

Fostering democracy

A paper on North Korea

Kim Jooil

with a foreword by Benedict Rogers

A **Parliament Street** policy paper

Foreword

North Korea is without doubt the most closed nation in the world, where some of the worst violations of human rights are perpetrated systematically and with impunity.

In every survey of freedom carried out by international organisations, North Korea comes out bottom of the list – the worst of the worst. There simply is no freedom in North Korea: no political freedom, no religious freedom, no press freedom, no freedom of association or expression. There is no civil society and no organised political opposition.

Furthermore, at least 200,000 people are incarcerated in a network of prison camps, in which conditions are inhumane, torture is extreme and executions are commonplace. These violations amount to crimes against humanity. The former UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in North Korea, Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, described the country's human rights record as “sui generis” – in a category of its own.

Surprisingly, however, North Korea is not only the most closed country with the worst human rights record. It is also one of the world's most under-reported human rights and humanitarian tragedies. The level of attention given to North Korea's human rights crisis by policy-makers, the media and the general public is exceptionally minimal and lacking in any sense of proportion or urgency, given the scale of the suffering.

For all these reasons, Kim Joo-il's paper is a very valuable contribution. The international community, including the United Kingdom, must step up its efforts to hold the North Korean regime to account for its crimes against humanity, and to help North Koreans inside and outside the country gather and spread information that could help change mindsets. Every possible tool available is needed – ranging from investigation, exposure and pressure, to critical engagement, and efforts to assist those North Koreans outside the country to become advocates and campaigners for their people.

Last year, I helped to found a global movement drawing together forty human rights organisations from around the world, including the three largest, to campaign specifically for the establishment of a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity in North Korea. The International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK), as it is called, aims to draw attention to the horrific situation in North Korea, and urge the UN to call the regime to account.

But ICNK's campaign is just one of the tools needed. Kim Joo-il's paper puts forward a wide range of recommendations, all of which deserve serious consideration. I hope the British Government, members of Parliament, the media and others will read this paper, and will dramatically step up efforts to bring an end to the tragic suffering of the North Korean people.

Benedict Rogers
East Asia Team Leader,
Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Introduction

North Korea is the terra incognita of the modern world, the last country around which the iron curtain still stands strong. We know very little about what goes on inside the regime, the lack of specialist knowledge expressed, all too publicly and painfully, during last years' broadcasts on the death of the late dictator Kim Jong-il. Questions about the succession and the nature of power were confused, the answers short, patchy and unconvincing. Ignorance was the defining feature of Western coverage as Kim Jong-un ascended to power.

This isn't surprising. North Korea has long been neglected in British political circles. While the US, Russia, Europe, China and even the middle east all warrant serious attention and discussion, North Korea, seen as a country on the other side of the world, with no threat to British interests is continuously ignored.

This is a dangerous attitude to take. This regime, armed with nuclear weapons, sitting in the centre of Asia between the powers of China, Russia, South Korea and China affects the whole world. We kid ourselves by assuming that, because it's on the other side of the planet, the UK has no interests in North Korea. With potential economic clout, and with the ability, via just one missile launch to throw the whole Pacific into chaos, North Korea affects every single one of us. It is time that the dictatorship was placed higher on the list of our priorities.

With a firm belief in human rights, and in promoting a safer world, Parliament Street approached the North Korean Residents Association to ask them to produce a report on the situation in North Korea for UK policymakers, under the assumption that most people know very little about what goes on inside the world's last Stalinist regime. This request was taken up with great enthusiasm and it is with great pride that we provide the following report.

Parliament Street has a firm belief in giving people the chance to state what they believe. Mr. Kim has illustrated his report with wonderful symbolism and metaphorical analogy, a sort of literacy device completely alien to the cold, analytic Western style of political discourse, but very familiar to students of far Eastern politics. This report, exploring the human rights abuses of North Korea, the history of the regime, the structure of its politics as well as useful advice on what can be done to help the oppressed people is a perfect introduction and primer for anyone interested in helping the an oppressed population.

North Korea is screaming. We can do something. This paper goes some way to showing how we can help.

1. Understanding North Korean politics

The death of Kim Jong-il in 2011 and the rise of his son saw a spotlight being shined on the strange world of North Korean politics. The strange rumours about military coups and sudden interest in the new leader Kim Jong-un left many commentators baffled. Indeed, the politics of North Korea may seem baffling to the outside observer. A hereditary Communist dictatorship is, at first sight a paradoxical arrangement, yet its sinister effectiveness and longevity demands careful study. It is only by studying the history of this regime that you can hope to understand the nature of the leadership and how to engage with it.

On 15 August, 1945, as the Second World War was coming to an end, North Korea was liberated from Japanese rule by the United States (US) and Soviet Union. The Soviet Union stationed their military in the northern part of the Korean peninsula, which was divided by the 38th parallel, while the US ruled the southern part with its Military Government. In North Korea, policies were developed based on Stalin's socialist ideas where as in South Korea, the American system prevailed.



Kim Il-Sung. 'Eternal President' of North Korea

Thanks to Soviet influence what was announced as “North Korean-style Democracy” was indeed a proletariat dictatorship, and one figure, Kim Il-sung, who claimed he wanted to bring about a socialist revolution by bringing down the bourgeois by the proletarian class, committed

atrocious acts such as arresting and imprisoning people as well as carrying out summary and arbitrary purge of people through people's court. The North Korean residents, who had been tied down to the outdated feudalistic agriculture system, joyfully welcomed the policies of Kim Il-sung: they believed that they would be provided with lands previously owned by the bourgeois for free, which seemed to be their biggest dream coming true. North Korea at that time was an agricultural country and soon found itself falling behind other countries, with more than 80 percent of the population engaged in agriculture. In order to gain the support of an absolute majority, Kim had to carry out land redistribution as a matter of urgency.

Kim Il-sung used violence to deprive the bourgeoisie of their lands and had the lands redistributed to the peasants, making himself a hero in their eyes. Needless to say, such policy seemed very useful to the North Korean peasants who had never owned any private property previously. No one knew, however, that this was part of the pre-planning that Kim Il-sung devised as he longed for a long-term dictatorship.

The desire for private land ownership was so strong that even people in South Korea, though only a number of them, admired Kim's land reform policy. They put their lives to rebel against Rhee Seung-man who was then the president of South Korea.

After winning the hearts of North Korean people with five years of land reform, Kim Il-sung invaded South Korea on 25 June, 1950, justifying his move as a need to "liberate" the country. Perhaps Kim carried out the land reform immediately following the independence from Japan with the war already in mind.

NORTH KOREA: TIMELINE

- 1945 - World War II ends. Soviet forces occupying the north of Korea, and US forces occupy the south.
- 1948 - Democratic People's Republic of Korea proclaimed in North Korea.
- 1950 - North Korean invades South Korea.
- 1953 - Armistice ends Korean War, which has cost two million lives.
- 1960s - Rapid industrial growth.
- 1968 - US intelligence-gathering vessel seized by North Korean gunboats.
- 1992 - North Korea agrees to allow inspections by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but over next two years refuses access to sites of suspected nuclear weapons production.
- 1994 - Death of Kim Il-sung. Kim Jong-il succeeds him.
- 1996 - There are widespread floods and severe famine
- 1998 - The late Kim Il-sung declared "eternal president"
- 2000 - Summit in Pyongyang between Kim Jong-il and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung.
- 2002 - US President George W Bush declares that North Korea is part of an "axis of evil"
- 2006 - North Korea claims to test a nuclear weapon for the first time.
- 2009 - North Korea says it successfully carries out an underground nuclear test, its second ever, drawing protests from the US, China and Russia.
- 2010 March sees the sinking of South Korean warship Cheonan, allegedly by the North. In November South Korean islands are shelled.
- 2011 - Kim Jong-il dies. Kim Jong-un is declared the "Great Successor"

Those who fought in the Korean War later reminisced that one of the reasons why they fought so hard during the war was not because they passionately adhered to the thoughts of the Great Leader, but simply because they did not want to lose ownership of land to “the enemies,” which took their lifetime to earn.

After the Korean War ended on 27 July, 1953, North Korea declared that it is now in the transition towards building a socialist country and embarked on post-war restoration works. It stressed that only with cooperation from the people of North Korea, the government can succeed in establishing a socialist paradise. Knowing that they can achieve nothing alone in completely destroyed land, the people of North Korea accepted Kim’s requests for them to contribute their own properties to the state.

Kim Il-sung tactfully used this to introduce the socialist planned economy and production and distribution mechanism, and also further developed the system in which the state would manage the surplus goods from cooperative farms and enterprises. Of course, not everybody agreed with Kim’s vision, but Kim overcame opposition through the so-called 'education mechanism' including propaganda, explanation and persuasion; and when necessary, trials and executions in the people's court would further remove conflict. It has been estimated that under Kim between 710,000 and 3,500,000 people died.¹

With the support of the Soviet Union, Kim Il-sung turned North Korea into his own Kingdom and firmly laid the foundation for the Absolutism of the Great Leader. The Absolutism of the Great Leader, also known as “Kim Il-sung-ism”, was further developed and strengthened by his son and successor Kim Jong-il. In addition, Juche (self-reliance), the well-known ideology of North Korea, and the inhumane and unjust “Ten Principles for the Establishment of the One-Ideology System” were added to this mentality, becoming “Kim Il-sung-ism and Kim Jong-il-ism” in North Korea.

Juche (Self reliance)

The official ideology of North Korea replacing Marxism in 1972, officially ascribed to Kim Il Sung. A rough Western alternative would be 'autarky'. A belief in putting the nation first, with strong emphasis on self-reliance.

¹ University of Hawaii research

The Absolutism of the Great Leader is the greatest of North Korean human rights violations. North Koreans suffer oppression, mentally and morally. Under Soviet-style socialism, a personality cult was cultivated on a massive scale in order to establish the authority of the



Example of North Korean propaganda

highest leader. It became an accepted fact that the highest leader had absolute authority and assumed the position of a life-long dictator.

This ideology based around the idolization of the leader can be seen in Government documents;

The great idea of Comrade Kim Il Sung and the great achievements made under his leadership are the lasting treasures of the Korean revolution and the basic guarantee for the prosperity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Under the leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Korean people will hold the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung in high esteem as the eternal President of the Republic and carry the revolutionary cause of Juche through to completion by defending and carrying forward the idea and achievements of Comrade Kim Il Sung. The Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea shall be called Kim Il Sung's Constitution, the codification of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's Juche-oriented ideas on and exploits in State building.²

It is hard for Western minds to understand what life in such regimes is like. In countries with relatively advanced democracies, the concept of dictatorship by an individual leader is simply

² 1972 North Korean Constitution

not accepted by the public. For example, after World War II when Stalin's personality cult was in its zenith and such personal dictatorships had spread to many countries, the communist party in England opted instead for parliamentary democracy, saying that it was a long-established tradition in England that would be difficult to break. Even Stalin agreed to the English communists' proposal.³

The lower the standard of political democracy and the greater the vestiges of feudalism in a country, the stronger its tendency to create a personality cult for its highest leader. In such countries, personal dictatorship by the highest leader was established with little resistance. In this regard, North Korea, with the vestiges of feudalism still maintaining a stronghold on society, was from the very beginning a hotbed for a personality cult. Personal dictatorship was established more firmly in North Korea than in any other socialist country. At first, the dictatorship of the highest leader in North Korea was established under the Soviet Union's supervision and therefore did not deviate much from the Soviet style of dictatorship.

The turning point for North Korea's personality cult and dictatorship of the highest leader came in the late 1960s, when China sent back-up forces to Korea during the Korean War, Kim Il-sung used the conflict between China and the Soviet Union to start breaking away from Soviet control. He went on to purge all opposition members from the worker's party, and by 1958, he was able to establish dictatorship of the highest leader based on a party filled with his people only.

In the late 1960s, when Kim Il-sung did not follow the Cultural Revolution in China, China accused him of being a 'revisionist'. Kim Il-sung responded by saying that he could put his faith in neither the USSR nor China. He decided that his party had to rely on its own strength to liberate South Korea and achieve reunification. To this end, he implemented policies to pursue both economic and military development, and began to pour his efforts into beefing up the military and preparing for war.

Unlike China where there was a strong political opposition force that challenged Mao, North Korea did not have a visible political force opposing Kim Il-sung. So North Korea's cultural revolution was a simple affair that accomplished its goal with the purging of a few intellectuals.

This was also the period when Kim Jong-il graduated from university and entered the Central Worker's Party, where he began to compete against his uncle Kim Young-ju. The two men's

³ A more detailed study of the English experience can be found in R. Service *Comrades: Communism, a world history*.

rivalry was based on who could put Kim Il-sung on a higher pedestal. Thanks to this competition, the Kim Il-sung personality cult went beyond the Soviet-style dictatorship to become a new concept called 'Absolutism of the Great Leader.'

So how was North Korea's Absolutism of the Great Leader different from Stalin's dictatorship of the highest leader? According to Stalin's theory, the highest leader is qualified to represent the interests of the party and the people, and to lead the people. The communist party is qualified to lead the working class because it is the most advanced army of the working class, and the highest leader is qualified to represent the interests of the party and to lead the party because he is the most outstanding communist. Following this theory, the leadership of the highest leader is the leadership of the communist party and the leadership of the working class, and thus, acknowledging the leadership and dictatorship of the highest leader does not run counter to Marx's proletariat dictatorship.

On the other hand, Absolutism of the Great Leader, which originated from North Korea, does not start with the working class or the people but with the highest leader. In other words, the leadership of the Great Leader makes it possible for the communist party to exist, and the leadership of the communist party makes it possible for the working class to exist, and the leadership of the working class makes it possible for the autonomous people (people who live as masters of the nation and society) to exist. In other words, first the Great Leader was born, he had a brilliant revolutionary idea, founded a party to realize his idea, and formed a revolutionary working class with his leadership and the party. This subsequently led to birth of a revolutionary class dominated by the working class under the leadership of the Great Leader and his party. To put it simply, the Great Leader exists before the communist party, before the working class and the people, before everything including the state and the military.

Stalinism acknowledged the necessity of dictatorship of the highest leader, but maintained that the highest leader had to serve the party, working class and people. But in North Korea's Absolutism of the Great Leader, things work the other way round. The Great Leader does not live for the people; it is the people who live for the Great Leader.

Stalin's dictatorship of the highest leader was an extension of Marxism, which emphasized the need for dictatorship of the working class. There was continued effort to convince the people of the legitimacy and inevitability of the highest leader's dictatorship. Thus the highest leader always carried out his dictatorship in the name of the revolutionary working class. In other words, his orders and instructions were not considered coming from an individual but from the working class. North Korea's Absolutism of the Great Leader, however, makes one

individual master over everything. The working class is indebted to the Great Leader's benevolence, and live to serve him as the master of its destiny.

North Korean leaders used the feudalistic idea of filial piety to justify Absolutism of the Great Leader. Filial piety in feudalism demands that children regard their parents as their benefactors and masters because they would not have existed without their parents. Taking care of your parents, the people who gave you life, and being dutiful children, are the ultimate goal in life and the highest moral code.

The state is formed of many families, and the head of all these families is none other than the king. Therefore the king is the common father of all families, and just as people show filial piety to their parents, they must swear loyalty to their king.

North Korean leaders linked this feudalistic idea of filial piety to the Great Leader, making him 'the father of the people.' Just as a person's physical life comes from his parents, his sociopolitical life comes from the Great Leader. This is because his leadership makes it possible for the party to exist, and the party's leadership makes it possible for the people's government to exist, and the people's government in turn makes it possible for all the people to live as masters of the state and society.

Even animals have physical lives. Having physical life does not make you master of the state and society. To live as master of the state and society, you need not physical but sociopolitical life, and this sociopolitical life is much more important than physical life. Therefore the Great Leader, who gave you your sociopolitical life, is greater and more precious than your parents, who gave you only physical life. So the people have to swear loyalty and filial piety to the Great Leader, who is the father who gave them the most precious life of all.

The Great Leader is not elected; he is 'elevated' by the people. It is a logic that does not necessitate democratic elections, a ground logic for the hereditary succession through three generations. That Stalin appointed Kim Il-sung as the ruler of North Korea is a historical fact but the leaders of North Korea insisted that Kim Il-sung was naturally accepted and exalted by his people because of his miracles: founding the anti-imperialism league in 1926 when he was 14 years old, creating the Juche (self-reliance) ideology in 1930 when he was 18, and lighting the way forward.

As for Kim Jong-il, people compared his birth to the appearance of a bright star and wrote congratulatory messages on huge tree barks, elevating him to the position of Kim Il-sung's heir.

Naturally, Kim Jong-il rose to the highest ranks in the People's Army not through elections but through this blind acceptance by the people. It was the same when he became the Secretary of the Workers' Party after the death of Kim Il-sung and when he became chairman of the National Defense Committee.

Also, people have been brainwashed by the leaders of North Korea that the revolution must continue by hereditary succession; if another great leader is born into the family of the great leader, he has to succeed. This is to say, a farmer's son is also a farmer, an engineer's son also an engineer. And the great leader's son also becomes the great leader and this is the rationale of hereditary succession Kim Jong-il established in the North Korean society.

It is North Korea in which Kim Jong-un's third generation succession is undoubtedly accepted. Because the father is the Great Leader, the son must also become the Great Leader, and this is the logic of North Korean hereditary succession. Since the people do not elect the Great Leader but 'elevate' him, it follows that the Great Leader does not serve the people but grants them his grace, and the people in turn have to repay his kindness by giving him their complete loyalty. In this way, the Great Leader became a sacred figure to the party, state and people, and the most influential element in determining the fate of the people.

According to the leaders of North Korea, the Great Leader holds an absolutely vital position in the revolution. Also, loyalty to the Great Leader is the most sublime expression of loyalty to the party, working class and people, and the highest moral good is dedicating your body and mind to the Great Leader.

This seemingly plausible but fallacious argument that is so absurd is used by North Korean dictators to brainwash people and the vast majority of people who do not understand freedom and democracy believe them as well as show unconditional loyalty and filial piety. The story of people in the Hwanghae Province being so impressed and crying as they saw Kim Jong-un as Kim Il-sung's doppelgänger and thought the Great Leader had been reborn proves this point.

It is this, more than anything else that explains the structure of North Korean society. The regime is based around the personality cult of Kim Il-sung. They believe they must remain utterly loyal to the Great Leader, whom they regard as the owner of their destiny and the father of sociopolitical life. Kim Jung-un as the heir, and the doppelgänger of the late leader has strong connections with the former leader. It is intimacy to the leader that explains power. This is a feudal, superstition basis for leadership, alien to the Western world. It is one that must be appreciated when dealing with North Korea.

**-Refugee Population -> Refugees and people in refugee-like situations -> Originating from -> World -> Ref. and ref.-like
sit. ori. from -> Dem. People's Rep. of Korea
(Periodicity: Year, Applied Time Period: from 1994 to 2010)**

| | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Australia | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 15 | 14 | 15 | 25 |
| Belgium | | | | | | | | | | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 7 | 9 | 13 | 22 |
| Cambodia | | 2 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Canada | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | | 0 | 0 | | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 23 |
| Denmark | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| France | | 1 | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Germany | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 225 | 258 | 276 | 193 | 239 | 204 | 180 | 156 | 146 |
| Ireland | | | | | | | | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Israel | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Kazakhstan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Kyrgyzstan | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Luxembourg | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | |
| Mexico | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Netherlands | | | | | | | 3 | 7 | 9 | 14 | 15 | 18 | 20 | 27 | 29 | 31 | 32 |
| New Zealand | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Norway | | | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 13 | 14 | 14 |
| Russian Federation | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | | 6 | 10 | 14 |
| Singapore | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sweden | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| Switzerland | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Thailand | | | | | | 4 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 17 | 33 | 64 | 281 | 570 | 574 | 581 |
| United States of America | | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | 7 | 9 | 9 | 30 | 22 | 23 | 25 | 25 |
| Uzbekistan | 1 | 2 | 4 | | | | | | 1 | 0 | | | | | | | |
| Yemen | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Source: London School of Economics

2. People and State

Many people make mistakes when they discuss matters regarding North Korea.

NORTH KOREA STATISTICS

While it is regrettable when ordinary people to make mistakes, the misinterpretations of experts who play an important role in international policy making are too important to be overlooked: they can bring about too big of an economic loss and

Population: 24.5 million

Life expectancy: 68.8 years

Under 5-mortality: 33.3 per 1,000

SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

damage to mankind. Therefore, it is vital that the accuracy of criteria and judgement is sought after in policy making in any nation or in the international community.

Especially, any policy making process concerning North Korea, a country with worst human rights violations, requires caution and accurate understanding of the country's society. We need to study North Korea carefully and not rely on what Pyongyang tells us; there is a clear difference between the diagnosis from a doctor who meticulously examines the patient's body and that from a doctor who only listens to what the patient has to say. The mistaken judgement of international community on North Korea will not only cause economic losses but also bring huge consequences to the lives of North Korean residents.

If one were to sincerely long for international peace and happiness of North Koreans, he must use a strict set of criteria to distinguish between the North Korean people and the North Korean government. With regards to human rights issues, humanitarianism, and democracy the international community must be ready to talk to the people, not the government.

Some attempt to resolve the issues of human rights and people's living conditions through discussion with the North Korean government. This is only a sentimentalist approach which starts from the fact that people do not fully understand the North Korean society or the attributes of the government. North Korean defectors all agree that as long as the current regime of hereditary succession remains, democracy will never come and human rights conditions will not improve.

Number of people leaving North Korea

| Year | Number of defectors |
|------|---------------------|
| 2005 | 1,383 |
| 2006 | 2,018 |
| 2007 | 2,544 |
| 2008 | 2,809 |
| 2009 | 2,927 |
| 2010 | 2,379 |
| 2011 | 2,737 |

Source: South Korean Unification Ministry

Why do they argue this?

Is this simply because they have escaped from and developed hatred towards the country? No. Despite the flight, most defectors have their beloved family left behind. Deep in their hearts, they would like their families to be relieved from the dead zone where their human rights are denied, and they are counting down the days until they return to their home country. They want to see North Korea change more than anyone. Then why do they oppose humanitarian aid flowing into the hands of the current regime? That is because they understand very well the deceitful tactics of the regime with 'the three generations of hereditary succession'. The international community must pay attention to these words of North Korean defectors' when they review issues concerning North Korea.

Otherwise, they would make the same mistake as South Korea's Sunshine Policy. This policy, which sought to encourage co-operation with North Korea was, from South Korea's point of view, highly attractive, as it sought to bring North Korea tin from the dark. To North Koreans, however, it was a horrible policy which would only extend the life of the tyrant and let him continue to exploit them.

The Policy made without a thorough understanding of the North Korean society was aimed at serving the government, not the people. This is not to say the policy per se was a bad one, but it was tailored to the government, not the people. They made a mistake by emotionally anticipating and imagining that, if the sun had shone long enough, even the most isolated part of North Korea would have eventually come out to the sunny spot: but in the absence of the accurate understanding of the society, it was an illusionary fantasy-like policy.

More precisely, the Sunshine Policy was for South Korea. The sudden collapse of the North Korean regime would bring about unexpected results to the South's national interest as well as its economy, and South Korea saw it more beneficial to keep the North Korean regime as the South was not ready to accept the North lagging far behind. Therefore, the Sunshine Policy might have been successful for South Korea, but not for the people of North Korea.

In fact, we learn from our daily lives that planning without knowing the information of the other, only using imagination as a source, will only end in failure. For instance, let's compare this to an everyday life event where we invite someone and provide hospitality. Providing good care means being nice to the other person. If the care is genuinely appreciated, it is a success while it is a failure when the receiver of the care feels uncomfortable.

In South Korea, there is a dish called Mae-un tang (fish soup). As a delicacy, it is favoured by many Koreans who like spicy food. There is a lady who has been brought up in a wealthy family, not having the chance to learn how to cook. One day, she wants to make a special meal for her husband and, with her little knowledge of cooking, does her best to make spicy fish soup. As the husband returns home from work, he requires another dish without even tasting the soup his wife has cooked. He is allergic to fish and thus cannot eat any seafood. The wife bursts into tears as she is upset with the husband who will not eat the food specially made for him.

Whose fault is this?

Is it the senseless husband who in fact must unwillingly feed himself with the food his wife worked so hard on? Is it the crying wife who claims her unilateral effort with no understanding of her husband's health conditions and taste? The problem is that the chef did not cook according to the eater's taste.

The same principle applies to North Korea. Western nations and international community must not use their own standards design their policy towards North Korea. A precise prescription tailored to North Korea is more important. They must understand the reality in North Korea.

North Korea has developed a system where their dictatorship differs entirely from what other socialist or dictatorial countries have had. The current North Korean regime will never open its door to foreign countries, unless the dictatorial regime is replaced.

The former Soviet Union, the origin of socialism, maintained socialist principles on the ground that the great leader is made by the great people; on the other hand, North Korea pursues the idea of Absolutism of the Great Leader that the great leader is born first, whose great guidance in turn bear the people. Maintaining the regime becomes the top priority, more important than the misfortunes of the people. As long as the regime is maintained, the possible death of 3 million people from starvation is not a problem. Therefore one must understand that, should there be any policy that is designed to serve the national interest but would threaten the current regime, the government will remove the policy right away. That is how North Korean government is.

Earlier this year North Korea proclaimed the so-called June 28 economic measure, in which it said it would abandon the distribution system and promote a market economy. Nevertheless, if people complain and resist because they still have a hard time making a living, the North Korean government is still capable of immediately cancelling the plan and send resistant people to labour camps for political prisoners.

Therefore, when designing policies towards North Korea, the international community must distinguish the people from its government. The absolute principle should be that the aid is targeted to the country's people, not the government and that is the way to prevent mistakes.

3. North Korea's nuclear program

North Korea's nuclear programme has always been a source of primary concern for the international community and the issue of security has always been given utmost priority in international debates. In North Korea, dictators place too much emphasis on keeping their power to worry about their people dying of starvation. The concern is that the possession of nuclear weapons in the hands of such unreliable and immoral regime could be very catastrophic for the humankind.

The North Korean Government has a 'Songun ideology (Military-first politics)', a justification for military dictatorship. According to North Korea, military means weapons, and weapons mean nuclear weapons. Today, insisting on autonomy, North Korea is enthusiastically developing nuclear weapons and missiles.

The North is believed to possess enough weapons-grade plutonium for at least six bombs - but experts say it has not yet solved the problem of making a nuclear warhead small enough to fit into a missile.

Source: BBC

Had they purchased rice with the money they used to develop missiles, nuclear weapons and chemical weapons, they would have saved millions of lives. Then, why does North Korea never give up the expansion of armaments and its nuclear weapons when millions of its people are starving to death? The reason is rather simple. The dictators are well aware of their own fate.

The dictators believe that their regime can only collapse if they give up their nuclear programme. It is the rationale of the rulers that no strong nation can attack a nuclear-armed North Korea. For this reason, they continue to expand armaments and nuclear weapons, even when people are dying of hunger.

The concern for the North Korean nuclear programme all began when, in the early 1990s, the possibility of plutonium production in North Korea seized the attention of the international community. In fact, North Korea's nuclear programme began much earlier in the 1960s; in the 1970s Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center was built, and started partially operating in the 1980s. North Korea has had breakthroughs in the missile industry and has become the 6th strongest country to have developed missiles.

Today, North Korea is a rogue nation that denies all the non-proliferation measures that are aimed at regulating weapons of mass destruction, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). North Korea continues to develop nuclear weapons with two attempts to test nuclear weapons. Just as the regime has been hereditarily succeeded through three generations, so has the development of nuclear weapons.

What is it that North Korea seeks through these weapons?

1) They believe they will stay in power as long as military and nuclear weapons exist.

It is said by some North Korean authority figures that the dictator Kim Jong-il, during the Gulf War in the 1990s, called Saddam Hussein a fool, criticising him for not having been equipped with nuclear weapons which allowed the US invasion.

2) They can use them as an excuse to blame the severe economic downturn.

As the economy collapsed after the fall of the Soviet Union, many people suffered from hunger, and the government attributed the economic collapse to the economic blockade by imperialists, not to Kim's inability to govern. North Korea continued to brainwash its people that, in order to fight against the United States, it was essential they keep the nuclear weapons. Despite economic difficulties, nuclear weapons would help the nation become stronger.

North Korean locals who do not know much about the outside world had no choice but to believe this logic. Because they have been brainwashed all their lives, they have no doubt. The systematic indoctrination of anti-Americanism allowed for North Koreans to be proud of their possession of nuclear weapons. To them, Kim Jong-il was the great leader. These thoughts made people incapable of blaming Kim Jong-il even when they were dying of hunger.

3) Nuclear weapons allow North Korea to attract attention and aid.

The issue of North Korean nuclear programme is always high on the agenda. This shows that the strategy is working. North Korea reminds western people of nuclear weapons whereas Burma reminds them of human rights issues. It is true that nuclear weapons is an issue of great importance to the international community, but this also proves that North Korea's nation branding strategy with its nuclear weapons is indeed working.

North Korea uses the issues related to nuclear weapons to deal with the international community and to obtain resources necessary for the government.

In order to keep the resource supply running and buttress the current regime, North Korea needs aid from rich nations, and nuclear weapons play an important role in stirring interest among these nations, from which North Korea will obtain supply of resources and aid. The US State Department reported that 60% of North Korea's economy relies on the aid they receive from the international community due to nuclear weapons.

Then is there any way to silence the crazy North Korea who is shaking the world with nuclear weapons?

The international community that supports democracy cannot take measures that are violent as North Korea does. In the 21st century which sees the rise of Pacifism, wars are something that happened in the past times. Furthermore, if the surrounding nations use their power to suppress North Korea, in the worst case scenario, North Korea will utilise its nuclear weapons. The most reasonable and peaceful way is to get North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions on its own. This however is unlikely for the dictators of three generations in North Korea.

The best way is to have North Korean people discard nuclear weapons themselves. For this to happen, people in North Korea must wake up to reality and abolish nuclear weapons, the consequence of their suffering, the cause of disaster to the whole world. Only then, peace will be established on the Korean Peninsula.

4. International aid and North Korea

As the economic condition has worsened in North Korea, international aid has continued to flow into North Korea since the late 1990s. The international community cannot bear to turn its back on North Korea when three million people are dying of hunger and suffer from malnutrition and diseases. This well-intentioned effort of the international community and its humanitarian aid should be appreciated by North Koreans. Nonetheless, in spite of the continuing international aid for more than 15 years, North Korea's economy has not recovered at all. North Korean defectors state the situation was not different from 15 years ago in the case of famine and poverty.

Compared to 15 years ago, foreign aid flows have increased, yet the miserable lives of North Koreans are still the same, not to mention dictators, fully proud of hereditary succession, still remain in power.

What is important here is that there are clearly problems with current international aid to North Korea. The provision of unconditional aid, regardless of how the aid money is spent, will cause wrongdoing.

The humanitarian aid money that goes into North Korea is all used for the dictatorial government, unless transparency in the use of money is sought after.

While there are no official statistics, it seems that only a very small percentage of the aid goes to North Korean citizens, and when it does so it goes in the form of gifts from the government. Therefore, North Korean people will never stop being mental slaves worshipping the Great Leader.

Most of the aid goes supporting North Korea's military. The international community is serving the 1.2 million North Korean soldiers. The international community must acknowledge that soldiers are brainwashed with terrorist ideas and are ready for suicide bombing for the Great Leader.

In the reality in which 80% of the economy has now stopped growing, international aid is feeding all the people including 1.2 million soldiers, security and police officers, as well as high profile government officials. It is needless to mention the humongous amount of money spent

in the war industry, such as inventing and testing missiles, nuclear weapons, and biochemical weapons. This is all made possible through International aid.

The international community is nourishing the dictatorial regime of three generation hereditary succession. North Korea will continue to utilise its nuclear programme to derive aid from the international community and do its utmost to use tricks (e.g., exaggerating the number of food victims) to receive as much money as possible. These technique have been successful; between 1995 and 2008, the United States provided North Korea with over \$1.3 billion in assistance: just over 50% for food aid and about 40% for energy assistance.⁴

At this point, what is more important is food inspection, rather than nuclear weapons inspection.

This is not to say that the aid flows must be cut, isolating North Korea with an economic blockade. An economic blockade will adversely enhance North Korea's reliance on China, North Korea's close ally.

The more reliant North Korea is on China, the longer the division of Korean Peninsula, creating a situation where the ideological conflict between North and South as well as between East and West only intensifies.

What is the solution then, if neither of the mechanisms (providing money or blocking the economy) is proper?

If the drug addict cries out of hunger, you can directly give him food or bring him to a restaurant to feed him, instead of paying him money. This logic applies to North Koreans. The driving force in the changes of North Korea is the people, not the government. The more evil dictators are, the more they are concerned about public sentiment. Because they fear, they take such extreme measures as violence. North Korean government is most afraid of the people's yearning for democracy.

North Korean locals who have lived in a closed society should be able to, through international humanitarian aid, hear the news from the outside world. Policies towards North Korea should be designed in a way that the love from the international community is also delivered. In other words, only with the principle that guarantees transparency, it is okay to establish a service centre, on behalf of the International Committee of Red Cross or the United Nations, in each army base. There has to be a physical way to distribute the aid materials directly to the citizens.

⁴ US Congress Report, Foreign Assistance to North Korea p. 2

Also, home visits should be frequently conducted for inventory check of the aid materials. Many times in the past, the government pretended and lied in front of foreign inspectors that they had distributed the aid materials to families, only to collect them back once the inspectors are gone. Frequent home visits are necessary to prevent such a case from happening again.

Moreover, cooperation from China and Russia is much needed. The principle of transparency must be well explained to these two countries, so as to help design better policy towards North Korea. The international community must get these two countries to thoroughly understand and support the notion of humanitarian aid with transparency.

It is also important that aid specialists in international organisations enhance their understanding of North Korea. Cultivating a large number of specialists on North Korean issues is necessary.

5.

Why was there no “Arab Spring” in North Korea?

The social system in North Korea does not allow for an uprising similar to the Arab Spring. A people's uprising typically processes in three phases: consciousness raising, organising, and struggle. This is a great lesson from the history of mankind.

The Arab Spring also took place following these three phases. Seemingly, social networks and modern devices such as mobile phones played an important role; behind the scenes, however, these three phases of people's revolution were thoroughly applied.

At first, there are people who acknowledge the unfairness and unreasonableness of the world. The power of awakened people in a revolution is so strong that it cannot be stopped by any dictator. It cannot be assumed that only the a group of awakened people is enough for a revolution. These people who are outrageous need to be organised and managed. As the Korean proverb says: it takes more than pearls to make a necklace. Each piece of pearl which is not of great worth is put together as a necklace, making the final product valuable. Our fingers, too, do not have much power until they are put together to make a fist.

It is not automatic that consciously awakening people begin to fight. An uprising does not begin until awakened people are formally organised and managed. People are like pearls, only the organisation that can put these people together will have enough power to lead the uprising towards the intended direction.

Are these enough for a successful uprising? Not necessarily. The absence of strategies and tactics appropriate to the fight is like a vessel floating aimlessly on the endless ocean, with no lighthouses.

Without a leader who can provide the awakened and organised people with appropriate strategies and tactics, the fight will end in failure. The most important phase in an uprising is the leadership that prepares accurate strategies and tactics. It is like a ship without a captain is tossed with winds and waves and sinks.

North Korea is not equipped with the environment that facilitates these three phases. The minds of the people in North Korea are paralysed as they have been locked up and brainwashed all their lives, and therefore their yearning for freedom does not exist. The problem lies in the

curriculum. From child-care centres and kindergartens right up to university courses, the education is based on idolisation of the Great Leader.

All subjects taught in schools consistently relate back to the one ideology of the Great Leader. Even in Mathematics and Science texts, every chapter and every paragraph quotes from the teachings of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. This breeding of a personality cult is called 'publicity of the Great Leader's greatness,' and the entire curriculum is under the strict control of the party so that all subjects fit the purpose of emphasizing the greatness of the Great Leader. In child-care centres and kindergartens, small children are taught to emulate the childhood years of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il and to hate the United States

“During the Fatherland Liberation War the brave uncles of Korean People’s Army killed 265 American imperialist bastards in the first battle. In the second battle they killed 70 more bastards than they had in the first battle. How many bastards did they kill in the second battle? How many American imperialist bastards did they kill all together?” – sample question from North Korean examinations⁵

From primary school to university, subject aimed at strengthening the personality cult account for 33.3% of the total curriculum (one-third of all subjects taught). These subjects include history of the revolutionary activities of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, their writings, and arts and culture worshipping the two Kims. Social Science subjects are naturally all about the Great Leader; even subjects like Physics and Foreign Language & Literature are geared in the same direction.

This 'worshipful education' does not end with studying the above-mentioned 33.3% of the curriculum in class. After class come extra-curricular activities or so-called 'sociopolitical activities' such as youth or boys' leagues.

While serving as a university president and party secretary in charge of science and education, I was so fed up with this 'idolisation education' that I pointed out to the youth organizations that they were going too far. But they replied that when it comes to idolisation, the more the better. North Korean people have no ability to judge right from wrong as they are brought up and taught in this way. They have developed a weird, North Korea-way of judging based on the lessons taught by and words given by the Great Leader.

⁵ Original research for NK News (<http://www.nknews.org/2011/11/an-education-in-slavery/>)

Thus, the first phase to awaken North Korean people is to help them realise the idolisation of the Great Leader is based on a fabricated history.

North Korea's organisational structures start from small cell groups. North Korean organisation theory states that, just as cells eventually make up an organism, a group of three people make up a cell and eventually become an organisation. The North Korean government use such ideas to help facilitate its rule; the Rules and Regulations of the Korean Workers' Party demand that every group that consists of three or more people conduct self-criticism sessions.

Because a group is defined as having three or more people, one out of three is a spy to conduct surveillance of citizens. Layers of surveillance, including neighbourhood units, party cells, the Public Health Bureau, the Security Bureau, are conducted and the so-called human CCTV's are installed and run for 24 hours.

Because of the strict surveillance, people are reluctant to speak out their minds. Even if they wanted to complain about the country, they could not dare to. Speaking of outside news is even more impossible.

In organisations, the basic principle is people must relate to one another. In a country where all the peoples' relations are strictly inspected and controlled, it is impossible to organise people through communication.

Furthermore, freedom to move or commute is not at all guaranteed. Even when going to the military base in neighbouring villages, one must receive permission with a travel certificate. This all makes the possibility to organise people rather small.

More importantly, most households do not own a landline phone, let alone mobile phones, it is unlikely that North Korea will use social networks and mobile text messages to liaise with people, as seen in the Arab Spring. To many people forget, that are no mobile phones and no access to the internet in North Korea.

According to a recent news, an Egyptian telecom company has launched a joint venture with the North to open the company called Koryolink.

The people who are subscribed to mobile phone services, mostly the citizens of Pyongyang, are not the ones who will cry out of hunger and will fight against the dictatorship. They are the ones who will live with the dictators, who believe their happiness will be gone with the collapse of the dictatorial regime. These are the people who are fanatical about purchasing mobile phones and this is a sad reality.

It is just absurd enough for the media to make a big fuss over this issue, as if a big change had occurred in North Korea, when in fact the prices of mobile phones as well as the monthly bills are as high as those in developed countries, which most citizens could not even imagine to bear. The elite in North Korean society will never be the main influence in democratisation of the nation, and will never rebel against the rulers.

Like the people in the Arab Spring who fought for "bread" and against dictators, it has to be the ordinary citizens, with no choice but to die tomorrow because they have nothing to eat, or with no money to buy medicine and save a dying child. It is these people who have to uprising.

The democratisation of North Korea will happen only when the people seeking freedom, human rights and democracy are awakened. Those people, who believes in the existence of the Great Leader and shows their loyalty to the Great Leader, while not turning a hair at the news of starving people, will never know the suffering of the ordinary citizens. These people are exposed to the outside world, they are obsessed with South Korean TV shows and movies, and care about trends and fashion. They would spend hundreds of dollars on their mobile phone bills, but not a penny on the people who are dying of hunger. They turn their backs on the people's human rights.

This is easily proved by the number of North Korean defectors who fled to South Korea.

There are currently twenty four thousand North Korean defectors living in the South. Class analysis of these defectors shows that only 15% comes from the elite and 85% ordinary citizens. This is a realistic, statistical number that proves that these are the ordinary people, the very people who will endure loss of families and sacrifice their lives to fight against dictatorship, in search of freedom and democracy.

Even if an elite recognised the ugly reality of North Korea, if he was rich enough, it is very unlikely that they would fight against the current regime.

Next, another reason for the impossibility of organising people in North Korea is the inhumane camp system including punishment, execution, life sentence as well as implicative system.

Even if a North Korean person knows of the outside world and realise the absurdity of North Korea, he will not want to cause trouble to his family by having them executed or imprisoned because of him.

North Koreans are threatened by the government, and as they live in fear, they don't disobey. These attributes are shown not only among the North Korean residents, but also among the North Korean defectors who fled the country for freedom.

It is easy to judge and guess that the people, who had to risk their life to escape the country of worst human rights violations, would zealously fight for human rights. In reality, however, the defectors are so afraid of harming the families left behind that they remain as silent as possible in the South.

When the media asks for interviews, the most common request from defectors is to not show their faces or to change their voices.

This is not because they are the elites in North Korean society. This is because they have witnessed the horrifying implicative system among their own families or in neighbours. Their bodies might have escaped the North, but the souls are still tied to the dictators. North Korean defectors still live in fear, despite having been freed.

This clearly shows the extent of the regime's cruelty. Thus the international community must act towards the deterrence of inhumane crimes in North Korea. Strong measures to improve human rights, abolish implicative system, and disband political prisoners camps should be implemented.

Lastly, North Korea does not provide an environment which supports and nourishes leadership skills in people to lead the struggle phase.

As previously mentioned, all learning takes place with no contact with the outside world, and when students aged 13 to 17 start to develop their value system, all they see, hear and learn is the idolisation of the Great Leader. Even the general curriculum is devised and strictly enforced by the government, which limits students' ability to go through complex cognitive processes.

Even the North Korean defectors of elite class who now work as passionate human rights activists would not have been able to penetrate into the nature of the North Korean regime if they had stayed in the isolated country, no matter how smart they are.

The reason why North Korean defectors can be such valuable human resource that can bridge the two Koreas' unification and lead democratization in North Korea is because they overcame the obstacle and crossed the border and made it to the free land. It is virtually impossible to even think about democratic values and human rights in the closed country.

As there is no fertile grounds on which future leaders of democracy can be nurtured in North Korea, it is highly likely that any movement towards changing the regime within North Korea will only switch the dictators, and the regime will remain dictatorial. This is not a pro-democracy movement.

Therefore, pro-democracy movement in North Korea must be led by someone from the outside world and, North Korean defectors who have experienced both the North and South as well as the international community, must lead the struggle phase. Only this will make North Korea a democratic country in which freedom and democracy are truly secured.

6. How to save North Korea

It was previously mentioned that North Korea does not have a system where people can develop their thought processes. Is it then entirely impossible to enlighten the people in North Korea? Not at all. It is true that the North Korean system does not make the possibility of enlightenment easy; but this is not a question without an answer.

There is a way to “enlighten” people in North Korea, and the ignorant people must be enlightened. History has shown us absolute power fails absolutely.

Media plays a very important role in enlightening the people of North Korea. Since the establishment of dictatorial regime in 1948, North Korea has not allowed free media except one news agency that is controlled by the government. North Korea is one of the worst ranking countries when it comes to press freedom and people live without knowing how the world is changing. The government strictly controls the press and does not allow any other media organisations except the one that represents the dictatorship.

What it means to have controlled media is that the residents are not aware of the news from the outside world. The only way to deliver news to the North Koreans who crave world news is through channels outside the country.

In the former Socialist countries of Eastern Europe, China, as well as the Middle East today, external media channels have made it possible to enlighten the people. The most renowned channel through which Eastern European countries were able to hear the news from outside was BBC World Service Radio. Now corporations or institutions such as Radio Free Asia and Voice of America work to promote democracy worldwide.

Is it possible to spread democracy by bringing in external media like radio broadcasting services? It is possible, but limited. Although people are locked up in a closed society and indoctrinated all their lives, the way they are educated differs depending on who they are and which class they belong to.

There are people who are absolutely in no access to the outside world where as they are also people who know of the news but still intensely indoctrinated.

Even in an open and democratic society, one may encounter people who are so influenced by their religious beliefs that they would do anything their murder says, for instance, murder people. Upper middle class people know of but they deny the news from the outside world because they are brainwashed by the government education.

It is only via media differentiation that we have any hope of enlightening the people of North Korea.

Radio broadcasting is a waste of money, not to mention it is only a token gesture. TV broadcasting accounts for 90% of the media of North Korea while 10% is radio broadcasting. Main newspapers are Labour Daily, Labour Youth Daily, and Korean People's Army Daily. The Labour Daily is distributed nationwide while Labour Youth Daily is only for young people and Korean People's Army Daily inside the Army only. These limited shares in the media show that using radio broadcasting to change the North Korean society would be an absurd media strategy.

Even the population group who owns a radio is strictly monitored by the government which does not allow them to listen to more channels than they are supposed to.

The upper middle class who owns both a TV and a radio will occasionally hear the news of the outside world. In other words, they know what they are supposed to know. But these are people who have wealth to hold on to, who do not need to fight against the dictators.

Some groups of North Korean defectors bring to North Korea USB sticks, CDs and DVDs containing materials on the outside world as well as indicating problems with North Korean system. This is well-intentioned but imprudent because North Korean people rarely have devices that can play these materials. Devices such as computers, CDs and DVD players are too expensive: people who are dying of hunger will never own these. This is not to say that it is unnecessary, but there is a realistic limit to how far it can go.

Best way would be TV broadcasting which makes up 80% of the media of North Korea but this entails financial burden and the transmission process is rather complicated.

Media strategies that are more assertive must be adopted, compensating the aforementioned problem while focusing on the differentiated mediums. The strategy is to provide tailored solutions for different groups of people.

Simply put, newspapers could be distributed to the poorest while radio broadcasting, USB sticks and DVDs would still work for the upper middle class. The poor, who makes up the absolute majority of the North Korean population, must be awakened. Unless they arise, even if middle class begins to rebel, North Korea will not have a pro-democracy. When the poor are ready while middle class people are not, it will only cause trouble to the poor.

To conclude, a mixed media strategy should be adopted for the democratisation of North Korea, a country the international community does not fully understand and where hereditary succession for three generations is still allowed.

7. Human rights violations in North Korea

North Korean defectors had to risk their lives to flee North Korea and now they have settled in more than 20 countries worldwide. North Korean defectors who were living in hiding in Asian countries such as Russia, China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Burma are now internationally recognised as refugees and have achieved a reasonable quality of life in England, the US, Canada, and other European countries, not to mention South Korea. South Korea has the highest number of North Korean defectors who are accepted as refugees, followed by England, Canada, US and some other European countries.

China see the highest number of North Koreans who are not accepted as refugees, with the number estimated to be around 0.2 million. In one night, thousands of North Koreans attempt to cross the border between China and North Korea along the Yalu and Tumen rivers. Those who are hiding out in China, if they are caught, they are repatriated back to North Korea, a dreadful punishment waiting for them.

This makes North Korean defectors remain mute even when their human rights are severely violated: they have no one to appeal to, even when they are kidnapped, raped, exploited, assaulted or killed. They live a horrible life and have to endure all the pain. Nevertheless, North Korean defectors to China all say it is much better to live in China than in North Korea. This tells how much more horrible the reality of human rights violations is in North Korea. Using China's case in comparison, one can easily imagine the extent of human rights violations in North Korea.

In North Korea there is no single field where human rights are not violated, be it politics, economy, culture, diplomacy, community, religion, press, legislation, education, military, or normal life. The problem is that North Koreans do not realise that their human rights are being violated. It is because they have never heard of, or seen, what it is to have their human rights violated or protected. They have lived all their lives under conditions where human rights are violated, so it is natural for them.

To name a few, political human rights are violated as people are forced to 'idolise' the Great Leader and whoever denies or opposes will be publically executed. All their families and relatives will be sent to concentration camps for political prisoners.

Economic human rights are infringed when the government exploits the grains and products produced by civilians, which goes well against their own socialist principle of division and distribution. The government will even take the smallest amount of rice that is barely produced by civilians on their narrow patch of land, making various excuses such as calling the rice 'rice for nation' or 'rice for military'.

In addition, economies are classified as party economy, military economy and people's economy. The government will collect all the money earned overseas or various funds received from the international community only to pile them up in the Office 39 of the Workers' Party. This money is spent to run the Workers' Party or support Kim's family overseas, but never for the lives of ordinary people.

As for the military economy, which is referred as the Second Economic Committee in North Korea, the government insists that military-defense industry continue to grow so as to make the country powerful. Despite deaths of people from starvation, the government continues to invent missiles and test its nuclear programme.

North Korean economy evolves around one principle: be respectful to the Great Leader. Unlike any leaders in the world, the three Kim's in North Korea have been given the most privileged, most cultural and most secured lives. Culturally, cultural desire and personal freedom to watch, hear or sing is restrained by the law. They forbid cultural programs, songs, TV and radio broadcastings from the outside world. They go as far as to send people to jail and put them to torture if they sing songs that are made by themselves but not verified by the government.

There are numerous cases of human rights violations in the field of diplomacy. If not all, this case must be told. In North Korea, diplomats are considered as being pretty well off, but they also suffer human rights violations. If a diplomat is stationed in a foreign country, it is required by the government that he leave behind a child, as a hostage, in North Korea. The hostage policy is that the government will deliberately choose and train people to become diplomats, among those who have big number of family members or whose parents and relatives work as high-ranking officials. They sign a form which states, after their return, they are not allowed to tell anyone anything about what they saw or heard overseas, and if they do, they will take whatever punishments given to them.

The story of human rights violations in North Korea will never end. All forms of freedom, including freedom in politics, freedom of voting, freedom of the media, freedom of protesting,

freedom of religion, freedom of moving, freedom of economic activities, are taken away. North Korean savagery classifies its population according to class based on the family history, and this class system inhibits even the smartest people from achieving a successful career.

Needless to say, violations of religious freedom are obvious in North Korea where the only right way of worshipping is idolizing the Great Leader. When caught, people are immediately sent to political prisoners' camps. Believing in superstitions is also forbidden: when caught, people are executed in public, as an example to instil fear in people's mind.⁶

The power to break the "idol" comes from the press. Knowing this, the government never allowed any other press organisations except their very own state-run news and TV agency. Usually Kim Il-sung appreciated and respected writers as he believed that pen may be stronger than a sword. However, he only appointed writers with the purpose of idolizing the Great Leader, not to express their personal opinions.

There are numerous cases where people write one phrase that is politically inappropriate and have to see their career end. No exception is made for high ranking officers. Once they make a mistake by writing or mentioning something inappropriate, in one night, they will have their ideology verified and sent to prisoners' camps.

As mentioned earlier, as for educational rights, people are indoctrinated from the day they are born until the day they die and this tells all about educational human rights violations. This doesn't end after school, when they turn 17, men are drafted into military service, and all must go as long as they are physically healthy. The total duration is between 10 and 13 years. Most of them are 30-31 years old when they are done with military service, but they have lost the opportunity to study and learn skills. The worst possible problem is that, if North Korea opens up to the rest of the world, the youth, who is supposed to have the leading role in the society in near future, has neither knowledge nor skills and North Korea will have been left with a labour force incapable of doing anything.

Females also serve in the military, usually for 6-8 years. During their military service, they are not provided with basic sanitary items for menstruation. Pieces of clothes that are intended to cover feet are partially used as sanitary pads. As there are no proper shower facilities, women go to polluted rivers to wash themselves. With no heating during the winter, they are exposed to high chances of getting ill.

⁶ Examples can be found in Hyok Kang, *This is Paradise! My North Korean childhood*

They are victims of sexual violence and harassment by superior officers and male colleagues. Supplies are not distributed properly: servicewomen are malnourished to the point that their breasts sag, not to mention it is impossible for them to dream of make-up products. They have almost lost their reproductive function as women.

During the entire period of military duty, none of the servicepersons is allowed a day off, a visit, or a sleep-out. That military approves some prize holidays is merely a formality and is a privilege given to a few good model soldiers. The biggest victims of human rights violations caused by Absolutism of the Great Leader are young soldiers. They spend the most precious and meaningful time of their life in military, and during ten years of inhumane suppression, they are forced to serve the Great Leader at the risk of their own lives while not being able to acquire any practical knowledge and skills.

The list is endless and it is a horrendous reality that it exists in today's world.

North Korean defectors testify that when in North Korea, they took these abuses as a matter of course, and because they had no contact with the outside world, they did not know these abuses were unacceptable. The international community must act together to end these outrageous violations of human rights in North Korea.

The UK and Europe has the second largest number of North Korean refugees in the world. What are their roles to improve human rights situations and to promote democracy in North Korea?

North Korean refugees who live in the UK to see the welfare system and democracy similar to what they have witnessed in the UK in North Korea one day. North Korean refugees in the UK can play a crucial mediating role to promote democracy in North Korea as they have not only found safety but have been taught the value of democracy. However there will only ever be change if the countries of the world recommend it.

Recommendation One:

The UK and other European countries must actively lead an international initiative to expose the reality of human rights violations, persuade the regime to address these problems, and plant the seeds of democracy in North Korea.

As well as the obvious moral rewards that such an approach will yield, it will help enhance the UK's position in the world.

Many people know of human rights abuses in Burma, but not those in North Korea, in which more serious and more severe violations prevail. During a meeting with Burmese human rights organisation headquartered in London, the managers there were shocked at the severity and the extent of human rights violations in North Korea. According to these managers, there are 2,000 political prisoners in Burma, which they think is a serious problem. They found it unbelievable that there are 0.2 million political prisoners in North Korea.

Recommendation Two:

Relate aid policies to human rights problems, together with transparency.

That is the real way of providing humanitarian aid to North Korea. A double standard where they provide economic assistance only while ignoring human rights issues cannot be truly humanitarian.

Both rescue mechanisms, humanitarian aid and human rights, are inseparably related to each other. Especially in a country like North Korea, where the concept of humanitarianism faces limitations, these two mechanisms must not be separated.

Although the international community has provided aid to North Korea for more than 15 years, residents in North Korea are still starving while being continuously brainwashed about the dictators. It is easily seen through the idolisation of Kim Jong-un, the third person to hereditarily succeed the dictatorial regime.

The current aid mechanism will only extend the term of current dictatorial regime while not improving the lives of the people. The international bias of humanitarianism ignores human rights violations that are threatening the lives of the people in the entire nation.

North Korea will be hostile to the "enemy countries" like the US, South Korea and Japan and take their requests on human rights for a threat to collapse the regime. However, if the UK and European countries made these requests, North Korea would consider them differently. Thus, the UK and other European countries must take the lead through the media.

Recommendation Three:

Promote freedom among the people of North Korea

There are high chances that human rights related requests from the UK and European press will be taken into consideration while those through the US media will only be considered as anti-North Korean broadcasts.

The feelings and reactions of North Korean citizens when they receive these news releases are also important. Ordinary North Korean citizens will disapprove the news sent through the US, South Korea or Japan, no matter how accurate and truthful the news may be. This is because they have been indoctrinated against these countries all their lives, believing only what the government tells them.

If the news arrive through the UK or European media, they are more likely to be accepted. Northern European nations such as England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway must actively support the media business related to North Korea.

Especially, in the UK, BBC World Service Radio must begin to broadcast news in Korean language and provide financial aid to support media agencies such as “Free North Korea Newspaper”, based in London and run by North Korean defectors, so that the news can reach their family and friends in North Korea.

Recommendation Four:**Nurture the future leaders of a free Korea**

The UK and other European countries must be actively involved in nurturing young talent among North Korean defectors. These young talents will be the future leaders in building democracy in North Korea. For this, special curriculums such as “leadership in bringing democracy to North Korea” must be devised to include teachings on politics, economy, culture, religion and diplomacy.

In addition, the UK and European countries should help North Korean defectors build more permanent organisations for the democratisation of the country. They have experienced democracy themselves, and should be able to lead the way forward to democratise North Korea. The UK and other European countries must seek to enact a law regarding North Korean refugees, providing safeguards for the defectors to settle in Europe and continue to work for the democratisation of North Korea.

This will in turn deliver an optimistic message to North Korean residents who are anticipating the right time for a pro-democracy movement. Furthermore, the human rights violations among the workers from North Korea who are stationed in Europe must be pointed out to the North Korean government. Today in Europe, there are numerous people, including construction workers, waitresses as well as workers in baking factories and leather tanneries, who have been selected and sent by the government to earn foreign currencies only to benefit the government: this is labour exploitation. The money earned overseas goes into the party's economy, not the people's economy.

The European community must urge the North Korean government to stop human rights abuses including economic exploitation. Europe must be willing to accept the refugees from North Korea and protect them.

In conclusion, the UK and other European countries must take the role as an advisor and mediator to help the dictatorial North Korea build a society that guarantees freedom and democracy. On one hand humanitarian aid is important but on the other hand so is the issue of human rights.

More specifically, they must strongly argue that if North Korea does not improve their human rights condition, they will not only cease the monetary aid but also diplomatic relations.

It is not realistic for the US to make this proposal when it is leading the negotiations on North Korea's nuclear programme.

It is more realistic and more effective if North Korea hears the advice from Europe and especially from the UK, a country where human rights are well protected. The advice from Europe will come as a shock to North Korea.

From a North Korean defector's point of view, the impact of rupture of diplomatic relations may unexpectedly be big in improving the human rights situation in North Korea. It is the responsibility that developed countries must bear in the international community.