to mandatory war work, thus making only the very old or the very young actual noncombatants.

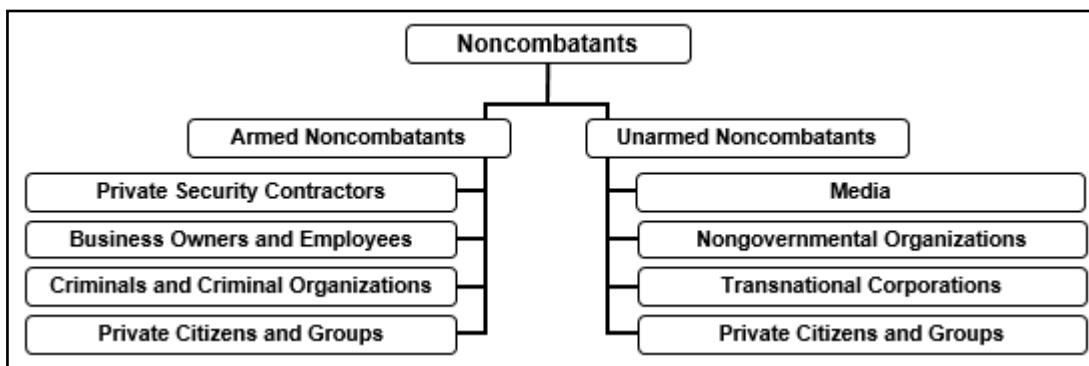


Figure 3-18. Armed and unarmed noncombatants (examples)

Armed Noncombatants

3-92. There are few armed noncombatants in North Korea, as no civilians may lawfully acquire, possess, or transfer a firearm or ammunition. Over seven million North Koreans belong to a military reserve unit or a paramilitary organization. These would be mobilized during a war and would be considered a paramilitary organization with access to weapons and ammunition. Firearms in North Korea are exclusively reserved for use by the military or police. There is an estimated 130,000 guns, licit and illicit, held by civilians in North Korea, making the gun possession rate less than 0.6 per 100 people in the country. There are no private security contractors, business owners and employees, or private citizens and groups with guns. Since gun ownership by civilians is a crime in North Korea, possessing a gun would make the individual a criminal who, if caught, would most likely be sent to a prison camp as a minimum sentence.

Unarmed Noncombatants

3-93. Very few unarmed noncombatants exist in North Korea. Besides the persons belonging to the paramilitary organizations, all other North Koreans are still subject to mandatory war work, thus making them combatants—whether armed or unarmed. There is no free media in North Korea, as the government controls all information outlets including newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. There are few nongovernmental organizations working in the country, as the government previously expelled most of them. Due to the trade restrictions against North Korea, there are few transnational corporations with offices in North Korea, most of which would be from China.