

N. KOREA

**Democratic People's
Republic of Korea (DPRK)**

HISTORY

After a long history of rule by the Yi dynasty, the territory of Korea was annexed by Japan in 1910. After the defeat of Japan at the end of World War II in 1945, Korea was divided. Soviet military had control over the north of Korea, and U.S. troops occupied the south. In 1948, separate governments were formed in the northern and southern territories of the peninsula. The governments both claimed the land, and relations became strained. In 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. Chinese communists fought for North Korea, while the United Nations and United States aided the south. The Korean War ended in 1953, with an armistice, but a permanent peace treaty has never been signed.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)—North Korea—was formed in 1948. Following the Korean War, the government worked to modernize industry and the military. Although the Soviet Union and China aided DPRK development, the government was mainly concerned with a



policy of self-reliance. The DPRK army is presently among the largest in the world, and there are worldwide concerns about the development of DPRK nuclear facilities.

LANDMINES/UXO OVERVIEW

DPRK produces at least two types of AP mines, but their production is not sophisticated. Korea is not known to export AP mines, and their mines have not been found in other countries. There are no reported landmine problems along the North Korean borders of China or Russia. It has been reported that mine fields are only present along the North-South Korea border. Landmines are used for defensive purposes along the northern sector of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea. The number of AP mines is estimated at 1.2 million, with about 1.12 million of these laying in the DMZ.

CASUALTIES

The DPRK government claims that there have been no civilian casualties along the DMZ. On Dec. 7, 1979, a U.S. military patrol crossed the DMZ and stepped on a landmine, causing one death and four injuries to soldiers.

DEMINEING

North Korea is currently working in conjunction with South Korea to demine a path through the DMZ for railway and highway construction (see article on page 26). There was a DPRK representative at the Mine Ban Treaty Intersessional Standing Committee of Experts on Mine Clearing meeting in Geneva, March 27-29, 2000. China has volunteered to assist North Korea with demining, equipment, technology, and expertise.

REALITY CHECK

The United Nations reported that two South Korean farmers were kidnapped by DPRK troops in the DMZ in October 2000. Twelve armed members of the Korean People's Army crossed the Military Demarcation Line and abducted the farmers from a rice field outside of the village of Daesung-Dong. The soldiers then moved north of the DMZ. Four days later, the government indicated to U.N. officials that they would return the two farmers to Panmunjom, a truce village that lies inside the 2.5 mile buffer zone in the DMZ.

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