

STRANGERS AT HOME: NORTH KOREANS IN THE SOUTH

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STRANGERS AT HOME: NORTH KOREANS IN THE SOUTH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the number of defectors from North Korea arriving in the South has surged in the past decade, there is a growing understanding of how difficult it would be to absorb a massive flow of refugees. South Korea is prosperous and generous, with a committed government and civil society, and yet refugees from the North almost all fail to integrate or thrive. Part of this is the change in the people coming; it is no longer just senior officials and fighter pilots who were useful and privileged propaganda tools. Nowadays many are women who have endured terrible deprivation in the North and abuse on their way to the South. Reconfiguring programs for defectors to take account of this change is essential if new defectors are to find a place in their new home.

The heart of the issue is humanitarian: those who arrive in the South are often fleeing material deprivation and political persecution and under South Korean law must be accepted and helped. But as with all humanitarian issues, it is complicated by politics. Defectors have been used by both sides. The South once rewarded them with wealth and public regard but that changed when rapprochement with the North began in the late 1990s. Defectors became something of an embarrassment, and policies to help them did not keep up with the numbers and types of people arriving.

As the difficulties of absorbing North Koreans become clear, the South is also wrestling with the possibility that it one day might have to handle a vast outflow of refugees from a collapsing North. The two sides of the Demilitarised Zone have diverged so much in economics, politics, language and social organisation that the people are now strangers to each other. South Korean law and opinion from some quarters would likely demand a rapid unification, but economic and social realities suggest such a move could be catastrophic. The difficulties of handling just over 20,000 refugees over a few decades should be a warning to those who wish to encourage the collapse of the North rather than a more gentle integration.

The divergences between North and South mean that defectors are on average significantly smaller, more poorly educated, less healthy and less likely to have useful skills. They must adapt to a country where credentials and net-

works are essential for finding jobs. They also come from a country where an all-powerful bureaucracy makes almost all decisions about their lives; there is almost no choice in education, employment or even food. New arrivals describe a bewildering rush of modernity, consumption and choice that rapidly overwhelms them. They also complain of discrimination by Southerners, who have stereotyped them as heavy drinkers, prone to crime, shirking work and relying on state handouts.

Many arrive nowadays suffering from serious physical and mental health problems, resulting in part from poor diet and trauma in the North and sometimes from abuse during their escape. South Korea is not well equipped to handle this: it has the highest suicide rate of wealthy countries and one of the poorest systems for providing mental health care. As more vulnerable people have begun to arrive, not enough has been done to accommodate their needs.

The South Korean government has devoted significant resources to helping defectors, but its efforts have often lagged behind new developments. The lavish welcome defectors received in the past has ended, and there is a more practical approach to education and integration, but as the arrivals have soared, facilities have not kept up. Civil society, particularly religious groups, has stepped up to help, but relations with the government are often strained. Better coordination of such efforts, improved oversight to determine what works and a more sensitive approach to discrimination are all needed.

Critically, policy on defectors needs to be insulated both from the occasional burst of belligerence from the North and from policy shifts in the South towards Pyongyang. What is clear is that the problems Northerners face on arrival take many years to resolve. What is needed is a long-term approach that allows a greater role for civil society and is less subject to change with each new government.

This report aims to draw attention to the challenges defectors have faced in integrating into the South, in the hope that the many international actors engaged with both Korea and refugee issues will devote more attention to planning for the possible need to accommodate much lar-

ger numbers due to conflict or other sudden major change on the Korean peninsula.

Among the issues to be tackled are:

- ❑ the government, particularly the Ministry of Unification, should endeavour to be more responsive to the needs of defectors by listening to civil society groups and those who come from the North;
- ❑ there is a need for greater oversight to ensure that money is allocated to those programs that meet defectors' needs most closely. This could be a role for the newly established North Korean Refugees Foundation;
- ❑ the government needs to improve public awareness among South Koreans to increase tolerance for Northerners, as well as tough anti-discrimination laws and practices; and
- ❑ the international community should accept more refugees from the North and engage the South Korean government to provide help in such areas as English-language education.

Seoul/Brussels, 14 July 2011

STRANGERS AT HOME: NORTH KOREANS IN THE SOUTH

I. INTRODUCTION

Prior to the last decade, very few North Koreans had defected to the South. There were only 86 defectors from 1990 to 1994, and the numbers remained under 100 each year until 1999.¹ North Korea's deteriorating economy and a subsequent famine in the mid-1990s, along with an erosion of border controls that opened an escape route into China, began to push the numbers higher by 2000.² In 2001, 583 North Koreans arrived in South Korea. The following year the figure nearly doubled to 1,138.³ By 2007, about 10,000 North Korean defectors had arrived in the South, and by December 2010, the number reached 20,360 (see Appendix B, Table One, below).⁴ The number is expected to remain steady at about 2,500-3,000 per year or even to increase,⁵ although slightly fewer defectors arrived in 2010 due to tightened restrictions in North Korea, including greater punishment for attempting to defect.⁶

In comparison with past displacement on the Korean peninsula, this is a small number.⁷ For example, during the two years following the Japanese Empire's collapse in 1945, as many as 2.6 million Koreans migrated to the southern part of the peninsula from Japan, Manchuria and northern Korea.⁸ About 3.5 million Koreans died during the Korean War (1950-1953), including about 2.5 million North Koreans (about one fourth of the northern population).⁹ The South Korean media often report that there are 10 million Korean family members separated by national division, but a more credible estimate of separated first-generation Koreans is about 500,000-750,000 out of a total Korean population of 72 million.¹⁰

This report is based on interviews in South Korea with defectors and those involved in providing services to them for resettlement. It also draws on extensive Korean language research on this issue. One of the aims of the paper is to bring some of this to the attention of a wider audience, in the hope that the many international actors engaged with both Korea and refugee issues will devote more attention to planning for considerably larger numbers as a possible

¹“북한이탈주민 입국인원 현황 [Current number of North Korean defectors in South Korea]”, unification ministry (MOU), www.unikorea.go.kr. See Appendix B, Table One, for annual totals.

²See Crisis Group Asia Report N°122, *Perilous Journeys: The Plight of North Koreans in China and Beyond*, 26 October 2006; Andrei Lankov, “Bitter taste of paradise: North Korean refugees in South Korea”, *The Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 6 (2006), pp. 105-137; Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland (eds.), “The North Korean refugee crisis: human rights and international response”, U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2006; Lim Hyun-chin and Chung Young Chul, “The political and human rights issues surrounding North Korean defectors”, *The Review of Korean Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (March 2006), pp. 87-116.

³“Current number of North Korean defectors in South Korea”, op. cit.

⁴Ibid.

⁵박정란 [Pak Chŏng-ran], “탈북자 지원체계의 쟁점과 발전 방향 [Ways to improve issues with the support system for North Korean defectors]”, *북한경제리뷰 [North Korean Economy Review]*, Korea Development Institute, September 2010, p. 50.

⁶이규창 [Yi Kyu-ch'ang], “김정은 후계구도와 북한 인권 [Kim Jŏng-ŭn succession structure and North Korean human rights]”, Korea Institute for National Unification, Online series CO 2011-11, April 2011, pp. 3-4.

⁷In comparison, in more recent times, Afghanistan has had the world's greatest number of refugees. After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, more than 6 million Afghans – over one fifth of the population – had fled the country by 1992, mostly to neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. See “Refugees from Afghanistan: The world's largest single refugee group”, Amnesty International, 1 November 1999. By late 2007, more than 4 million Iraqis were displaced, about 2.2 million of them still within the country. “Statistics on displaced Iraqis around the world”, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), September 2007. In July 2007, Iraq's population was estimated to be about 27.5 million. See “The 2008 World Factbook”, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2008, www.cia.gov.

⁸Bruce Cumings, *The origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1 (Princeton, 1981), pp. 56, 60.

⁹Bradley K. Martin, *Under the loving care of the fatherly leader* (New York, 2004), p. 87.

¹⁰This includes individuals who were separated from their families at the time of the war but not their descendants. James A. Foley, “Ten million families”: statistic or metaphor?”, *Korean Studies*, vol. 25, no. 1 (2001), pp. 96-110. In July 2007, the South Korean population was estimated to be about 49 million, and North Korea's was estimated to be about 23.3 million. See “The 2008 World Factbook”, op. cit.

result of conflict or other sudden major change on the Korean peninsula.

It follows an earlier study by Crisis Group of refugees from North Korea fleeing to China and South East Asia.¹¹ This paper examines what happens to these people if they reach South Korea and the problems they face integrating into society. While primarily a humanitarian concern, the issue is linked to the risks of conflict or instability in North East Asia and the resolution of the longstanding tensions on the Korean peninsula.

The problem of integrating refugees is important because of the possibility that South Korea may one day have to deal with the total failure of the North Korean state. There are a number of possible scenarios from a peaceful hand-over of power to the eruption of violence within the North. At the moment it is impossible to predict if or how North Korea may collapse, and as events in North Africa have shown, it is unlikely anyone can predict how, when or if a transition will take place. What would be likely if that time arrives, however, is a massive outflow of refugees because of the brutal living conditions in the North. South Korea's struggle to integrate quite small numbers shows what an immense challenge this would be for the region and international actors.

II. CHANGING POLICIES TOWARDS DEFECTORS

South Korea is a prosperous country that should be well equipped to cope with new arrivals. However, the settlement of a relatively small number of defectors has presented several legal, social, and economic challenges.¹² According to the South Korean constitution, citizenship is “prescribed by law”, and “all citizens are equal before the law”.¹³ The constitution declares that the territory of the Republic of Korea (ROK) includes the Korean peninsula and surrounding islands, but the Nationality Law is ambiguous on the status of North Koreans.¹⁴ It would appear to grant automatic ROK citizenship to Koreans who lived in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), but the Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea, which was implemented in January 1997, is the legal mechanism governing the transition of North Koreans into full-fledged citizens.¹⁵

The legal basis for supporting the settlement of defectors began in April 1962 with the ROK's enactment of the Special Relief Act for Patriots and Veterans, and North

¹² Even the terminology for “defector” is controversial in the South because of the political connotations of different terms. Until the 1970s or 1980s, the word 歸順者 [*kwisunja*] was used, meaning someone who “submits or surrenders”. The act of “submission or defection” usually included a press conference at which the individual announced his allegiance and shouted three times “Long live the Republic of Korea [大韓民國 萬歲]”! By the 1990s, the term 脫北者 [*t'albukcha*], a “person escaping from the North” became the norm. Around 2005, the Roh Moo-Hyun [No Mu-hyōn] government began using the term 새터민 [*saetōmin*] or “people in a new place”. The Roh government considered this term more neutral and conducive to its policy of “peace and prosperity” towards the North. But North Korean defectors in the South generally dislike the term, so after the change in governments in 2008, the MOU announced it would stop using it. Since 2008, the correct legal term is 北韓離脫住民 (*pukhan'italjumin*, “citizens who escaped from North Korea”), according to the Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea, Article 2. However, *t'albukcha* remains the common colloquial term in South Korea. This report uses “defector” to refer to all former North Koreans now living in South Korea and makes no assertions about their legal or political status in the South.

¹³ Republic of Korea Constitution, Chapter I General Provisions, Article 2; and Chapter II Rights and Duties of the Citizens, Article 11.

¹⁴ 國籍法 [Nationality Law].

¹⁵ 北韓離脫住民의 保護 및 定着支援에 關한 法律 [Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea].

¹¹ See Crisis Group Report, *Perilous Journeys*, op. cit.

Korean Defectors.¹⁶ Defectors were given a status equal to that of patriots with special national merit or considered “human national treasures”. In December 1978, the ROK enacted the Special Compensation Act for Heroes Who Defect to the South.¹⁷ During the Cold War, the few defectors who made it to the South carried significant propaganda value and were rewarded handsomely. In 1993 the government enacted the Act on the Protection of North Korean Defectors, which significantly reduced the amount of compensation and required defectors to earn their livelihood.¹⁸ In 1997, the Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea was promulgated, re-establishing the government assistance system for defectors.¹⁹ This law has been revised six times, most recently in March 2010.

According to Article 7 of the Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea, a defector must first ask for protection at a South Korean embassy or consulate before the government can consider the right to receive protection and resettlement into the South. The law stipulates that protection will be provided in accordance with humanitarian principles. The head of the diplomatic mission is required to report the request to the unification minister and the director of the National Intelligence Service (NIS); the former subsequently decides in consultation with a ministry consultative council chaired by the vice unification minister. However, the minister can reject applicants such as criminals or others deemed unworthy of consideration. The unification minister is authorised to establish facilities for the protection of defectors as well as logistical support facilities once they arrive. The NIS director is authorised to establish separate facilities, and the president can issue decrees on matters related to the types, management and operation of these facilities.²⁰

Few defectors have integrated into South Korean society effectively, and the government mechanisms set up to help them have been relatively ineffective. Defectors have transitioned from being Cold War heroes to an embarrassment for Seoul as the Roh Moo-hyun [No Mu-hyŏn] government (2003-2008) sought rapprochement with Pyongyang. As the Lee Myung-bak [Yi Myŏng-bak] government (2008 to date) has urged a national discussion on preparations

for a unified Korea, defectors offer a microcosm of the challenges that lie ahead. Earlier defectors tended to be men from the North Korean elite. Nowadays, those arriving in the South are more likely to be women, many of them single mothers with dependent children. In 1998, only 12 per cent of the 947 defectors in the South were female. But they surpassed males in 2002, and in 2010 they accounted for 76 per cent of the 2,376 defectors who arrived in the South.²¹ By January 2011, the cumulative total of defectors nineteen years of age and younger was 3,174 – 15.4 per cent of all defectors in the South.²²

About 70 per cent of the defectors arriving recently have graduated from middle school or high school, about 9 per cent have graduated from junior colleges, and about 8 per cent are college graduates. About 50 per cent were unemployed or dependents before they left the North, and about 39 per cent were workers. In April 2011, at least 65 per cent of them were living in the greater Seoul-Inch’ŏn metropolitan area. The unification ministry (MOU) estimates that 54 per cent are suffering from personal hardships and about 16 per cent are in the South with other family members.²³

The issue presents a constant risk to delicate negotiations between the Koreas; Pyongyang has frequently used it as an excuse to block progress in inter-Korean relations. For example, when a North Korean fishing boat malfunctioned and drifted south in early February 2011, four of the crew decided to defect, but 27 wished to return. They were not repatriated until 50 days later because the North insisted that the whole crew be returned. Pyongyang continued to insist that the four were being held against their will and that there would be consequences for Seoul if they were not returned.²⁴

There have been cases of North Koreans slipping into the South disguised as defectors to conduct covert operations. Although ROK authorities had suspected this for years, the first case was disclosed only in 2008. A North Korean woman, Wŏn Jŏng-hwa, entered the South in October 2001 immediately after marrying a South Korean businessman she met in China.²⁵ She told him she was Korean-Chinese

¹⁶ 國家有功者 및 越南歸順者 特別援護法 [Special Relief Act for Patriots and Veterans, and North Korean Defectors]. The law was abolished in 1985.

¹⁷ 越南歸順勇士 特別補償法 [Act on Special Compensation for North Korean Defectors to South Korea].

¹⁸ 歸順北韓同胞保護法 [Act on the Protection of North Korean Defectors].

¹⁹ Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea.

²⁰ Ibid, Article 10.

²¹ “Current number of North Korean defectors in South Korea”, *op. cit.*

²² At the end of January 2011, the total number of defectors to have reached the ROK was 20,539. *Ibid.*

²³ “북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]”, internal MOU document, no date.

²⁴ Kim Mi-ju, “27 North Koreans finally repatriated: Four others on fishing boat defected, adding to tensions”, *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 28 March 2011.

²⁵ 정지우 및 홍석희 [Chŏng Ji-u and Hong Sŏk-hŭi], “위장탈북 여간첩 검거.. 장교에 성로비 뚫기일 빼내 [Arrest

but later told the ROK authorities that she was a defector from the North.²⁶ In fact, Wŏn had received three years (1989-1992) of training to join a unit that conducts special operations in the South, but was discharged when she was injured.²⁷ She reportedly was sent to China in 1998 by the DPRK's national security ministry [國家安全保衛部] where she assisted in the kidnapping of seven South Korean businessmen and about 100 North Korean defectors for repatriation to the DPRK.²⁸ Her stepfather followed her to China in 1999, also posing as a defector while actually working for the DPRK's national security ministry. He then followed her to the South in 2006, passing through Cambodia.²⁹

Once in South Korea, she approached military and police officers and eventually was hired to give lectures about the North to military personnel. In 2008, authorities discovered that she had taken photographs of U.S. and ROK military installations and engaged in sexual relations with South Korean military officers to acquire classified information that she passed to the North.³⁰ She also established a fisheries products trading firm and travelled fourteen times to China, where she met with DPRK national security ministry officials to coordinate her espionage activities.³¹ Wŏn reportedly exposed ROK agents, who were later murdered, and delivered contact and background information on about 100 senior military officers as well as the whereabouts of prominent North Korean defectors such as Hwang Jang-hyŏp, who would become the target of an assassination plot.³²

The Hwang assassination plot apparently began when two North Korean special agents departed North Korea disguised as defectors in December 2009. They passed through

China and South East Asia before arriving in South Korea in January 2010.³³ However, the plot was discovered while the agents were being processed and debriefed prior to release into South Korean society.³⁴ Hwang, a former senior North Korean party official who defected to the South in 1997, was the highest-level defector ever to reach the South. He was a former president of Kim Il-sung University and is considered the true architect of Kim Il-sung's *chuch'e* ideology. The agents reportedly were dispatched by the General Reconnaissance Bureau, which is responsible for special operations against the South and is believed to have been behind the sinking of the ROK naval vessel *Ch'ōnan*.³⁵ They were sentenced to ten-year prison terms in June 2010.³⁶

The immense difficulties faced by defectors in adapting to life outside the North is also a lesson for those who would like to see North Korea squeezed to the point of collapse. While most South Koreans would prefer a gradual unification following inter-Korean convergence in politics, economics, society and living standards, the Lee Myung-bak government has suggested that discussions and preparations for unification are necessary now.³⁷ President Lee has stated that unification must be pursued regardless of the costs or burdens.³⁸ Over the last two decades, the government position has been to pursue a "soft landing" for the North, but now some ruling party advisers and pundits believe official unification policy should include plans to seek unification after a DPRK collapse or emergency.³⁹

of a female spy disguised as a defector ... extracted military secrets from officers with sex]", *Financial News*, 27 August 2008.

²⁶ 박홍두 [Pak Hong-du], "원정화 '15살부터 3년간 남파공작원 훈련'" [Wŏn Jŏng-hwa 'trained for operations unit against the south for three years when she was 15']", *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 27 August 2008.

²⁷ 선상원 [Sŏn Sang-wŏn], "'탈북자 위장' 여간첩 적발" ['North Korean defector disguise' female spy exposed]", *Naeil Sinmun*, 28 August 2008.

²⁸ 박진석 및 이영창 [Pak Chin-sŏk and Yi Yŏng-ch'ang], "미녀간첩에 홀린 대한민국 안보 [Republic of Korea's security bewitched by female spy beauty]", *The Hankook Ilbo*, 28 August 2008.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "위장탈북 여간첩 검거..장교에 성로비 무기밀 빼내" [Arrest of a female spy disguised as a defector]", *op. cit.*

³¹ 박호근 [Pak Ho-gŭn], "직파 女간첩 원정화 활동 전모 [A full account of female spy Wŏn Jŏng-hwa's activities]", *The Segye Ilbo*, 28 August 2008.

³² "미녀간첩에 홀린 대한민국 안보 [Republic of Korea's security bewitched by female spy beauty]", *op. cit.*

³³ 이관범 [Yi Gwan-bŏm], "'황장엽 암살조' 징역 10년" ['Hwang Jang-hyŏp assassination team' get 10 years imprisonment]", *The Munhwa Ilbo*, 1 July 2010.

³⁴ Ibid; 김미애 [Kim Mi-ae], "'황장엽 암살조' 北간첩 징역10년·자력정지 10년 선고" ['Hwang Jang-yŏp assassin team' sentenced to 10 years as North Korean spies and lose rights for 10 years]", *Asia Today*, 1 July 2010.

³⁵ See Crisis Group Asia Report N°198, *North Korea: The Risks of War in the Yellow Sea*, 23 December 2010.

³⁶ Kwon Mee-yoo, "NK spies get 10-year jail term for plot to kill Hwang", *The Korea Times*, 1 July 2010.

³⁷ On 15 August 2010, President Lee proposed a unification tax to prepare for unification and declared that South Koreans must prepare for it. Lee Tae-ho, "Lee proposes unification tax", *The Korea Times*, 15 August 2010.

³⁸ 추승호 및 이승우 [Ch'u Sŭng-ho and Yi Sŭng-u], "李대통령 '한반도 핵 있으면 통일 지연될 것'" [President Lee 'if nuclear weapons are on the Korean peninsula, unification will be delayed']", *Yonhap News*, 9 May 2011. However, Lee's unification tax proposal is controversial; many argue the revenue would be better spent strengthening the overall South Korean economy. See "Experts divided over proposed 'unification tax'", *Yonhap News*, 12 May 2011.

³⁹ 박은주 [Pak Ŭn-ju], "북한 급변사태 포함하는 統一방안 마련 필요" [Unification planning should include North Korean contingencies]", *Korea Policy*, vol. 5 (March-April 2011), pp.

The Obama administration policy is not to seek regime change, but to deal with the DPRK as it is. Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, has stated that regime collapse is not the goal of U.S. policy and that collapse is unlikely. Bosworth also has emphasised that a change in DPRK behaviour is necessary for an improvement in bilateral relations.⁴⁰ However, some high-level Republican Party officials, such as Senator John McCain, have suggested that regime change should be the U.S. goal.⁴¹

Coping suddenly with an entire population that has lived under such oppressive control for so long would certainly push the capacities of the South and the wider international community beyond their limits. In a worst case scenario, Kim family regime loyalists could retreat to remote areas to resist unification on ROK terms. At best, cooperation from the disbanded DPRK government and military would be instrumental in avoiding immediate violence, but in the longer term, the economic and social challenges would be extraordinary.

III. LESSONS FROM KOREAN HISTORY

Korea was a traditional agrarian society that was isolated until the late nineteenth century. From 1392 to 1910, the Chosŏn Dynasty's neo-Confucian ideology viewed society as a function of five human relationships: ruler and subjects; father and son; older brother and younger brother; husband and wife; and friend and friend. Social cleavages were traditionally a function of social class, family relations, regional origins, educational level and school ties.⁴² Foreigners were absolutely excluded in the strict neo-Confucian world view. Korea's geographic isolation resulted in few foreign visitors except for those in the periodic attempts by neighbours to conquer the peninsula, which reinforced xenophobic attitudes in Korea. Christianity was viewed as heretical and subversive.⁴³ On the other hand, shipwrecked foreigners were treated well until they could be repatriated.⁴⁴ In sum, Korea has had no experience in peacefully integrating significant numbers of outsiders.

Since personal ties based on family links, alumni connections or regional hometown networks are critical for personal success and social mobility in South Korea, North Korean defectors face significant obstacles. South Korea's economy has seen profound transformation and modernisation since industrialisation took off in the 1960s, but sons traditionally have taken over family businesses or families have pooled resources for entrepreneurial ventures. School ties or regional networks are still valuable assets when seeking employment or credit, or when a reference is required to vouch for one's reliability. North Korean defectors have an extremely difficult time opening doors and establishing positive personal reputations without pre-existing social networks.

A. COLD WAR USES AND ABUSES

The propaganda value of Korean defectors has long been recognised in Pyongyang and Seoul. After national division in 1945, both sides tried to exploit defectors to demonstrate the superiority of their political system and government. The intense rivalry and deep ideological division, exacerbated by the Korean War, continued throughout the

62-70; 김석우 [Kim Sŏk-u], “북한 급변사태 대비하고 통일외교 전개해야 [We must prepare for North Korean contingencies and expand unification diplomacy]”, *Korea Policy*, vol. 4 (January-February 2011).

⁴⁰ Hwang Doo-hyong, “Clinton expresses concerns about rising tensions due to N Korea's nuke weapons”, *Yonhap News*, 3 March 2011.

⁴¹ Douglass K. Daniel, “McCain: Time to discuss N Korea ‘regime change’”, *MSNBC.com*, 28 November 2010. In the days following North Korea's nuclear test on 9 October 2006, then U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton said that UN sanctions would help in the ultimate objective of regime change. Guy Dinmore and Daniel Dombey, “Bolton: Sanctions ‘Help Regime Change’”, *Financial Times*, 24 October 2006.

⁴² During the Chosŏn Dynasty, officially there were four social classes: *yangban* (elite ruling class); *chung'in* (professional middle class); *sangmin* (commoners); and *ch'ŏnmin* (lower class including slaves). For a description of these classes, see Gregory Henderson, *Korea: The politics of the vortex* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 36-55.

⁴³ The Korean government executed about 300 Catholic converts and imprisoned or exiled hundreds of others in 1801. Key-Hiuk Kim, *The last phase of the East Asian world order* (Berkeley, 1980), pp. 31-38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Cold War. The status and repatriation of prisoners of war (POWs) prolonged the Korean War armistice talks for about two years, as the Chinese and North Koreans insisted that all POWs be repatriated to their home countries, while the UN side refused to send any back against their will. Ultimately, the Chinese and North Koreans agreed to voluntary repatriation, and those who refused to return home became propaganda symbols. The overwhelming majority of the 22,600 POWs who refused repatriation were Chinese, but 357 POWs from the UN side (333 South Koreans, 23 Americans, one Briton) expressed their intention to decline repatriation.⁴⁵

During the Cold War, six American soldiers defected to the DPRK while assigned to bases in the ROK. Private Larry Allen Abshier and Private First Class James Joseph Dresnok crossed the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in May and August 1962.⁴⁶ Corporal Jerry Wayne Parrish defected in December 1963,⁴⁷ and Sergeant Charles Robert Jenkins defected while on patrol in January 1965.⁴⁸ These four became celebrities in the DPRK after starring in a series of films as American villains. Roy Chung, who defected to East Germany in 1979, later arrived in the DPRK.⁴⁹ Private First Class Joseph White crossed the DMZ at Guard Post Ouellette in August 1982.⁵⁰ Dresnok is the sole American defector remaining in North Korea, after Jenkins was permitted to leave in 2004.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Two Americans and eight Koreans later changed their minds. "Operations Big and Little Switch", Department of Defense Factsheet, U.S. Korean War Commemoration, <http://korea50.army.mil/history/factsheets/ops/switch.shtml>; "By mutual consent", *Time*, July 15, 1996; Mark W. Clark, *From the Danube to the Yalu* (Pennsylvania, 1988).

⁴⁶ Penny Spiller, "Last US defector in North Korea", BBC News, 23 January 2007.

⁴⁷ Rudi Williams, "U.S., North Korea agree to search for MIAs", American Forces Press Service, 19 May 1997.

⁴⁸ Jim Frederick, "In from the cold," *Time*, 5 December 2004.

⁴⁹ Joe Ritchie and Jaehoon Ahn, "South Korean, who joined U.S. army, reportedly defected to North Korea", *The Washington Post*, 13 September 1979.

⁵⁰ Robert Neff, "Joseph White's walk in the dark", *The Asia Times*, 23 February 2007; "Crossing through no-man's land", *Time*, 13 September 1982.

⁵¹ Jenkins is married to Japanese abduction victim Hitomi Soga, who was released after Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang in May 2004. He subsequently was permitted to meet his wife in Indonesia, after which they travelled to Japan, where Jenkins turned himself in to U.S. military personnel at Camp Zama. Three defectors are confirmed dead: Abshier from a heart attack in 1983; White in 1985, reportedly while swimming in a river, but many believe he was executed or committed suicide; and Parrish from an abdominal infection in 1996. "Last US defector in North Korea", op. cit.; "In from the cold", op. cit.; Min Lee, "Last U.S. defector in N Korea feels at home," *The Washington Post*, 18 October 2006.

For at least two decades after the Korean War, the obstacles to defecting were considerable, and there were few if any material incentives for North Koreans to depart for the ROK, since the DPRK economy was outperforming the economy in the South. Furthermore, defectors in the early years switched sides for ideological reasons, and the vast majority of Koreans had already migrated to the side representing their personal ideological convictions in the late 1940s and during the war. Nonetheless, during this period, the overwhelming direction of this migration was from the North to the South.

Extensive migration also resulted in many separated families. Many Koreans were caught up in the shifting battle front that crossed most of the peninsula during the first months of the war. While some switched sides voluntarily, others had no choice and were conscripted into military or forced labour service. In many cases, it has been impossible to determine whether migrants switched sides voluntarily or were kidnapped. But this classification has been important for family members because of governmental and societal perceptions. Deliberate defection has serious consequences for family members, and although the South Korean government and legal system officially do not penalise relatives for unrelated individual acts, there is still a heavy social stigma for betraying the nation and defecting to the North. For example, in 2007, a South Korean prevailed in a legal case to have his father reclassified as a victim of abduction rather than a defector as he was a passenger in a two-seat light aircraft that flew to the North in October 1977.⁵² In the case of North Koreans defecting, collective punishment is standard, and banishment to a penal labour camp or execution for extended family members are common.

According to the *1954 ROK Yearbook*, 82,959 South Koreans were kidnapped by the North during the war, and 10,271 defected.⁵³ Between the signing of the Korean War Armistice in July 1953 and November 2010, North Korea abducted 3,824 South Koreans (3,721 fishermen) and returned 3,318. All but eight of those repatriated were detained for six to twelve months. About 506 abducted South Koreans are believed to still be in the North.⁵⁴ Sev-

⁵² "White paper on human rights in North Korea 2010", Korea Institute for National Unification, 2010, p. 463.

⁵³ 韓國年鑑 cited in 조성훈 및 김미영 [Cho Söng-hun and Kim Mi-yöng], "6·25전쟁 납북자 대상자별 실태 파악 및 명예회복 방안 연구 [Research into understanding compensation, discrimination, and the restoration of the honour of those kidnapped to the North during the Korean War]", 한국전쟁납북사건자료원 [Korean War Abductees Research Institute], October 2009, p. 4.

⁵⁴ "White Paper on Human Rights", op. cit., pp. 460-462.

eral other foreign nationals are suspected of being kidnapped or held against their will in the DPRK.⁵⁵

The most notable abduction probably was the 1978 kidnapping of South Korean movie producer Shin Sang-ok and his actress wife, Ch'oi Ūn-hŭi, in Hong Kong. The couple had recently divorced, and Ch'oi was lured to Hong Kong first before Shin followed to look for her. They were taken to North Korea under orders from Kim Jong-il in a bizarre plan to improve the North Korean film industry and produce propaganda movies. After producing films for the North and finally gaining Kim's trust, they were permitted to travel to Vienna in 1986, where they escaped from their minders and asked for asylum in the U.S.⁵⁶

During the Cold War, the few defectors who made it to the other side were mostly air force pilots, soldiers stationed near the DMZ or high-level officials who could travel internationally and flee while abroad. Some defectors were prized for their high propaganda and intelligence values. In the case of South Korean defectors, the most notable case probably is the defection of former Foreign Minister Ch'oi Dŏk-sin (1961-1963) in 1986.⁵⁷ Some South Korean scientists have defected and subsequently worked in the North's nuclear program, including Yi Sŭng-gi, who was in charge of this program in the early years.⁵⁸ Yi defected during the early part of the Korean War. He had become disgruntled after an incident with ROK President Rhee during a visit to Seoul National University in February 1950.⁵⁹ South Korean defectors also have participated in radio broadcasts to the South and cooperated with North Korean authorities to collect information about the South and in other intelligence activities.⁶⁰

North Korean defections after the Korean War were infrequent, and the defectors were rewarded generously for bringing aircraft, weapon systems and valuable intelligence. Settlement packages included cash, a new home, a new job and even a new spouse. The first pilot to fly south was Yi Gŏn-sun in April 1950, but the event gained little attention because it was before the Korean War, and he flew a Soviet-made World War II vintage Il-10.⁶¹ In late 1952, the U.S. implemented "Operation Moolah" to entice an enemy pilot to defect with a MiG fighter jet. On 21 September 1953, less than two months after the armistice was signed, Lt. No Kŭm-sŏk flew his MiG-15 to Seoul and was awarded \$100,000.⁶² However, benefits have been reduced significantly since the end of the Cold War.

Some defectors have come to the ROK with valuable intelligence. For example, in September 1974, Kim Bu-sŏng, a special agent for the Korean Workers Party Liaison Department, defected and revealed North Korea's tunnelling activities under the DMZ.⁶³ In May 1983, Korean People's Army Captain Shin Chung-ch'ŏl defected and provided information that led to the discovery of the North's fourth infiltration tunnel in March 1990.⁶⁴ Prominent defections continued during the 1990s,⁶⁵ including a KPA guard at

⁵⁵ Yoshi Yamamoto, "Taken! North Korea's criminal abduction of citizens of other countries", The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2011.

⁵⁶ Mike Thomson, "Kidnapped by North Korea", BBC News, 5 March 2003; "Shin Sang-Ok: Shin Sang-Ok, film director and abductee, died on April 11th, aged 79", *The Economist*, 27 April 2006.

⁵⁷ 고제규 [Ko Je-gyu], "월북한 최덕신의 '이념 곡예' 40년 공개 [South Korean defector Ch'oi Dŏk-sin's 'ideological stunts' over 40 years released to public]", *Sisa Journal*, no. 566, 31 August 2000.

⁵⁸ 김정섭 [Kim Chŏng-sŏp], "北核두뇌 상당수가 남한출신 [Considerable number of the brains behind the North's nukes came from South Korea]", *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 4 April 2003.

⁵⁹ 안중주 [An Jong-ju], "비날론발명 북 화학자 리승기 박사 별세 [North Korean chemist Ri Sŭng-gi known for vinalon dies]", *The Hankyoreh*, 10 February 1996.

⁶⁰ 황일도 [Hwang Il-do], "북한 통일전선부 출신 탈북자가 증언한 '대남공작부서의 모든 것' [Testimony of defector from North Korea's Unification Front Line Department 'everything in the South Operations Department']", *Shindonga*, no. 574, 1 July 2007, pp. 264-275.

⁶¹ 남찬순 [Nam Ch'an-sun], "[횡설수설] 노금석씨 [[Random talk] Mr. No Kŭm-sŏk]", *The Donga Ilbo*, 5 December 2000.

⁶² No had not heard of the reward money prior to defecting. Robert F. Dorr, "Intel gained from pilot's gift", *The Air Force Times*, 23 April 2001.

⁶³ Four infiltration tunnels have been discovered (in November 1974, March 1975, October 1978, and March 1990), but some believe there could be as many as twenty. Kim Il-sung issued a directive to build the tunnels on 25 September 1971. 발견에 주요역할 귀순 김부성씨(인터뷰) [Defector Kim Bo-sŏng's important role in the discovery (interview)], *The Kukmin Ilbo*, 5 March 1990; 김원홍 [Kim Wŏn-hong], "북한 기습남침 저의 다시 입증/제4땅굴발견 계기로본 속전속결 전략 [My testimony about North Korea's surprise southern invasion substantiated again/discovery of tunnel number 4 is a chance to see the blitzkrieg strategy]", *The Seoul Shinmun*, 4 March 1990.

⁶⁴ 윤승용 [Yun Sŭng-yong], "암벽 뚫자 역풍속 실체 드러내/땅굴 탐색현장 [displayed in the wind after drilling through a rock wall/on the scene in the tunnel search]", *The Hankook Ilbo*, 4 March 1990.

⁶⁵ These included Ko Yŏng-hwan (diplomat, May 1991), Kang Myŏng-do (nephew of former DPRK Prime Minister Kang Sŏng-san, July 1994), Cho Myŏng-ch'ŏl (Kim Il Sung University professor, July 1994), Ch'oi Ju-hwal (KPA senior colonel, October 1995), Hyŏn Sŏng-il and Ch'oi Su-bong (diplomat and wife, January 1996), Ri Ch'ŏl-su (MiG-19 pilot, flew aircraft to South, May 1996), Hwang Jang-hyŏp (KWP secretary, April 1997), and Kim Dong-su (diplomat, February 1998). "80년대 이후 주요 탈북자 입국 일지 [Dates when principal North Korean defectors entered the South]", *The Chosun Ilbo*, 19 August 2002.

the Joint Security Area (JSA) at Panmunjŏm in February 1998.⁶⁶

B. CHANGING GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES

During the Cold War, both the ROK and DPRK governments used defectors to the full extent of their propaganda value. In recent years, the number of South Korean defectors going to the North has dropped to a very small number. The DPRK system does not lure South Koreans, and Pyongyang has tightened security around those who might contemplate fleeing to the South.⁶⁷ The consequences for family members and close associates of North Korean defectors are severe, which is a sombre deterrent for any potential defectors who would leave behind family. However, the famine of the mid-1990s began to push destitute North Koreans across the Chinese border in search of food and resources.

The famine resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths and a deterioration of social control in the DPRK.⁶⁸ The decline of state and party capacity to govern was a primary reason Kim Jong-il turned to “military-first” politics [先軍政治] in the late 1990s.⁶⁹ “Military first” coincided with ROK President Kim Dae-jung’s “sunshine policy” of seeking reconciliation between the two Koreas. While Kim Dae-jung is recognised as a long-time human rights activist, he was willing to remain silent on human rights issues in North Korea because it might have undermined his goal of encouraging North Korea to open and reform.

When President Roh Moo-hyun pledged to build upon Kim’s “sunshine policy” after taking office in February 2003, the number of North Korean defectors in the South was on the rise. Many of these defectors have become the most vocal critics of the DPRK government and the Kim Il-sung family. The Roh government took a neutral public

stance regarding North Korean human rights issues, and it consistently tried to silence or reduce the influence of defectors who were critical of Pyongyang. Essentially, the government tried to conceal the defector issue.⁷⁰ This policy position is ironic given No’s background as a human rights lawyer, but the government considered it a short-term tactical move within the context of a long-term strategy of “peace and prosperity” for the Korean peninsula.

Since the election of President Lee Myung-bak in December 2007, the policies of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun have been rolled back considerably. Unconditional delivery of rice and fertiliser to the North ended after Lee was inaugurated in February 2008. Initially, the Lee administration insisted that the DPRK government must ask for aid before it would be considered. Subsequently, inter-Korean relations steadily deteriorated, particularly after a South Korean tourist was shot and killed at the Kŭmgang Mountain resort in the North in July 2008.⁷¹ After the sinking of the ROK’s *Ch’ŏnan* and the artillery attack against Yŏngp’yŏng Island in 2010, relations sunk to their lowest level in decades.⁷²

The Lee government also reversed the policy of taking a neutral stance on DPRK human rights and trying to squelch North Korean defectors in the South. The Roh government either abstained or was absent when the UN Human Rights Council voted on resolutions condemning North Korean human rights, except for 2006 after the North’s first nuclear test.⁷³ However, since 2008 the South has cooperated with the European Union (EU), Japan and the U.S. to propose and vote for draft resolutions on DPRK human rights.

South Korea’s Grand National Party (GNP) introduced a North Korean human rights bill in the National Assembly for the first time in 2005, but it failed to pass.⁷⁴ Another

⁶⁶ 주병철 [Chu Byŏng-ch’ŏl], “북 장교 판문점 통해 첫 귀순/변용관 상위 [First officer from the North to defect through Panmunjŏm/captain Pyŏn Yong-gwan]”, *The Seoul Shinmun*, 4 February 1998.

⁶⁷ “Trafficking in persons report 2011”, U.S. Department of State, June 2011, p. 216.

⁶⁸ DPRK officials stated in 1999 and 2001 that the famine caused 220,000 deaths between 1995 and 1998. Other estimates run as high as 3.5 million. However, the likely number of “excess deaths” due to the famine is probably somewhere between 600,000 and 1 million. See Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Famine in North Korea: markets, aid and reform* (New York, 2007), pp. 73-76.

⁶⁹ Kim Jong-il has relied more on the military rather than the party to govern, in contrast to his father. For a brief description of “military first” see Byung Chol Koh, “‘Military-First Politics’ and Building a ‘Powerful and Prosperous Nation’ in North Korea”, Policy Forum Online, PFO 05-32A, Nautilus Institute, 14 April 2005.

⁷⁰ Crisis Group interview, Joanna Hosaniak, head of International Campaign & Cooperation, Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, Seoul, 20 April 2011.

⁷¹ Jonathan Watts, “South Korean tourist shot dead in North Korea”, *The Guardian*, 11 July 2008.

⁷² Crisis Group Report, *North Korea: The Risks of War in the Yellow Sea*, op. cit; Crisis Group Asia Report N°200, *China and Inter-Korean Clashes in the Yellow Sea*, 27 January 2011.

⁷³ Jung Sung-ki, “Seoul urges Pyongyang to address human rights”, *The Korea Times*, 3 April 2008; Claire Truscott and agencies, “South Korea to condemn North on human rights”, *The Guardian*, 26 March 2008.

⁷⁴ 대한변호사협회 및 북한인권시민연합 [Korean Bar Association and the Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights], “북한인권의 현황과 국제캠페인 전략 [North Korean human rights conditions and a strategy for an international campaign]”, joint academic conference proceedings, 26 November 2010, p. 135.

bill also failed to pass the National Assembly in April 2011.⁷⁵ However, the U.S. and Japan passed North Korean human rights legislation in 2004 and in 2006 respectively. Amnesty International recently criticised South Korea's passive response to human rights in the North and abuses under its National Security Law.⁷⁶

As the numbers of defectors has increased, more and more South Koreans (including defectors) are taking collective action to voice their opposition to the DPRK government. Many defectors have become active in the media by publishing internet newspapers and broadcasts. The most prominent defector journalist is Kang Ch'ol-hwan, who writes for the conservative *Chosun Ilbo*, one of the most popular dailies.⁷⁷ Other defectors are active in new media and NGOs, but they serve a very narrow audience; the average South Korean is indifferent at best to defector issues. Moreover, many question the credibility of their reporting and the value of the NGO activities.

C. A CHANGING NATION

Racial purity traditionally has been viewed as virtuous and desirable in Korea. Until 2006, biracial South Koreans were not permitted to serve in the military even though they were Korean citizens, and there is mandatory conscription for all men. No biracial Koreans hold public office or positions in government bureaucracies; they have been shunned, and many have been pushed to the entertainment industry, where they are featured as "oddities". Biracial children are teased and bullied, resulting in high drop-out rates and high unemployment. There are also numerous reports of foreign wives being abused and even murdered.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Political parties and South Korean media did not pay much attention to the bill because of by-elections held on 27 April 2011. 조종익 [Cho Jong-ik], "與野, 북한인권법 4월 처리 요구 끝내 묵살 [Ruling and opposition parties ignore demands to pass North Korean human rights bill in April]", *The Daily NK*, 29 April 2011.

⁷⁶ Amnesty International also asserted that the National Human Rights Commission of Korea has been losing its independence and authority under its present leadership after failing to speak out or act on some significant human rights issues. "Amnesty International Report 2011: The State of the World's Human Rights".

⁷⁷ Kang spent ten years in a labour camp before defecting and with Pierre Rigoulot published an account of his experience in *The Aquariums of Pyongyang* (New York, 2001).

⁷⁸ Park Si-soo, "Vietnamese mother denied custody of biological children", *The Korea Times*, 16 February 2009; "Mail-order bride's murder is a symptom of a larger problem", *The Chosun Ilbo*, 16 July 2010; Kwon Mee-yoo, "Another tragic death of immigrant wife; Mongolian woman killed by friend's husband", *The Korea Times*, 16 September 2010; Cathy Rose A. Garcia, "Filipina commits suicide after enduring marital abuse", *The Korea Times*, 20 January 2011; Kim Hee-jin, "Outsiders dial for 'help'; Centre advises foreign women dealing with crisis",

The topic of multi-ethnicity or biracial citizens was mostly taboo until the U.S. football player Hines Ward won a Super Bowl championship with the Pittsburgh Steelers and visited Korea in 2006.⁷⁹

In North Korea, racial purity is deeply ingrained in the national consciousness and identity. Pregnant defectors repatriated from China reportedly are forced to undergo abortions, and their babies are subject to infanticide if born in detention.⁸⁰ The author Brian Myers argues that North Korean ideology is based on a racist world view. According to Myers, North Koreans are indoctrinated to believe they are racially pure and must be protected by the Great Leader from an impure and hostile world.⁸¹ As Marxism has lost its appeal, DPRK propaganda has come to rely more on "racial purity" to differentiate the North from the globalised South.

Non-Koreans are still a rarity in South Korea. As of May 2011, there were 969,507 registered foreigners in the country, making up around 2 per cent of the population.⁸² By

The Korea JoongAng Daily, 7 February 2011; Kim Tae-jong, "Husband arrested for murdering Cambodian wife", *The Korea Times*, 23 March 2011; Kim Tae-jong, "Migrant wives remain defenseless; More shelters needed to provide protection", *The Korea Times*, 24 March 2011.

⁷⁹ Ward is half Korean and half black and was raised by his Korean mother. His visit brought wide-spread media attention along with an awkward visit to the presidential Blue House. Kim Soe-jung, "Hines mania' leaves bitter taste in mouths of biracial Koreans", *The Korea JoongAng Daily*, 17 February 2006; Paul Wiseman, "Ward spins biracial roots into blessing", *USA Today*, 10 April 2006.

⁸⁰ "White paper on human rights", op. cit., p. 123; David Hawk, "The hidden gulag: exposing North Korea's prison camps", U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2003.

⁸¹ Brian Myers, *The cleanest race: how North Koreans see themselves and why it matters* (Hoboken, 2010).

⁸² "출입국·외국인정책 통계월보 [Immigration and foreigner policy statistics monthly]", justice ministry, Korea Immigration Service, 2011년 5월호 [June 2011], p. 8, www.immigration.go.kr. Most new arrivals are migrant workers and foreign-born wives, mostly from China and Vietnam. For more information on international marriages in the ROK, see "국인의 국적 및성별 국제이동 [International Migration of Foreigners by Nationality and Sex]", Statistics Korea, <http://kostat.go.kr>; Norimitsu Onishi and Su-Hyun Lee, "Betrothed at first sight: A Korean-Vietnamese courtship", *The New York Times*, 22 February 2007. Although it is difficult to compare across countries because of different statistical methodologies, in terms of "foreign born as a percentage of the population" South Korea ranks second lowest to Mexico. Comparable figures are 5.3 per cent for Spain, 6.3 per cent for Portugal, 8.3 per cent for the UK, 12.3 per cent for the U.S., 19.3 per cent for Canada, 23 per cent for Australia, and 32.6 per cent for Luxembourg. "Trends in international migration part II: counting immigrants and expatriates

2050, this figure is expected to increase to 4.09 million (about 9.8 per cent).⁸³ The number of undocumented foreign workers was about 13,000 at the end of 2010, but it is expected to rise to about 27,000 by the end of 2012.⁸⁴ In May 2011, there were 168,450 foreigners in the ROK illegally.⁸⁵

South Korea exported labour, primarily for construction in the Middle East, from the 1960s to the late 1980s, but since the 1990s it has imported migrant workers, mostly for manual or unskilled labour positions that are undesirable to many Koreans. In 1994, the government introduced an “industrial trainee program” that in reality was a mechanism for importing short-term unskilled workers, who were paid below the minimum wage. The program was changed to an “employment permit system” in 2004 whereby migrant workers could stay for three years with an option to extend for another three years, but many workers begin to establish roots and have incentives to stay.⁸⁶ As the South Korean population ages, the influx of foreign workers is expected to increase.⁸⁷

Discrimination against outsiders, including ethnic Korean-Chinese, is common, and media warn Koreans about foreign criminal activities.⁸⁸ Media are quick to report crimes or other unsociable activities by Koreans from China but tend to ignore the discrimination they face.⁸⁹ Korean cyberspace is full of bigotry, which has led the National Human Rights Commission to ask the Korea Internet Self-

governance Organisation to block racist expressions.⁹⁰ Such an environment will have serious consequences for South Korea’s increasing number of ethnically mixed children, who numbered 44,258 in 2007 and 58,007 in 2008.⁹¹

in OECD countries: a new perspective”, organisation for economic cooperation and development (OECD), 2005.

⁸³ “S Korean foreign population to quadruple”, United Press International, 3 September 2009.

⁸⁴ Park Si-soo, “Undocumented foreign workers expected to surge”, *The Korea Times*, 17 May 2011.

⁸⁵ “출입국·외국인정책 통계월보 [Immigration and foreigner policy statistics monthly]”, op. cit. The government periodically offers amnesties for these illegal foreigners to depart the country without penalty. The discrepancy in the numbers appears to result in a larger number of people who stay beyond their visa period and are categorised as “residing in Korea” although they do not appear in labour statistics. Kim Eun-jung, “Illegal immigrants given until Aug. 31 to leave S Korea”, *Yonhap News*, 3 May 2010.

⁸⁶ Stephen Castles, “Will labour migration lead to a multicultural society in Korea?”, conference paper, Global Human Resources Forum 2007, Seoul, 23-25 October 2007.

⁸⁷ Andrew Eungi Kim, “Global migration and South Korea: foreign workers, foreign brides and the making of a multicultural society”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1 (January 2009), pp. 70-92.

⁸⁸ Oh Tae-jin, “Korea must beware of growing crime by foreigners”, *The Chosun Ilbo*, 19 May 2011.

⁸⁹ “(News Focus) Ethnic Koreans from China grow resentful over discrimination in homeland”, *Yonhap News*, 22 March 2011.

⁹⁰ Song Sang-ho, “Cyberspace tainted with racist postings”, *The Korea Herald*, 9 May 2011.

⁹¹ “국제결혼가정 자녀(계) [children in international marriage households (total)]”, Statistics Korea, <http://kostat.go.kr>.

IV. THE PROBLEMS DEFECTORS FACE

North Korean defectors are sicker and poorer than their Southern brethren, with significantly worse histories of nutrition and medical care. They have distinctive accents, use different words and have little experience in the daily demands of life in a developed and open society. In the North, their education, employment, marriage, diet, and leisure were determined by the government, which assigned them to a class of people based on family history and political reliability. In the South, the array of choices presents them with endless difficult decisions that can be overwhelming.

On top of these differences, many have faced arduous journeys through China or other third countries to get to the South.⁹² They often have suffered abuse, human trafficking, sexual assault, near-starvation and forced labour on their way.⁹³ They all live with the possibility that not only will they never see their families again but that their relatives may have been punished, even executed, as a result of their defections. Nevertheless, most South Koreans seem ignorant of their plight. Since only about 20,000 North Korean defectors are in the South, the number is still too small to make a significant impact on society.⁹⁴

A. HEALTH

1. Mental health

Defectors often face serious mental health problems, which in turn make employment and integration that much more difficult. The extent of the problem is unclear, but a number of studies suggest high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. One study found that nearly 30 per cent of defectors have PTSD.⁹⁵ Another study showed that at least half of those tested show signs of PTSD and that this was the most important factor limiting adjustment to their new lives, followed by economic status

and job status.⁹⁶ Shortages of food and water, along with illnesses and no access to medical care, have been cited as key forms of trauma.⁹⁷ Asked of their fears during their journey to the South, more than 80 per cent said they had feared for their lives while in hiding.⁹⁸ Almost all defectors have suffered some form of trauma before entering South Korea, with the most commonly cited being “witnessing public executions” and “hearing of the death of family members from starvation”. Refugee and defector surveys also reveal multiple sources of trauma and anxiety.⁹⁹

These problems are exacerbated because many defectors do not know how to get treatment even when it is available, while many others are reluctant because they lack awareness or underestimate the seriousness of their conditions. Culturally, Koreans tend to suppress and tolerate mental health problems rather than get treatment, which has resulted in insufficient facilities and systems for identifying and treating disorders.¹⁰⁰ Despite South Korea’s high suicide rate, mental health screening is quite rare in the ROK, although there are no statistics on it. Only 11.4 per cent of those with mental health problems had psychological consultation with doctors or counsellors in 2006 compared to 27.8 per cent in the U.S. during 2001-2003. Between 2006 and 2010, the number of South Koreans treated for depression increased 17.3 per cent from about 440,000 to about 517,000, and those treated for bipolar disorder increased 29 per cent from 42,530 to 54,792.¹⁰¹ However, these figures only reflect the number of people treated over the period, not the number suffering from these problems.

⁹² Crisis Group Report, *Perilous Journeys*, op. cit.

⁹³ Sung Ho Ko, Kiseon Chung, and Yoo-seok Oh, “North Korean defectors: their life and well-being after defection”, *Asian Perspective*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2004, pp. 65-99.

⁹⁴ “Homecoming Kinsmen or Indigenous Foreigners? The case of North Korean re-settlers in South Korea”, Citizens’ Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, NKHR Briefing Report no.5, February 2011, p. 11.

⁹⁵ Jeon Woo-taek, Hong Chang-hyung, Lee Chang-ho, Kim Dong-kee, Han Moo-young, Min Sung-kil, “Correlation between traumatic events and post-traumatic stress disorder among North Korean defectors in South Korea”, *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, vol. 18, no. 2 (April 2005), pp. 147-154. This study was funded by the MOU.

⁹⁶ Chung Soon-dool and Seo-Ju-yun, “A study on post traumatic stress disorder among North Korean defectors and their social adjustment in South Korea”, *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, vol. 12, no. 4 (2007), pp. 365-382.

⁹⁷ Y. Lee, M.K. Lee, K.H. Chun, Y.K. Lee, S.J. Yoon. “Trauma experience of North Korean refugees in China”, *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, no. 20 (2001), pp. 225-229.

⁹⁸ “Correlation between traumatic events and post-traumatic stress disorder,” op. cit.

⁹⁹ Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, “Witness to transformation: refugee insights into North Korea”, Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2011, pp. 35-42.

¹⁰⁰ 유성경 [Yu Söng-gyöng], “우울의 표현 및 상담에 대한 태도에 관한 문화간 비교연구: 한국 대학생과 미국 대학생간의 비교 [Comparative cultural research expressions of depression and attitudes in counselling: a comparison of South Korean and American college students]”, *청소년상담연구* [The Korea Journal of Youth Counselling], no. 6, 1998, p. 95, 99, <http://lib.kyci.or.kr/pdf/1998-53-04.pdf>; 오강섭 [O Kang-söp], “자살 예방 자원 및 서비스 실태 조사 [A survey of support for suicide prevention and the status of services]”, 한국자살예방협회 [Korea Suicide Prevention Association], February 2009, p. 136.

¹⁰¹ “More Koreans seek treatment for depression, bipolar disorder”, *The Chosun Ilbo*, 3 June 2011.

Suicide is the fourth highest cause of death in the ROK, and it has become a serious social problem. While the suicide rate is decreasing in most Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, the rate in South Korea has been rising rapidly. From 1990 to 2006, the average suicide rate of OECD countries decreased by 20.4 per cent; however, the rate increased by 172.2 per cent in the ROK. In 2009, the ROK suicide rate was the highest among OECD countries, 28.4 per 100,000 people. This is much higher than second-ranked Hungary (19.6) and third-ranked Japan (19.40). In 2009, suicides accounted for 15,413 of the country's 246,942 total deaths (6.2 per cent).¹⁰² Former President Roh Moo-hyun committed suicide by jumping off a cliff in May 2009.¹⁰³ South Korea's top universities have also been shaken by suicides.¹⁰⁴

While the ROK's mental health infrastructure has much room for improvement, the country's total health care expenditures amounted to 6.5 per cent of GDP in 2008, the third lowest share among OECD countries. The number of doctors per 1,000 persons was 1.9 in 2008, the second lowest among OECD countries, and the number of nurses also remains far below the number in most OECD countries.

As defectors arrive in a land with inadequate mental health care facilities, those who come alone seem to suffer the worst problems. Families that escape the North together fare better in the long-run, but they are not immune to serious mental health issues. Heads of families are often overwhelmed when facing the economic pressures of providing childcare, children's education and the healthcare of elderly parents.¹⁰⁵ According to Yun Yō-sang, president of the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, many defectors encounter difficulties in the South because of an inferiority complex as they struggle to assimilate. Many of them feel marginalised, discriminated against,

excluded and victimised by a systemic bias.¹⁰⁶ South Korean society tends to be clannish, which makes North Korean defectors feel like strangers in their own country.

Many defectors report considerable loneliness in South Korea, compounded by intense guilt over leaving relatives behind. According to Pak Chōn-ran [Park Jeon-ran], a specialist on defectors at Seoul National University's Institute for Unification Studies, "the health status of defectors who left their families in the North is five times worse than that of defectors who escaped North Korea with relatives or friends".¹⁰⁷ She also found in a study that 20 per cent of ailments afflicting defectors were psychosomatic. The medical staff at a government reintegration centre reported that about 70 per cent of their patients exhibited symptoms of depression or other stress-related disorders.¹⁰⁸

Mental health problems persist for some time after resettlement. Studies in other countries suggest that refugees who have experienced particularly harsh regimes, such as that of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, suffer from PTSD for several years after reaching their host country.¹⁰⁹ The director of a social welfare organisation in Seoul observed that defectors usually experience depression for two to three years upon arriving in the South, because they feel helpless and unable to improve their lives.¹¹⁰ According to a survey conducted in 2001 and followed up three years later, men were more vulnerable to depression than women. This may be explained by a marked decline in social status among men, who often find it more difficult than women to obtain work in the South.¹¹¹

2. Physical health

North Korea has faced a public health crisis since the mid-1990s. There has been a complete degradation of hospital and other medical services, as well as an enduring problem of malnutrition. The diet has been so poor that many consume about 40 per cent of their food in the form of in-

¹⁰² "시군구/사망원인(50항목)/성/ 사망자수, 사망률, 연령표준화 사망률 [city county district/causes of death (50 categories)/number of deaths, death rate, average death rate for age]", Statistics Korea, KOSIS <http://kostat.go.kr>.

¹⁰³ "S Korea stunned by Roh's suicide", BBC News, 25 May 2009. Suicide has become a widespread phenomenon among South Korean celebrities. Since 2005, seven popular celebrities have killed themselves. Some suicides are marked by a copycat effect. 최민재 [Ch'oi Min-jae], "연예인 자살 보도로 돌아본 자살사망보도의 문제와 대안 [Problems and countermeasures regarding reports of people committing suicide after reflecting on reports of entertainer suicides]", *연륜중재* [Ŏllonjungjae], winter 2008, p. 91.

¹⁰⁴ Mark McDonald, "Elite South Korean University rattled by suicides", *The New York Times*, 22 May 2011.

¹⁰⁵ 한인영 [han In-yōng], "북한이탈주민의 우울 성향에 관한 연구 [Depressive Traits of North Korean Defectors]", *Mental Health & Social Work*, vol.11 (June 2001), pp. 78-94.

¹⁰⁶ Crisis Group interview, Yun Yō-sang, president of the Database Centre for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), Seoul, 14 April 2011.

¹⁰⁷ "In mind, body, North Koreans still suffer after they defect", Radio Free Asia, 9 May 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ E.B. Carlson and R. Rosser-Hogan, "Mental health status of Cambodian refugees: ten years after leaving their homes", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, no. 63 (1993), pp. 223-231.

¹¹⁰ Crisis Group interview, Kim Sun-hwa, director, North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Center, Nowōn-gu Gollūng General Social Welfare Organisation, Seoul, 16 March 2007.

¹¹¹ 조영아, 전우택, 유시은, 엄잔섭 [Cho Yōng-a, et al.], "우울 예측 요인 [The major causes in estimating depression]", chapter 24 in 정병호, 전우택, 정진경 [Chōng Byōng-ho, ChōnU-t'aek, and Chōng Jin-kyōng, eds.], *웰컴투 코리아* [Welcome to Korea] (Seoul, 2006), pp. 516-532.

digestible filler from fibrous plant matter and husks.¹¹² Chronic digestive problems are common due to damage from irregular wild foods eaten during times of severe shortages.¹¹³ Years of poor nutrition and inadequate or non-existent health care have compromised immune systems, which make defectors susceptible to disease, and many poor North Koreans and defectors are infected with parasites.¹¹⁴ Defectors mostly arrive in the South in poor health and require medical treatment.

In 2007, researchers from Seoul National University disclosed that in interviews conducted with over 200 defectors, 80 per cent indicated they had contracted at least one ailment since arriving in the South. In April of the same year, the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs released a study on the health of 6,500 defectors who had arrived in the South between 2000 and 2005. Some 1.8 per cent were infected with syphilis in 2004 and 2.1 per cent in 2005.¹¹⁵ About 20 per cent of 700 women aged twenty to 49 suffered from some type of gynaecological disorder.¹¹⁶

The Korea Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) reports that the average height and weight of defectors is much lower than their South Korean counterparts. The average North Korean male defector is 164.4cm tall and weighs 60.2kg, compared to the average South Korean man, who stands 171.4cm tall and weighs 72kg. The figures for North Korean female defectors and South Korean women are: 154.2cm and 158.4cm; 52.8kg and 57.1kg. The average teenage male defector's height is 155.7cm, 13.5cm less than the average South Korean counterpart; the average weight is 47.3kg, 13.5kg less than that of the South Korean. The average heights and weights for

teenage female defectors and South Korean teenage females are: 151.1cm and 159.4cm; 46.9kg and 52.3kg.¹¹⁷

In a recent study that included 109 defectors, with questionnaires and eleven in-depth interviews, the Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights found the subjects to have recurring or chronic health problems. Of those surveyed, 38 visited hospitals or medical clinics ten times or more the previous year, and 30 were hospitalised for at least two days. Twenty-four respondents reported taking medical leave and about one third divulged they "suffered from depression, nightmares, recurring headaches, anger or problems of trust toward people".¹¹⁸ While most defectors must be strong to survive the extraordinary hardships in the North and the perilous journey to the South, many must deal with long-term or chronic health issues. For elderly defectors who reach the South, health care is the most urgent problem.¹¹⁹

Young children suffer the long-term consequences of early childhood malnutrition. Poor nutrition leads to increased childhood mortality, stunting (low height for age), wasting (low weight for height), and cognitive development problems. Childhood malnutrition and related health problems have a significant impact on an individual's prospects for education, employment, and life-time income. Studies have shown that early intervention is critical to avert these long-term issues.¹²⁰

To deal with medical issues when defectors arrive in the South, the Hanawŏn resettlement centre, the government training facility that hosts defectors for three months prior to their release into South Korean society, operates a clinic.¹²¹ In addition, the government provides health care assistance and subsidies to cover treatment at local hospi-

¹¹²"The Crumbling state of health care in North Korea", Amnesty International, 2010; John Owen-Davies "North Korea's public health tragedy", *The Lancet*, vol. 357, no. 9256 (24 February 2001), pp. 628-630.

¹¹³"The Crumbling state of health care in North Korea", op. cit.

¹¹⁴The Korea Centre for Disease Control and Prevention found 35.8 percent of adolescent and 24.6 of adult defectors had parasites, up to twelve times the rate of infection among South Koreans. "N Koreans are smaller, weaker than S Koreans", *The Chosun Ilbo*, 17 February 2010.

¹¹⁵The rate of infection in South Korea was 0.2 per cent in 1995 and 2000, rising to 0.7 per cent in 2005. 백진옥 [Paek Chin-ok], 지현중 [Chi Hyŏn-jung], 김태균 [Kim T'ae-gyun], 김현숙 [Kim Hyŏn-suk], 이민길 [Yi Min-gŏl], 최근 일반 건강인에서의 매독 유병률 경향: 서울지역 단일 기관에서의 연구 [Recent trends of syphilis prevalence in normal population in Korea: a single center study in Seoul], *대한피부과학회지* [Korean Dermatological Association Journal], vol. 49, no.2, 2011, pp. 107, 109.

¹¹⁶"In mind, body, North Koreans still suffer after they defect", op. cit.

¹¹⁷The figures are from KCDC annual medical examinations for 8,214 defectors who arrived in the ROK from 2005 to 2008. The data here are for those between the ages of thirteen and eighteen and the average differences between the groups. "N Koreans are smaller, weaker than S Koreans", op. cit.

¹¹⁸"Homecoming kinsmen or indigenous foreigners? The case of North Korean re-settlers in South Korea", Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, February 2011, p. 41.

¹¹⁹Crisis Group interview, Joanna Hosaniak, head of International Campaign & Cooperation, Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, Seoul, 20 April 2011.

¹²⁰Lucia Luzi, "Long-term impact of health and nutrition status on education outcomes for children in rural Tanzania", November 2010, paper for the Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) 25th Anniversary Conference 2011: Economic Development in Africa, Oxford, UK, 20-22 March 2011; "What Can We Learn from Nutritional Impact Evaluations?", The World Bank, 2010.

¹²¹"2010 White Paper on Korean Unification", MOU, January 2011, p. 232. The Hanawŏn centre is discussed at greater length below.

tals.¹²² Health care coverage in the ROK is regulated by The National Health Insurance Act, which was first enacted in 1999 and revised several times, most recently in May 2011.¹²³ Coverage is mandatory for all ROK citizens, who must register for national health insurance through their employers or residences.¹²⁴

Special subsidies and assistance is provided to the disadvantaged through The Medical Care Assistance Act.¹²⁵ Families receive “class I medical assistance” if their income is below the minimum subsistence standard as determined by the health & welfare ministry (see Appendix B, Table Two).¹²⁶ Other legislation has established special classes that receive class I medical assistance, such as victims of natural disasters, patriotic martyrs and their families, adoptees under eighteen, people of national merit and their families, national human cultural treasures and their families and victims of the 18 May 1980 Kwangju democratisation movement and their families.¹²⁷

With the class I medical assistance, the ROK government pays for most categories of medical care.¹²⁸ In 2008, defectors took advantage of class I medical assistance on 301,446 occasions with the government paying ₩9.98 billion (\$10 million) of the total ₩10.2 billion cost.¹²⁹ Since many defectors require continuous medical treatment, they often avoided seeking employment out of fear

they would lose their class I medical assistance. Therefore, from January 2011, defectors receive this benefit for five years after arrival even if they are hired and obtain regular employment health insurance and benefits.¹³⁰ In the event of sudden unification, the provision of similar health care subsidies for all Koreans in the North would have significant budgetary consequences. But either grandfathering or repealing the benefits for former defectors in the South likely would face political obstacles.

B. LIVELIHOODS

1. Unemployment

In North Korea, jobs are allocated on the basis of political reliability, family connections and the needs of the state. Many are purely sinecures; work often involves just turning up. Since North Korea’s economic decline and famine in the 1990s, many citizens turned to the unofficial market to trade and acquire resources to survive. The government has acquiesced at times, and it implemented some economic reform measures in July 2002, but it has since moved to reassert strict control over the economy. In particular, it executed a currency reform the first week of December 2009 that eliminated the savings of small traders who earned a living in the market.¹³¹ While rent-seeking opportunities abound for the authorities, private actors remain mired in a world of uncertainty. This absence of developed and institutionalised markets means that the average North Korean is unable to acquire the skills and knowledge to function and operate in the ROK economy.

Being thrown into South Korea’s dynamic and highly competitive society is one of the greatest challenges for defectors.¹³² In January 2011, only 50 per cent of defectors were employed (10,248 of 20,539), and most of these were in unskilled manual labour jobs (7,901, or 77 per cent of those

¹²² Ibid, p. 243.

¹²³ 국민건강보험법 [The National Health Insurance Act], revised on 19 May 2011, www.law.go.kr.

¹²⁴ Coverage through employers also includes family members for a small fee. Citizens registered through employers must pay a monthly insurance premium based on income and other criteria. Private employers are required to pay 50 per cent of the monthly premium. Citizens registered through their residences must pay a premium based on the member’s income and assets. The coverage requires patients to pay 20 per cent of hospitalisation costs, and 30-60 per cent of outpatient care depending on the type of hospital. Children under six and those over 65 pay reduced fees; those with debilitating diseases such as cancer are only required to pay 5 per cent of the costs for five years. “국민건강보험 [National Health Insurance]”, National Health Insurance Corporation, www.nhic.or.kr.

¹²⁵ This law first went into effect in December 1977 and has been amended several times, most recently in March 2011, with the change taking effect on 1 July. 의료급여법 [Medical Care Assistance Act], www.law.go.kr.

¹²⁶ “수급자 선정기준 [Beneficiary standards]”, health & welfare ministry, www.mw.go.kr.

¹²⁷ “2011년 의료급여사업안내 [2011 information on medical care allowances and treatment]”, health & welfare ministry, January 2011, p. 5.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

¹²⁹ “2008 의료급여통계 [2008 medical care allowance statistics]”, health, welfare and family affairs ministry and the National Health Insurance Corporation, no. 17, June 2009, p. 138.

¹³⁰ Prior to the policy change in January 2011, upon gaining employment defectors were re-classified to receive the same health insurance as other South Koreans, which in effect eliminated the subsidy for essentially free health care when they found jobs. “2011년부터 이렇게 달라집니다 [From 2011 things will change this way]”, ROK government, 2010, p. 318.

¹³¹ Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°101, *North Korea under tightening sanctions*, 15 March 2010; Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, “Economic crime and punishment in North Korea”, EAI Asia Security Initiative Working Paper no. 5, April 2010.

¹³² Crisis Group interviews Yun Yō-sang, president of the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), Seoul, 14 April 2011; North Korean defectors, Seoul, March 2011; Ser Myo-ja, “Cold reception, lack of jobs worry defectors”, *The Korea JoongAng Daily*, 22 January 2007; 이재명 [Yi Jaemyōng], “장벽 넘어 장벽 ‘새터’ 못 찾는 새터민 [A barrier beyond the barrier, new settlers who can’t find their ‘settlement’]”, *The Sisa Journal*, 30 January 2007.

employed). Only 439 defectors (4 per cent) were working in skilled jobs, and 381 were working in administrative positions.¹³³ There has been no real progress over the years. For example, a survey in 2006 showed that 45 per cent of defectors were unemployed, and 30 per cent worked half time. Only 12 per cent were self-employed or worked full-time.¹³⁴ Another survey in 2006 showed that about two thirds described themselves as unemployed.¹³⁵ In the same year, 61.9 per cent of South Koreans aged fifteen or over were “economically active” and 59.7 per cent were employed, so only a small fraction of those seeking jobs were unemployed.¹³⁶

Many defectors become discouraged and simply give up looking for work.¹³⁷ Those who do find work earn on average ₩1.27 million (about \$1,170) per month, which is just above the minimum subsistence level for a family of three.¹³⁸

These levels of unemployment persist despite subsidies for employers who hire defectors; the government provides up to ₩500,000 of monthly salaries for the first year and up to ₩700,000 of monthly salaries for the second year.¹³⁹ The Lee Myung-bak government has tried to ad-

dress the employment problem by making defectors more “employable”. Instead of simply being given a lump sum of cash and released to society, defectors are paid bonuses for earning certificates in vocational programs.

In 2008, the employment and labour ministry spent ₩3.9 billion (about \$3.61 million) on job training for 772 defectors, but only 261 (41.3 per cent) were able to find jobs. In 2009, ₩4.0 billion (about \$3.7 million) was spent to train 881 defectors, but only 237 (36.9 per cent) found employment.¹⁴⁰ Some employers hire the workers with the intention of laying them off and hiring new defectors when the government subsidy expires.¹⁴¹ In 2001, 251 defectors were employed under the wage subsidy program in 226 firms. By 2009, the number increased to 1,489 in 1,151 firms.¹⁴² However, a specialist on this issue told Crisis Group that the companies taking advantage of this wage subsidy program are in declining industries and seeking to reduce their wage costs through the subsidies.¹⁴³

The government has hired very few defectors, and until June 2011, when Cho Myōng-ch’ōl was appointed as director of the Education Centre for Unification, none held a high-level position there or in the military.¹⁴⁴ The competition for government jobs is very intense, and applicants are screened through a rigorous exam process. Without a South Korean education and adequate exam preparation, it is virtually impossible to get hired. However, the public administration and security ministry recently announced a plan to hire administrative assistants beginning 1 February 2011; it is expected to take about 200 defectors in to government jobs,¹⁴⁵ and as of May 2011, 50 had been hired.¹⁴⁶

Despite government initiatives, unemployment remains a problem, and most employed defectors find their jobs through friends, family, neighbours or newspapers adver-

¹³³ “북한이탈주민 입국인원 현황 [Current number of North Korean defectors in South Korea]”, MOU, www.unikorea.go.kr.

¹³⁴ Kim Tae-suk, “Improving Resettlement Conditions for Defectors”, presented at the conference “How to Embrace Living Together” hosted by the Youngdong Forum, Seoul, 13 February 2007.

¹³⁵ Survey of 451 defectors conducted by Seoul National University Professor Park Sang-an between August and September 2006. Park Chung-a, “70% of NK defectors are jobless”, *The Korea Times*, 16 April 2007.

¹³⁶ In April 2011, the figure for South Koreans was 40.7 per cent. “통계청 사회통계국 고용통계과 [Statistics Agency Social Statistics Bureau Employment Statistics Department]”, Statistics Korea, <http://kostat.go.kr>; e- “일반고용동향 [General employment trends]”, 나라지표 [e-National Indexes], www.index.go.kr.

¹³⁷ “70% of NK defectors are jobless”, op. cit.; 이재명 [Yi Jaemyōng], “장벽 넘어 장벽 ‘새터’ 못 찾는 새터민 [A barrier beyond the barrier, new settlers who can’t find their ‘settlement’]”, *The Sisa Journal*, 30 January 2007.

¹³⁸ 백나리 [Paek Na-ri], “<탈북자 2만명 시대>⑤ 통일역군? 이질적 계층? [Era of 20,000 North Korean defectors: unification labourers? Heterogeneous classes?]", *Yonhap News*, 6 October 2010; “수급자 선정기준 [beneficiary index]”, health & welfare ministry, www.mw.go.kr.

¹³⁹ There is a provision to extend the subsidy for a third year if the employee remains with the same employer. “북한이탈주민 취업보호지침(개정안) [employment protection guide for North Korean defectors (amendments)]”, MOU <http://sjobcc.or.kr>; “북한이탈주민 고용지원제도 안내 [Employment subsidy program for NK defectors]”, North Korean Refugee Foundation, <http://sjobcc.or.kr>.

¹⁴⁰ “2010 Employment and Labour White Paper”, Employment and Labour Ministry, July 2010, p. 119.

¹⁴¹ Crisis Group interview, Chōng T’ae-ung, standing consultant, North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity, Seoul, 18 March 2011.

¹⁴² “2010 White Paper on Korean Unification”, op. cit., p. 240.

¹⁴³ Crisis Group interview Kim Yōng-il, executive director, People for Successful Corean Reunification (PSCORE), Seoul, 19 April 2011.

¹⁴⁴ “N Korean defector appointed to key post in the south”, *The Chosun Ilbo*, 8 June 2011.

¹⁴⁵ “북한이탈주민 고용, 정부가 직접 나선다, [Government comes forward directly for employment of North Korean defectors]”, public administration and security ministry, 29 January 2011.

¹⁴⁶ “공직채용된 북한이탈주민과의 화합과 소통의 장 마련 [Communication between the Minister of Public Administration and Security and North Korean defectors working as public servants]”, public administration and security ministry, announcement, 24 May 2011, p. 2.

tisements.¹⁴⁷ Most NGOs working with defectors and resettlement issues agree that employment prospects must improve if defectors are to integrate successfully into society.

2. Cultural barriers

Upon arrival, most defectors feel a sense of relief having escaped from the North, and they are very optimistic about the future.¹⁴⁸ But they tend to underestimate the cultural differences and the type of adjustments they will have to make. What are considered normal and necessary activities in a liberal market-oriented society can be daunting for those from centralised and strictly controlled North Korea. Although they do not miss the oppression in the North, many of the defectors reminisce about the simplicity of a situation in which everything is decided by the government.¹⁴⁹ Adapting to a free and open society is difficult for many.¹⁵⁰

North Koreans are taught that money is “an instrument of slavery” in capitalist society, symbolising selfishness and evil. In a study by Dr Jeon Woo-taek [Chŏn U-t’aek] at Yonsei University Medical School, nearly 80 per cent of the defectors surveyed felt ambivalent towards money.¹⁵¹ One respondent said, “I do not want to be a slave to money. But at the same time, I desperately need money to live in this society. At first, when I received money after I gave my first anti-communism lecture in South Korea, I felt insulted; because in North Korea, a lecture could not be regarded as labour, and I did that from my heart. But if I take money, it looks like I am only speaking for financial gain”.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Crisis Group interview, Joanna Hosaniak, head of International Campaign & Cooperation Team, Citizens’ Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR), Seoul, 20 April 2011; 조정아, 정진경 [Cho Younga and Chung Jeankyung (sic)], “새터민의 취업과 직장생활 갈등에 관한 연구 [A study on conflicts in the workplace of North Korean refugees]”, *Unification Policy Studies*, vol.15, No.2 (2006), p. 32.

¹⁴⁸ Crisis Group interviews, Seoul.

¹⁴⁹ The transition is especially difficult for the elderly. For example, one elderly gentleman told Crisis Group about the anxiety he felt when he had to buy clothing. He appreciated the abundance of consumer goods but lamented how stressful it was to select the appropriate style of many, compare prices and quality, etc. He said it was so much easier just to get issued a shirt and not have to worry about all this. Crisis Group interviews, Seoul.

¹⁵⁰ “Cold reception, lack of jobs worry defectors”, op. cit.

¹⁵¹ Jeon, Woo-taek, “Issues and problems of adaptation of North Korean defectors to South Korean society: an in-depth interview study with 32 defectors”, *Yonsei Medical Journal*, vol. 41, no. 3 (2000).

¹⁵² Ibid.

Productivity in the South is significantly higher than in the North. Defectors have said that if they had worked in the North as hard as South Koreans, they would have been treated as “enthusiastic elements,” not always a good thing as jealousy could lead to problems with co-workers.¹⁵³ When participating in group indoctrination and self-criticism meetings in the North, those who are viewed as too enthusiastic in criticising others face peer retribution.¹⁵⁴ Southerners are seen as individualistic, independent and active, and North Koreans are viewed as passive and dependent.¹⁵⁵ This is often seen as “laziness” or “bad communist habits” by Southern colleagues. On the other hand, defectors often see Southern individualism as selfish and aggressively competitive. Defectors are also hampered by insufficient computer and English skills when seeking employment.

3. Debts and money

Many defectors reach the South with the help of people known as brokers.¹⁵⁶ The journey can cost anywhere from \$2,500 to \$15,000. Many brokers will defer payment until the government in Seoul has paid resettlement money.¹⁵⁷ To prevent a developing business in bringing defectors to the South, in 2005 the government cut the payments from a ₩10 million (about \$9,400) lump sum to ₩6 million (about \$5,600) paid out over several years.¹⁵⁸ This has left many defectors with considerable debts. Some are repeat-

¹⁵³ “새터민의 취업과 직장생활 갈등에 관한 연구 [A study on conflicts in the workplace of North Korean refugees]”, op. cit., pp. 29-52.

¹⁵⁴ North Koreans frequently attend indoctrination meetings where party officials encourage participants to expose faults and report misdeeds of others. However, serious criticism of others is generally avoided unless an individual has committed a severe transgression that would bring collective punishment. The discussions usually turn to mundane topics such as “watching too much television” or “smoking too many cigarettes” and subsequent vows to focus more on upholding the teachings of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. Crisis Group interviews, Seoul.

¹⁵⁵ Crisis Group interview, Yang Yŏng-ch’ang, dean of student affairs, 자유시민대학 [Civic College for Freedom], a Christian NGO for defector re-settlement education, Seoul, 23 March 2007. The college was established in 1999 and offers six-month education programs to help defectors assimilate into South Korean society, www.freecitizen.kr.

¹⁵⁶ Crisis Group Report, *Perilous Journeys*, op. cit.

¹⁵⁷ Crisis Group interview, Chŏng Yu-gŭn, director, North Korean defector resettlement support team, Seoul Yangch’ŏn-gu Red Cross Service Centre, Seoul, 20 March 2007.

¹⁵⁸ This lump sum has been reduced several times. At one point, the amount was ₩36 million [about \$34,000] in addition to the housing subsidy which was ₩528,000 [about \$500] per month, as noted in “Cold reception, lack of jobs worry defectors”, op. cit.

edly visited and threatened by brokers to repay.¹⁵⁹ Debts have forced people to take whatever jobs come along and have led some women into the sex industry.¹⁶⁰ “Some young female defectors work as prostitutes. It is hard for them to resist that sort of easy money when facing such high debts”.¹⁶¹

A journalist who spent time with adolescent defectors found that they either spent money extravagantly or simply misplaced it.¹⁶² In one instance, a boy had lost the equivalent of about \$2,000 in cash. Lacking money management skills, few defectors are able to save.¹⁶³ In addition, they are often the victims of crimes. At least one in five Northerners falls prey to fraud, a rate more than 40 times higher than the national average.¹⁶⁴ In most cases the frauds are carried out by fellow defectors borrowing money and not repaying it, running pyramid schemes or offering to get relatives out of the North but never delivering. These experiences have increased suspicions, as most defectors feel they cannot trust anyone in South Korean society.¹⁶⁵

As the number of defectors has increased, more are sending remittances to their relatives in the North. The DPRK does not have the banking system to accept wire transfers, so defectors rely upon brokers or Chinese traders who act as middlemen to deliver cash. Middlemen usually take 30 per cent, and many defectors confirm the delivery through mobile phone calls.¹⁶⁶ In December 2010, the Database Centre for North Korean Human Rights polled 396 defectors and found that 49.5 per cent said they had sent remittances to their families in the DPRK. The ROK government estimates that defector remittances now amount to

about \$10 million per year. Those who send cash usually send the equivalent of about \$1,000 to \$2,000 annually.¹⁶⁷

Defector remittances have come under government scrutiny in the wake of the attacks against the *Ch'ŏnan* and *Yŏnp'yŏng* Island in 2010. In May 2010, Seoul imposed unilateral sanctions against Pyongyang, and most trade and investment has been suspended. In May 2011, the MOU indicated it has submitted a bill to revise the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Act; if passed, it would require defectors to receive ROK government approval before sending remittances.¹⁶⁸ However, it is unclear whether the government will be able to monitor and block transfers, since the amounts are small and flow through irregular channels.¹⁶⁹ The ministry will review transfers case-by-case and does not intend to block small remittances sent to family members with a humanitarian objective, though some officials and analysts argue all foreign exchange to the DPRK should be blocked. Some defectors have vowed to resist or circumvent any government policy to block their cash transfers.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, the remittances signal South Korean prosperity to citizens in the North, which could be subversive in the long run.¹⁷¹

C. DISCRIMINATION

Defectors are frequently victims of an array of prejudices about Northerners that developed during the decades when both sides demonised each other. Few South Koreans know much about the North; indeed many defectors are shocked how little they even care. South Koreans tend to underestimate or ignore the cultural differences between the two Koreas and assume that any burdens of adjustment and assimilation fall upon defectors. Koreans generally apply different standards for cultural integration; foreigners who speak a few simple words of Korean will be praised repeatedly and told they speak Korean so well, but ethnic Koreans who grew up abroad are harshly ridiculed if they are unable to speak like a native. Neo-Confucianism extols the “doctrine of the mean” and is intolerant of anything but the “right way”. Consequently, this cultural perspec-

¹⁵⁹ “장벽 넘어 장벽 ‘새터’ 못 찾는 새터민 [A barrier beyond the barrier, new settlers who can't find their 'settlement']”, op. cit.

¹⁶⁰ Crisis Group interview, Choi Mi-yeon, North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Centre, Yangcheon-gu Hanbit Social Welfare Organisation, 21 March 2007.

¹⁶¹ Crisis Group interview, Chŏng Yu-gŭn, director, North Korean defector resettlement support team, Seoul Yangch'ŏn-gu Red Cross Service Centre, Seoul, 20 March 2007.

¹⁶² Michael Paterniti, “The flight of the fluttering swallows”, *The New York Times*, 27 April 2003.

¹⁶³ “장벽 넘어 장벽 ‘새터’ 못 찾는 새터민 [A barrier beyond the barrier, new settlers who can't find their 'settlement']”, op. cit.

¹⁶⁴ Kim Rahn, “1 out of 5 North Korean defectors swindled”, *The Korea Times*, 30 January 2007; 장준오, 이정환 [Chang Chuno and Yi Jŏng-hwan], “북한 이탈주민의 범죄피해 실태연구 [A study on the crime victimisation of North Korean defectors]”, *The Korean Institute of Criminology*, December 2006, www.kic.re.kr.

¹⁶⁵ “1 out of 5 North Korean defectors swindled”, op. cit.

¹⁶⁶ Some defectors do not disclose they are in the ROK because they fear it could endanger their relatives, so instead tell them they are working in China. Crisis Group interviews, Seoul.

¹⁶⁷ Song Sang-ho, “Remittance to N.K. helps enlighten about South Korea: defector”, *The Korea Herald*, 13 February 2011.

¹⁶⁸ Kim So-hyun, “Seoul tightens rules on cash flow to North Korea”, *The Korea Herald*, 23 May 2011.

¹⁶⁹ Song Sang-ho, “N Korea defectors slam remittance approval plan”, *The Korea Herald*, 26 May 2011.

¹⁷⁰ Kim Young-jin, “NK defectors vow to fight Seoul's control on remittances”, *The Korea Times*, 29 May 2011.

¹⁷¹ The DPRK authorities have stopped punishing recipients of cash from relatives in the South because there are too many cases now, and it only draws attention to the issue. Furthermore, the cash is a safety valve for the faltering DPRK economy. Crisis Group interview, MOU official, Seoul, 27 May 2011.

tive focuses on differences, which inherently are viewed as “wrong”.

1. Language

Most of the variance in Korean language is due to accents. The language spoken throughout the peninsula is intelligible to other Korean speakers, but with distinct differences in pronunciation and intonation.¹⁷² Native speakers can immediately identify someone who speaks with another regional accent.

As communication between North and South Korea has been minimal in the past 60 years, it is not surprising that the language has diverged. The sentence structures and basic vocabulary have largely remained the same. However, North Korean language policy has been influenced by Kim Il-sung’s *chuch’e* philosophy, which was reflected in two major directives by Kim in January 1964 and May 1966.¹⁷³ These prescriptive language policies aimed to purge foreign words¹⁷⁴ and also prohibited the use of Chinese characters, even though 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the Korean lexicon comes from Chinese characters.¹⁷⁵ After Kim’s 1966 directive, the country began a “campaign for cultural language [文化語運動]” to eliminate Sino-Korean words and foreign words in the standard language.¹⁷⁶ Kim Jong-il also issued a language directive, in 1992, called “*chuch’e* literature theory [主體文學論]”.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² The language spoken on Cheju Island was once so different it could be categorised as a distinct dialect or language. However, with modern communications and standardised education, residents now generally speak the standard South Korean dialect.
¹⁷³ Kim’s directives were entitled “조선어를 발전시키기 위한 몇 가지 문제 [A few matters to develop the Korean language]”, and “조선어의 민족적 특성을 옳게 살려나갈데 대하여 [On correctly preserving the national characteristics of the Korean language]”. See 이기동 [Yi Gi-dong], “국어학: 북한의 언어정책과 연구내용에 대한 고찰 [Korean linguistics: North Korean language policy and an examination of its contents]”, *우리어문연구 [Korean Language and Literature Research]*, vol. 31, 2008.

¹⁷⁴ Although Sino-Korean words were not purged per se, they are only written in Korean script (han’gŭl).

¹⁷⁵ 허철 [Hŏ Ch’ŏl], “국어사전 등재 어휘를 통해 본 어휘 構成 分析과 漢字의 造語 능력 조사 [Analysis of the ratio in modern Korean words and the ability of Chinese character word formation in the Korean Dictionary]”, *東方漢文學會 [Eastern Chinese Text Academic Society]*, 37권, 2008, p. 290.

¹⁷⁶ 최영란 [Ch’oi Yŏng-ran], “문화어학습으로 본 북한의 문법 교육 [North Korean grammar education as seen through studying cultural language]”, *국어교육연구 [Korean Language Education Research]*, vol. 25, 2010, p. 232.

¹⁷⁷ 연규동 [Yŏn Gyu-dong], “북한의 외래어 <조선말대사전> 을 중심으로 [Loanwords in North Korea: a focus on the

The different international orientations and development strategies of the two Koreas have also affected modern language usage. The DPRK economy is autarkic, but the ROK economy is affected by globalisation, including linguistic influences. South Koreans commonly insert English lexicon into colloquial speech even though pure Korean words could be used instead, which is extremely frustrating to North Koreans with very limited exposure to or understanding of English.¹⁷⁸

Several defectors said that language differences are very troubling and that resettlement education at Hanawŏn should dedicate more time to them. They usually say language is as critical when assimilating in the South as other problems, such as cultural differences, personal economic problems and employment prospects.¹⁷⁹ In the ROK, many English words have been adopted for new technologies and products either because they originated abroad or South Koreans have a global market in mind when developing products. However, the North Korean technical and mechanical lexicon has been influenced by Russian, so words for common technologies or machines are either unintelligible or sound extremely odd to the South Korean ear.

Defectors who work in the service industry have more difficulties with language barriers and are often unaware of basic words.¹⁸⁰ New vocabulary can be learned easily but masking an accent is more difficult. Many defectors blame this for making them stand out and blocking employment prospects. One defector said how much easier her life became after she was able to change her accent; South Koreans began to treat her differently.¹⁸¹ However, another defector said he refuses to change his accent and immediately tells South Koreans he is from the North. He said he would rather know whether anyone holds that against him, but he also resents the discrimination he has experienced.¹⁸²

To address the divergences in the language, the two governments agreed in October 2004 to compile a joint dictionary.¹⁸³ The agreement provided for conferences four

[North] Korean Grand Dictionary]”, *언어학 [Linguistics]*, vol. 37, Seoul, 2003, p. 170.

¹⁷⁸ In the South, English words are sometimes used as slang or as an effort to demonstrate one’s English prowess, which is often a symbol of higher education or social status.

¹⁷⁹ Crisis Group interviews, Seoul, March 2011. See also Choe Sang-hun, “Koreas: divided by a common language”, *International Herald Tribune*, 30 August 2006.

¹⁸⁰ Crisis Group interview, Lee, Ch’ŏl-u, director, the North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Centre, Yangch’ŏn-gu Hanbit Social Welfare Organisation, Seoul, 21 March 2007.

¹⁸¹ Crisis Group interview, Seoul, August 2009.

¹⁸² Crisis Group interview, Seoul, January 2010.

¹⁸³ 최재봉, 이재훈 [Ch’oi Jae-bong and Yi Je-hun], “남북 손잡고 6년째 편찬 ‘겨레말큰사전’ 좌초위기 직면 [In the

times a year, and the joint panel aimed to compile a 300,000-word dictionary by 2012 (subsequently revised to 2013).¹⁸⁴ However, the two countries have had to negotiate politically charged words, which they have agreed to omit along with many English words adopted for colloquial use in the South. These restrictions have eliminated many words most needed by defectors in the ROK. The dictionary was 56.7 per cent complete in 2010,¹⁸⁵ but the ROK government suspended funding for the project after the sinking of the *Ch'ŏnan*, so the 2013 target date will almost certainly be missed.¹⁸⁶

2. Visibility and prejudice

Media coverage of defectors often has been negative. For example, an article headlined “More defectors rely on crimes for living” referred to criminal acts by defectors and asserted that “crimes by defectors are also getting more pervasive and grave” but provided no evidence of worsening rates. It also cited experts as saying “North Korean defectors are easily involved in crimes because of their inadequate knowledge of capitalism and insufficient government support”.¹⁸⁷ Another article cited statistics indicating that the crime rate among defectors was twice that of South Koreans.¹⁸⁸ Until 2004, the National Police Agency had a policy of publicising crimes attributed specifically to North Korean defectors, but it has since stopped.¹⁸⁹

Social workers report a widespread perception of defectors as noisy, heavy drinking, and troublesome neighbours.¹⁹⁰

sixth year after the South and North joined hands to compile the “National Grand Dictionary” it faces a crisis of running aground”, *The Hankyoreh*, 4 October 2010; Choi Jae-bong, “Integrated Korean dictionary faces funding crisis”, *The Hankyoreh*, 5 October 2010.

¹⁸⁴ The project was supported by ROK legislation that was passed in April 2007. *겨레말큰사전남북공동편찬사업회법* [Act on the North-South Joint Compilation of the National Grand Dictionary], revised 28 April 2011, www.law.go.kr.

¹⁸⁵ 이성규 [Yi Sŏng-gyu], “남북경색으로 ‘겨레말큰사전’ 사업 차질 [Work on ‘National Grand Dictionary’ setback by North-South blockage]”, *Yonhap News*, 29 May 2011.

¹⁸⁶ “남북 손잡고 6년째 편찬 ‘겨레말큰사전’ 좌초위기 직면 [In the sixth year after the South and North joined hands to compile the “National Grand Dictionary” it faces a crisis of running aground]”, op. cit.; “Integrated Korean dictionary faces funding crisis”, op. cit.

¹⁸⁷ Kim Rahn, “More defectors rely on crimes for living”, *The Korea Times*, 26 March 2006.

¹⁸⁸ *Donga Ilbo*, 4 October 2004 as cited in Andrei Lankov, “Bitter taste of paradise: North Korean refugees in South Korea”, op. cit.; Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland (eds.), “The North Korean refugee crisis”, op. cit.

¹⁸⁹ “Cold reception, lack of jobs worry defectors”, op. cit.

¹⁹⁰ Crisis Group interview, Chŏng Ūn-ju, social worker, Kangsŏ-gu Pangwha 6 General Social Welfare Organisation, Seoul, 13 March 2007.

They are seen as benefiting from generous state subsidies while poorer South Koreans lack the same advantages.¹⁹¹ Although South Koreans acknowledge difficult conditions in the North and feel sympathy, this does not necessarily extend to defectors personally. They are often treated in the same dismissive manner as immigrants and are viewed as inferior and lacking sophistication.¹⁹² One study found that South Koreans commonly see defectors as being ruthless for having left their families behind, as having betrayed people and relying on handouts rather than working for themselves.¹⁹³

It has been easy to identify defectors because of their resident registration number, which appears on ROK citizen identity cards. The second and the third of the last seven digits of the number indicate the place of registration. Up until June 2007, all defectors were registered in Ansŏng City, home to the Hanawŏn resettlement centre, and so share the same two digits, which are known to the public.¹⁹⁴ People with the Ansŏng City code, even those born there, find it difficult to obtain work and are routinely rejected for Chinese visas because the authorities in Beijing are concerned that they may be travelling there to meet family.¹⁹⁵

The number is used in many daily transactions, such as endorsing a check or opening a bank account, making defectors feel vulnerable to prejudice. Several groups, including the Association for North Korean Defectors and the Committee for North Korean Democratisation, pressed the government to issue registration numbers using the location where defectors first live after leaving the resettlement centre to make it impossible for them to be identified in this way.¹⁹⁶ In 2007, the government began issuing num-

¹⁹¹ Crisis Group interview, Park Chŏng-sak, volunteer, Yangch'ŏn-gu Red Cross Service Centre, Seoul, 20 March 2007.

¹⁹² 강주원 [Kang Ju-wŏn], “남한사회의 구별짓기 [The construction of discrimination in South Korean society]”, in *웰컴투 코리아* [Welcome to Korea], op. cit., pp. 84-100.

¹⁹³ Yoon In-jin, “North Korean Diaspora: North Korean defectors abroad and in South Korea”, *Development and Society*, vol. 30, no. 1 (June 2001), Institute for Social Development and Policy Research, Seoul National University, pp. 1-26.

¹⁹⁴ Crisis Group interview, Kim Sŏng-ch'ŏl, chief of Operations Department, Association for North Korean Defectors, Seoul, 11 May 2007.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid; and “취업불이익 등 탈북자 ‘주민번호 피해’ 확산 [Damages to defectors spreading due to the resident registration number]”, *Chosun Ilbo*, 4 April 2007.

¹⁹⁶ The first six digits of a national identification registration number begins with the person's birth year, month and date, followed by a hyphen and a seven digit number. The first digit indicates gender (one for male and two for female), followed by a two-digit number that identifies the location of registration and then four random digits. The identification numbers for those registered in Ansŏng City area are: *****- 125**** for males, and *****- 225**** for females. 정혜원 [Chŏng Hye-

bers based on initial residence after leaving Hanawŏn.¹⁹⁷ The Association for North Korean Defectors has called for new identity card numbers for those already in the South.¹⁹⁸ In 30 January 2009, the Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaped from North Korea was revised, and according to Article 19-3, a defector can apply to change the registration number if it has been issued based on the Hanawŏn resettlement centre.¹⁹⁹

D. WOMEN

Women often suffer from the mental and physical effects of sexual assault and forced prostitution during their journeys to the South. Almost all female defectors (94.1 per cent) transit and stay in a third country before entering the ROK, 90.3 per cent of them in China.²⁰⁰ While in China, many marry Chinese men or ethnic Koreans living there to avoid repatriation to the DPRK. Others are trafficked and forced into marriages through coercion or deception.²⁰¹ According to a survey of 401 female defectors conducted by the Seoul Foundation of Women and Family in October 2009, 59.1 per cent responded that they were unemployed while in a third country before arriving in the ROK.²⁰² In order to survive, many married. In a sample of 177 from the same study, 61.6 per cent did so once, 35.6 per cent twice and 2.8 per cent three times or more.²⁰³ This study also revealed that 41.5 per cent were still with their spouses, but that 24.6 per cent had never married, 15.7 per cent

were widowed, 13.4 per cent divorced and 4.7 per cent separated.²⁰⁴

Although many of the female defectors in China are traded or trafficked in a marriage system, some of them are forced into the sex industry and work in brothels or karaoke bars.²⁰⁵ In China, women are more likely to be trafficked into forced marriages, because the Chinese government enforces anti-prostitution laws relatively strictly, but in South East Asia, women more often end up in the sex industry.²⁰⁶ This experience exposes these women to gynaecological health risks in addition to psychological trauma.²⁰⁷

However, once in the South, many women adapt more easily than male defectors.²⁰⁸ According to a social worker working with women defectors, “female defectors feel the sense of freedom here”.²⁰⁹ Women’s relatively higher social status in South Korea and increased job opportunities often allow them to demand more equality with their husbands. This has also been a source of tension within families, because of changed expectations regarding family roles in the South. Male defectors also have a higher rate of alcohol dependency (55 per cent) than their female counterparts (27 per cent).²¹⁰

Many women who make it to the South have left behind spouses and children in the North or in China, where children who are born there are stateless. Some women sub-

wŏn], “새터민 주민번호, ‘탈북’ 낙인번호? [New settlers’ citizen registration numbers, ‘northern defector’ stigma number?]”, *메디컬투데이* [*Medical Today*], 9 June 2008.

¹⁹⁷ 최재석 [Ch’oi Jae-sŏk], “탈북자 주민번호 피해 없어진다 [The damages from North Korean defector ID numbers is disappearing]”, *Yonhap News*, 21 June 2007.

¹⁹⁸ Crisis Group interview, Kim Sŭng-ch’ŏl, chief of Operations Department, Association for North Korean Defectors, Seoul, 11 May 2007.

¹⁹⁹ Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea, revised on 26 March 2010.

²⁰⁰ 장명선 및 이애란 [Chang Myŏng-sŏn and Yi Ae-ran], “서울시 북한이탈주민여성 실태조사 및 지원정책방안 연구 [A survey of North Korean female defectors in Seoul and research on proposals for support policies]”, 2009-정책개발-028, 서울시 여성가족재단 [Seoul Foundation of Women and Family], December 2009, p. 65.

²⁰¹ Norma Kang Muico, “An absence of choice: the sexual exploitation of North Korean women in China”, *Anti-Slavery International*, London, 2005, www.antislavery.org.

²⁰² The total sample was 426 female defector mothers, but it was not random because the research also addressed issues of child rearing. “서울시 북한이탈주민여성 실태조사 및 지원정책방안 연구 [A survey of North Korean female defectors in Seoul and research on proposals for support policies]”, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁰⁵ “An absence of choice: the sexual exploitation of North Korean women in China”, *op. cit.*

²⁰⁶ 이금순 [Im Kŭm-sun], “북한여성의 이주훈인과 인권문제 [Seminar regarding North Korean defector women]”, *The National Human Rights Commission of Korea*, April 2007, p. 11.

²⁰⁷ As noted above, according to a survey of 700 women between the ages of twenty and 40 at the Hanawŏn resettlement facility, one out of five suffered from gynaecological disorders. “In mind, body, North Koreans still suffer after they defect”, *op. cit.*

²⁰⁸ A survey of 63 defectors conducted in April 2010 found the men to be less satisfied with their lives in the South than the women. 김용태 [Kim Yong-t’ae], 배철호 [Pae Ch’ŏl-ho], “북한이탈주민의 지역사회적응과 생활지원 방안 [A program for North Korean defectors’ regional social adaptation and livelihood support]”, *한국경찰학회보* [*Korean Association of Police Science Review*], vol. 25, 2010, p. 103.

²⁰⁹ Crisis Group interview, Ch’oi Mi-yŏn, social worker, Defector Resettlement Support Centre, Yangch’ŏn-gu Hanbit general social welfare organisation, Seoul, 21 March 2007.

²¹⁰ 김희경 [Kim Hŭi-gyŏng], 신현균 [Shin Hyŏn-gyun], “지역사회 정착 전후 북한이탈주민의 성 및 연령별 심리 증상 [Psychological symptoms of North Korean defectors before and after settlement in South Korean society according to gender and age]”, *한국심리학회지 일반* [*The Korean Journal of Psychology: General*], vol. 29, no.4, 2010, p. 709.

sequently remarry in the South. A social worker told Crisis Group that double marriages and mixed forms of families are emerging problems for women defectors. “I know one defector who has three sons through marriage and cohabitation, all with different surnames living together, one from North Korea, one from China and one in South Korea. Her case is somewhat extreme, but many single female defectors have children with different men”.²¹¹ A newly revised law on the protection of North Korea defectors that came into effect in January 2007 allows defectors to divorce spouses still in North Korea.²¹² In the first such cases, the Seoul Family Court allowed thirteen defectors to divorce in June 2007.²¹³

E. CHILDREN

North Korean children are now physically distinctive from their peers in the South because many are stunted as a result of famine.²¹⁴ These children and teenagers often struggle to develop personal relationships in the ROK. In addition to the general difficulties of adjusting to South Korean society, they often exhibit anxiety caused by their experiences in North Korea, uncertainty over their future and their confusion over how their past fits into their identities.²¹⁵

Out of fear of discrimination, adolescent defectors tend to hide their origins. Facing a constant struggle to conceal their true identities, their past becomes a constant mental burden. A 25-year old defector told Crisis Group that his North Korean accent and his efforts to adapt in the south caused him much stress during his youth.²¹⁶ It was difficult for him to admit that there was such a huge disparity between himself and his southern counterparts, but doing so was the first step to making progress. Some young defectors respond with outbursts or violence.²¹⁷ This reinforces South Korean stereotypes that defectors are irra-

tional, untrustworthy or violent. A South Korean scholar has warned that discrimination against defectors and other minorities in the South could lead to home-grown terrorists venting their frustration through violence.²¹⁸

The number of school-age defectors is increasing. In 2005, 724 youths came to the South, and the number steadily has risen with 841 in 2006, 1,050 in 2007, 1,319 in 2008, 1,478 in 2009, and 1,711 in 2010, accounting for about 12 per cent of the total entrants. About 83 per cent enrol in regular schools, and about 9 per cent pursue their education at alternative schools.²¹⁹ Han’györe Middle and High School is a specialised school for North Korean teenagers,²²⁰ and about ten other private institutes support education with financial assistance from the government.²²¹ In 2009, the government eased regulations to make it easier to establish alternative schools that can be designed to fit the particular education needs of children who lived in the DPRK.²²²

Parents find it overwhelming to deal with the multitude of choices to be made about their children’s education. The

²¹¹ Crisis Group interview, Ch’oi Mi-yön, social worker, Defector Resettlement Support Centre, Yangch’ön-hu Hanbit general social welfare organisation, Seoul, 21 March 2007.

²¹² Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaped from North Korea, revised on 26 March 2010.

²¹³ 박준형 [Park Jun-hyöng], “탈북자 남한서 재혼할 수 있다 [Defectors can remarry in South Korea]”, *Maeil Kyöngje*, 23 June 2007.

²¹⁴ 박순영 [Park Sun-yöng], “성장발육 – 생물인류학적 연구 [Growth development: a biological anthropological study]”, chapter 12 in *웰컴투 코리아 [Welcome to Korea]*, op. cit., pp. 243-259.

²¹⁵ 정진경, 장병호, 양계민 [Chöng Jin-kyöng, Chöng Byöng-ho, and Yang Gye-min], “North Korea students’ adaptation to South Korean schools”, chapter 13 in *ibid.*, pp. 263-282.

²¹⁶ Crisis Group interview, North Korean defector, Seoul, 2 December 2006.

²¹⁷ Crisis Group interview, Yun Yö-sang, president of the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), Seoul, 14 April 2011.

²¹⁸ Lee Ji-yoon, “Mistreatment of minorities likely to foment terrorism”, *The Korea Herald*, 21 February 2011; “S Korea may face internal terrorism from frustrated minorities: scholar”, *The Korea Herald*, 21 February 2011; 이만종 [Yi Man-jong], “국내 자생테러의 위협과 우리의 대비전략 [Threat of homegrown terrorism in Korea and our counter-measure strategy]”, *對테러政策 研究論叢 [Counter-terror policy research compilation]*, 제 8 호 [no. 8], February 2011, pp. 26-41.

²¹⁹ About 8 per cent either do not attend school or fall into a miscellaneous category. “2010년 탈북청소년 교육지원 추진계획 [2010 promotion plan to support North Korean defector youth education]”, Education, Science and Technology Ministry, June 2010, p. 1.

²²⁰ Han’györe Middle and High School is the first official alternative school for NK defectors authorised by the Kyönggi Province education office in 2006. The [national] education office, MOU and the Kyönggi Province education office provide financial support to the school. 김선희 [Kim Sön-hüi], *인적자원개발론 [Human resource development theory]*, (Seoul, 2004), p. 350. The Seoul education office plans to establish a public school for North Korean defectors in March 2012. “2010년 탈북청소년 교육지원 추진계획 [2010 promotion plan to support North Korean defector youth education]”, op. cit., p. 13.

²²¹ Alternative schools are divided into two categories: authorised and unauthorised. 성형경 [Söng Haeng-kyöng], “대안학교, 공교육 ‘대안’ 되나 [Can alternative schools be an alternative to public schools?]”, *서울경제 [Seoul Economy]*, 5 January 2011, <http://economy.hankooki.com/lpage/society/201101/e2011010516560193820.htm>.

²²² 성삼재 [Söng Sam-jae], 「대안학교의 설립·운영에 관한 규정」 10.27 국무회의 통과 [Regulations on the establishment and operation of alternative schools passed by the cabinet on 27 October 2009], *공감코리아 Korean governmental policy website*, <http://korea.kr>, 27 October 2009.

ROK's education system emphasises test scores and is fiercely competitive. Children and youth from the North have a difficult time adjusting to it.²²³ The drop-out rate of North Korean children enrolled in middle school and high school from late 2003 to late 2004 was 13.7 per cent compared to 1.95 per cent for their southern counterparts.²²⁴ The drop-out rate was 11.9 per cent in 2006, 17.9 per cent in 2007, 11.0 per cent in 2008, and 8.8 per cent in 2009.²²⁵ As expected, the lack of a high school diploma affects job prospects.

Children and youth from the DPRK are at an extreme disadvantage, as their previous studies in North Korea are of little use. Education for many has been disrupted due to food shortages in the North and lengthy journeys to the South. Many are placed in classes with students who are much younger. This in turn creates difficulties, as age plays an important role in establishing hierarchies among people in South Korea.²²⁶

Unlike in North Korea, private tutoring is an important part of South Korean education. Parents of defector students are often dismayed when they discover their children's entire education is not covered by the public school system. More than 80 per cent of students attend university in the South, while in North Korea university attendance is reserved for a small minority from the elite. Although North Korean defectors can receive financial aid for university or college – 100 per cent if they are admitted to national universities and 50 per cent at private universities²²⁷ – defector families are not prepared for the intense competition for admission that absorbs much of adolescent life for Southerners. Failing to attend university or college is a huge obstacle to success, as one's alma mater contributes heavily to future opportunities in South Korean society.

²²³ 배임호 [Pae Im-ho], 양영은 [Yang Yŏng-ŭn], “학업중단 북한이탈 청소년의 적응과정에 관한 질적연구 [A study on the adaptation process of North Korean immigrant youth discontinuing formal education]”, *사회복지연구*, vol. 41, no. 4, 한국사회복지연구회, p. 197.

²²⁴ 권혁철 [Kwŏn Hyŏk-ch'ŏl], “탈북 청소년 90% 북한서도 ‘학력결손’ [90 per cent of North Korean children had insufficient education in North Korea too]”, *The Hankyoreh*, 28 November 2004.

²²⁵ “북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]”, internal MOU document, no date.

²²⁶ In the Korean language, there are different words and verb infixes and endings that are specific to the age of the person being addressed.

²²⁷ “북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]”, op. cit.

V. HOW DEFECTORS JOIN A NEW SOCIETY

A. GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

1. On arrival

The Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea provides the legal guidelines for the ROK government's identification, protection, processing, transfer and settlement of defectors. The law established the Consultative Council on Residents Escaped from North Korea (北韓離脫主民對策協議會), which is chaired by the unification vice minister and includes up to 25 members from nineteen other government ministries and agencies. The council can extend or reduce the period for protection overseas and adjusts policies related to re-settlement issues.²²⁸

Defectors spend their first month or two (for exceptional cases, it can be extended) in the South in a secure location where the National Intelligence Service, the Defence Security Command, and the MOU investigate whether they have any sensitive intelligence information and to ensure they do not represent a security risk. During this screening, they are given medical examinations and access to free health care.²²⁹ Once cleared, they move to Hanawŏn, the facility established in 1999 in Ansŏng, about 30 kilometres south of Seoul. It is modern and the setting attractive but behind barbed wire and security cameras. The capacity was doubled to accommodate 300 people in 2003, then raised to 500 in mid-2007 by increasing the number of residents from two to four per room and reducing the period of training from twelve weeks to eight. The capacity in May 2011 was 750.²³⁰

In 2009, the length of residence in Hanawŏn was restored to twelve weeks and now focuses on four areas to help defectors adjust to the South: physical health and psychological stability; understanding South Korean society; initial settlement support; and career counselling and vocational training.²³¹ The ROK government is now building a second facility, in Hwach'ŏn-gun, Kangwŏn Province,

²²⁸ “2010 White Paper on Korean Unification”, op. cit., p. 249; Crisis Group interview, MOU official, Seoul, 22 June 2011.

²²⁹ For more information, see Eugene Yim, “The first four months of resettlement for North Koreans”, 26 July 2006, <http://med/stanford.edu>.

²³⁰ “북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]”, op. cit.

²³¹ “2010 White Paper on Korean Unification”, op. cit., p. 230.

which is scheduled to open in late 2012 and will have a capacity of 500 residents.²³²

Defectors attend 420 hours of classes covering the skills needed for daily life and some vocational training.²³³ They are taught some English words used in the South and basic computer literacy.²³⁴ The centre organises job fairs to introduce them to potential employers. It also provides medical care on site. The training is very limited, and defectors are expected to master an almost entirely different culture in about three months while often recovering from the emotional and physical trauma of their escape from the North. Therefore, the ROK government increased the budget for the four main subject areas at Hanawŏn from ₩68.7 billion (about \$64 million) in 2009 to ₩90 billion (about \$84 million) in 2010, an increase of 31 per cent.²³⁵

On the third Thursday of each month, one group of defectors is released from Hanawŏn at dawn and handed over to other organisations.

2. Long-term support

After completing the training in Hanawŏn, defectors can receive additional assistance, including financial assistance, regional adaptation education, employment support, education support and medical support. They receive an individual base payment of ₩6 million (about \$5,600) and other bonuses.²³⁶ Additional payments are provided for those over 60, single parents, and the physically handicapped (see Appendix B, Table Two). Defectors can receive incentive payments or subsidies (up to ₩24.4 million, about \$22,900) when they attend job training, find employment and acquire certifications.²³⁷ In light of problems with defectors handing over their settlement money to brokers or swindlers, additional money is paid in tranches.

Defectors are helped by a network of private and public institutions. There are 30 regional Hana Centres that provide assistance to complete residence registration paperwork, information on job training, employment and other administrative necessities when a defector moves into a

new residence.²³⁸ Police stations maintain “Community Security Cooperation Committees” [保安協力委員會] that include officers, lawyers, doctors, and teachers, etc., to support defectors as they adjust to society.²³⁹

There are more than 700 officers at district police stations to help defectors and provide counselling for protection.²⁴⁰ Before the number of arrivals rose so steeply, these officers were often the greatest help to defectors. However, their workload has increased to the point where they can no longer provide sustained handholding. For example, one police officer takes care of fifteen defectors in Kumi City, North Kyŏngsang Province. It is widely recognised that more officers are needed to manage the increasing number of defectors.²⁴¹

The housing and employment officials working with defectors have been less successful, particularly those involved with job hunting.²⁴² The labour ministry’s Work Information Centres are severely understaffed; one office had only a single official for 900 defectors living in a dis-

²³² Ibid, pp. 234-235.

²³³ Ibid, p. 230.

²³⁴ Crisis Group interviews, Hanawŏn officials, 23 January 2007; “북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]”, op. cit.

²³⁵ “2010년도 대한민국재정 [2010 Republic of Korea Finance]”, National Assembly Budget Office, 29 March 2010, p. 242.

²³⁶ “북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]”, op. cit.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid; 김용태 [Kim Yong-t’ae], 배철호 [Pae Ch’ŏl-ho], “북한이탈주민의 지역사회적응과 생활지원 방안 [A program for North Korean defectors’ regional social adaptation and livelihood support]”, *한국경찰학회보 [Korean Association of Police Science Review]*, vol. 25, 2010, p. 89.

²³⁹ “2010 경찰백서 [Korean National Police Agency 2010 White Paper]”, p. 263.

²⁴⁰ “북한이탈주민의 지역사회적응과 생활지원 방안 [A program for North Korean defectors’ regional social adaptation and livelihood support]”, op. cit., p. 95.

²⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 107; 111.

²⁴² A 2010 survey by the North Korean Refugees Foundation revealed that 21.7 per cent found their jobs through newspaper advertisements, 17.0 per cent through South Korean friends, 12.7 per cent through defector friends, 11.6 per cent through the internet, 5.8 per cent through the government’s employment support centre, 5.2 per cent through defector-related institutions, 4.9 per cent through relatives, 4.1 per cent through school teachers or job training instructors, 3.0 per cent through private employment agencies, 2.6 per cent through religious institutions, 2.4 per cent through alumni and 1.9 per cent through community welfare centres. The remainder found employment through other means. See “2010 북한이탈주민 기초설문조사 분석보고서 [Analysis report on a survey of North Korean defectors in 2010]”, 연구총서 2010-11, North Korean Refugees Foundation, 2010, p. 84. According to an MOU report submitted to the National Assembly in September 2009, during 2007-2008, 33.7 per cent found jobs through their friends or relatives, 28.7 per cent found them on their own, and only 12.0 per cent found jobs through the government’s employment support centre. See 김종우 [Kim Jong-wu], “탈북자 임금 100만~130만원 가장 많아 [North Korean defectors with salary of ₩1 million ₩1.3 million most numerous]”, Yonhap News, 27 September 2009.

trict.²⁴³ In 2009, there were 81 Employment Information Service Centres nation-wide, and the government has been trying to strengthen employment support services the last two years.²⁴⁴ Among them, 55 centres with 55 counsellors provide support services to defectors, but at least three of them are understaffed.²⁴⁵

Although numerous private organisations have been involved in resettlement, a real partnership between the public and private sectors is lacking.²⁴⁶ A social worker told Crisis Group that the government only partially supports the private sector, and the efforts of the different agencies remain uncoordinated.²⁴⁷ But according to Yun Yō-sang, president of the Database Centre for North Korean Human Rights, money is not a problem; the government is very generous in funding numerous programs, but there is no sustained or detailed follow-up to assess which work well. Without evaluation, neither the government nor the private sector can identify and support the programs that are most effective and efficient.²⁴⁸

3. The North Korean Refugees Foundation

The programs and related assistance from government agencies have been fragmented and not monitored effectively. In order to address this problem, in 2010, the government amended the Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaped from North Korea to establish the North Korean Refugees Foundation (北韓離脫主民主支援財團), which aims to provide more professional and specific support.

²⁴³ Crisis Group interview, Lee Ch'ōl-u, director, North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Center, Yangch'ōn-gu Hanbit General Social Welfare Organisation, Seoul, 21 March 2007.

²⁴⁴ “2010년판 고용노동백서 [2010 Employment and Labour Policy]”, employment and labour ministry, 2010, p. 25

²⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 26; “취업지원제도 [Employment support system]”, MOU website, <http://sjobcc.or.kr>.

²⁴⁶ Crisis Group interview, Yun Yō-sang, president of the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), Seoul, 14 April 2011; 이금순 [Yi Gūm-sun], “북한이탈주민 분야별 지원체계 개선 방안 [Proposals for improving the support for North Korean Defectors by sector]”, Korea Institute for National Unification conference paper, 10 September 2004, pp. 268, 271, 299; 안혜영 [An Hye-yōng], 이금순 [Yi Gūm-sun], 북한이탈주민 정착지원을 위한 지역 네트워크 분석 [Regional network analysis of local settlement for North Korean defectors], 통일정책연구, 제16권 제2호, Korea Institute for National Unification, 2007, p. 146.

²⁴⁷ Crisis Group interview, Chōng Ūn-ju, social worker, Kangsō-gu, Pangwha 6 General Social Welfare Organisation, Seoul, 13 March 2007.

²⁴⁸ Crisis Group interview, Yun Yō-sang, president of the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), Seoul, 14 April 2011.

The foundation was established in September 2010 to coordinate and support long-term assistance for defectors after they leave Hanawōn. It has about 60 staff and directs defectors to appropriate organisations, such as the Red Cross, for assistance. The foundation has the support of about 800 government officials who provide personal security, about 200 who provide home security, and 55 government security staff for workplaces.²⁴⁹ Its Research Support Centre collects and analyses data to provide feedback and support for resettlement.²⁵⁰ On 30 May 2011, the foundation opened a 24-hour call centre with eight counsellors (four of whom defected from the North) to assist defectors with urgent problems.²⁵¹

B. NON-GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES

1. Local social welfare organisations

The number of NGOs dealing with defectors began to increase around 2005, and their role also began to grow. Most of them are small and provide counselling and referrals to local social services. Providing services through a large number of small operators has provided some flexibility. Those operating in neighbourhoods favoured by families focus on such issues as education and job support. In areas where young women predominate, the groups have concentrated on issues tailored to their needs. The North Korean Refugees Foundation now recognises 65 NGOs that are authorised to work with it and defectors.²⁵²

Despite these programs, defectors who have just graduated from Hanawōn are slow to take advantage of these services, and it is difficult for the social workers to draw them in.²⁵³ A social worker observed that immediately after completing the Hanawōn program, defectors seem to be focused only on earning money and usually ignore the advice of social workers, preferring to listen to other de-

²⁴⁹ “북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]”, op. cit.

²⁵⁰ The North Korean Refugees Foundation Research Support Centre website, www.nkr.or.kr/main.do.

²⁵¹ 김연숙 [Kim Yōn-suk] “탈북자 지원 24시간 콜센터 개소 [24-hour call centre opens to support North Korean defectors]”, Yonhap News, 30 May 2011.

²⁵² The list of organisations is available on the North Korean Refugees Foundation's website. See “소속단체명단 [Affiliated organisation list]”, at www.dongposarang.or.kr/private/position.php.

²⁵³ Crisis Group interview, Kim Sun-hwa, director, North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Centre, Nowōn-gu Kongnūng Social Welfare Organisation, Seoul, 16 March 2007.

factors.²⁵⁴ Only after failing to find a job or settle into life do they reach out.²⁵⁵

2. The Korean Red Cross

The Korean Red Cross looks after a considerable number of defectors once they leave Hanawŏn.²⁵⁶ Volunteers from the organisation's nationwide network assist defectors for a year, guiding them through paper work and settling into new apartments.²⁵⁷ When defectors require specialised expertise, such as psychological counselling or employment services, the volunteers refer them to welfare organisations. Volunteers visit twice a month, providing considerable personal attention.²⁵⁸ This type of care often creates close bonds and builds trust, something that is lacking with many professional social workers. Defectors generally prefer to work with the Red Cross rather than other welfare organisations.²⁵⁹

3. NGOs

A large number of NGOs are involved in the resettlement process, mostly operating with little coordination with the government. Several NGO workers complained that the government and NGOs rarely discussed their activities, resulting in "high costs and low effectiveness".²⁶⁰ A frequent complaint is that the government rarely discusses changes to resettlement policies with NGOs. Rather than work together to adjust policies, NGOs feel the unification ministry only issues directives and expects them to fall into line. NGOs particularly sense this attitude when they receive funding from the MOU, which they consider expects them to be grateful for the financial support.²⁶¹ The North Korean Refugees Foundation was established

to address these problems, but it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness.²⁶²

Civic College for Freedom. This church-funded "college" offers resettlement education to 50 adults at a time and has graduated 433 defectors.²⁶³ To be eligible, students must have already lived in the South for between six months and five years²⁶⁴ and have developed some ideas on what they need from the program.²⁶⁵ For the first six months of the eight-month program, the students learn about South Korean society and culture. After that they choose elective classes in college or courses for employment preparation. The college sees its goal as enabling defectors to be competitive in the labour market and providing links to vocational institutes where they can take courses. Yang Yŏng-ch'ang, former dean of student affairs, said graduates typically rate themselves an average of three years ahead of other defectors in their resettlement process.²⁶⁶ As of May 2011, graduates of the program have been able to open eight convenience stores with the support from Good People, a Christian NGO affiliated with the Civic College for Freedom.²⁶⁷

Good Friends. A Buddhist human rights NGO, Good Friends runs a "good neighbours" program in which defectors are paired with volunteers who provide assistance with the basics of surviving daily life. While this program has been successful, it is quite small and serves only a fraction of the need among defectors for continuing assistance.²⁶⁸ Good Friends also holds a sports competition festival for reunification and a field trip program on South Korean history for Hanawŏn residents.²⁶⁹

4. Religious organisations

There is no religious freedom in the North, with only a handful of government-controlled churches and temples operating, but most defectors say they follow some faith. A 2003 survey found that nearly 70 per cent were religious,

²⁵⁴ Crisis Group interview, Kim Sŏng-mo, director, Welfare Department, Kangsŏ-gu, Kayang 7 Social Welfare Organisation, Seoul, 13 March 2007.

²⁵⁵ Crisis Group interview, Lee Ch'ŏl-u, director, North Korean Defector Resettlement Support Centre, Yangch'ŏn-gu Hanbit Social Welfare Organisation, Seoul, 21 March 2007.

²⁵⁶ In March 2011, the Red Cross was monitoring and assisting 844 households that included 1,087 defectors. Crisis Group telephone interview, Paek Chong-hun, head of the Resettlement Support Team, the Korean Red Cross, 23 June 2011.

²⁵⁷ Crisis Group interviews, Park Chŏng-suk, volunteer, Yangch'ŏn-gu Red Cross Service Centre, Seoul, 20 March 2007; Kim Hyŏn-jŏng, Relief and Social Services Unit, Korea Red Cross Seoul Chapter, 19 March 2007.

²⁵⁸ Crisis Group interview, Park Jŏng-suk, volunteer, Yangch'ŏn-gu Red Cross Service Centre, Seoul, 20 March 2007.

²⁵⁹ Crisis Group interview, Lee Yŏng-hwan, Citizen's Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, Seoul, 14 March 2007.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Crisis Group interview, Yun Yŏ-sang, president of the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), Seoul, 14 April 2011.

²⁶² The unification ministry asserts it has made extensive efforts to consult with NGOs, and the ministry established the North Korean Refugees Foundation as a result. Crisis Group email correspondence with MOU official, 13 July 2011.

²⁶³ News at the Civic College for Freedom website, www.freecitizen.kr.

²⁶⁴ Announcement at the Civic College for Freedom website, www.freecitizen.kr.

²⁶⁵ Crisis Group interview, Yang Yŏng-ch'ang, dean of student affairs, Civic College for Freedom, Seoul, 23 March 2007.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Announcement at the Civic College for Freedom website, www.freecitizen.kr.

²⁶⁸ "Welcome to the 21st century: North Korean refugees in South Korea", Refugees International, 17 December 2003.

²⁶⁹ Good Friends website, www.goodfriends.or.kr/community/community1.html.

and three quarters of those surveyed identified themselves as Christians.²⁷⁰ Another report put the percentage of Christian defectors between 80 per cent and 90 per cent.²⁷¹ Christian churches have become popular among defectors as organisers of defector groups and advocates for human rights in the North. “The South Korean government has been guilty of neglecting its duty. We have been silent too long – we have forgotten about it too long”, said Kim Hyŏn-uk, a leader at the Catholic Lay Apostolate Council of Korea.²⁷²

Since the mid-1990s, a growing number of South Korean and Korean-American missionaries have been working along the China-DPRK border, proselytising and distributing bibles. They also provide money for defectors to reach South East Asia, from where they can travel to Seoul. After being introduced to Christianity during this arduous journey, many defectors start worshipping at churches once they get to South Korea. In March 2000, 66.2 per cent of defectors surveyed were Christians upon arrival at Hanawŏn. A follow-up survey of defectors revealed that 76.2 per cent practiced Christianity in 2001, and in 2004, 61.6 per cent continued to practice the religion.²⁷³ An entire floor of the education building at Hanawŏn is devoted to religious education.

Kang Ch’ŏl-ho, a defector, founded his own Peace Unification Church that is mostly attended by others from the DPRK. As well as services, it provides support to defectors, even helping them set up businesses. Two food manufacturers founded by members of the church work out of the same building and have been among the most successful started by defectors.²⁷⁴

Some South Korean churches hold special services for defectors and provide an array of support services.²⁷⁵ Others also give material and financial assistance, but the appeal is mostly spiritual.²⁷⁶ “Mentally, Christianity helps a lot.

When you are going through a lot of hardships, religion is the only thing you can rely on”, said a defector.²⁷⁷ In a survey examining why defectors attend church, 69.4 per cent cited peace of mind, 41.8 per cent living a moral life, 35.7 per cent to have a relationship with South Koreans and 21.4 per cent to get useful information about settling in South Korea.²⁷⁸

Nevertheless, Kang Ch’ŏl-ho points to problems in the way some churches support defectors.²⁷⁹ Financial aid leads some to view churches primarily as a source of money rather than spiritual guidance. Kang says he often receives phone calls from defectors asking, “how much money does your church give when defectors register?” He also points out that some defectors stop attending services once the cash stops or they register with several churches at the same time to receive multiple benefits. Some churches require a profession of faith and disclosure of past experiences, particularly hardships, in front of the congregation. This, Kang contends, is counter-productive and often traumatic. Some defectors feel conflicted about religion, since the fervour of some churches feels reminiscent of the worship of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.²⁸⁰

Buddhist orders and temples also provide special services for defectors. For example, the Han’gyŏre Middle and High School was established by Wŏn Buddhism.²⁸¹ The Korea Ch’ŏnt’ae Buddhist Order and the local government office in Tanyang-gun, North Ch’ungch’ŏng Province, will establish a meditation centre [한마음체험센터] by the end of 2012.²⁸² Defectors will be able to stay at the temple and mediation centre and learn about Buddhism.

5. Alternative schools

Some ten special schools for young defectors have been founded, mostly by NGOs. They offer short-term classes in a full range of subjects but have not been acknowledged as part of the formal South Korean education sys-

²⁷⁰ 이금순 [Yi Gŭm-sun], “북한이탈주민의 사회적응 실태 [Reality of North Korean defectors’ social assimilation]”, Korea Institute for National Unification conference paper, 26 September 2003, p. 18.

²⁷¹ Caroline Gluck, “North Korean defectors find Christianity”, BBC News, 11 February 2003.

²⁷² Quoted in Choe Sang-hun, “Seoul relies on silence to sway North”, *International Herald Tribune*, 15 July 2005.

²⁷³ 유시은, 전우택, 홍창형, 조영아, 엄진섭 [Yu Si-ŭn, Cŏn U-t’aek, Hong Ch’ang-hyŏng, Cho Yŏng-a, Ŏm Jin-sŏp], “생활과 교육 [Life and Education]”, in *웰컴투 코리아 [Welcome to Korea]*, op. cit., pp. 422-439.

²⁷⁴ Crisis Group interview, Kang Ch’ŏl-ho, defector and evangelist, Peace Unification Church, Seoul, 25 April 2007.

²⁷⁵ Crisis Group interview, Chŏng Pan-sŏk, Southern Seoul Grace Church, Seoul, 7 May 2007.

²⁷⁶ Crisis Group interview, Kang Ch’ŏl-ho, defector and evangelist, Peace Unification Church, Seoul, 25 April 2007.

²⁷⁷ “North Korean defectors find Christianity”, op. cit..

²⁷⁸ Multiple responses were permitted in the survey. 유시은, 전우택, 홍창형, 조영아, 엄진섭 [Yu Si-ŭn, Cŏn U-t’aek, Hong Ch’ang-hyŏng, Cho Yŏng-a, Ŏm Jin-sŏp], “생활과 교육 [Life and Education]”, in *웰컴투 코리아 [Welcome to Korea]*, op. cit., pp. 422-439.

²⁷⁹ Crisis Group interview, Kang Ch’ŏl-ho, defector and evangelist, Peace Unification Church, 25 April 2007.

²⁸⁰ Crisis Group interviews, Seoul.

²⁸¹ 김환영 [Kim Whan-yŏng], “작더라도 좋은 일 시작해보세요, 눈덩이처럼 커집니다 [Even if the good things you do are small, they will be bigger]”, *The Joongang Sunday Newspaper*, 25 April 2010.

²⁸² 노승혁 [No Sŭng-hyŏk], “단양군 내년까지 한마음 체험센터 건립 [Tanyang-gun to establish one mind experience centre by next year]”, *Yonhap News*, 15 May 2011.

tem and cannot award recognised diplomas. They concentrate on filling gaps in the education that children receive in the North, particularly in English, Korean and social studies. However, in 2010, Yŏ'myŏng [Yeomyung] School became the first alternative school to be recognised officially by the ROK government, so graduating students are not required to take an extra qualification examination.

Most schools are small. The best known, Yŏ'myŏng School, produced only nine graduates in 2007, but seven of them went on to college, a remarkable figure given the high drop-out rates of Northerners mentioned earlier. According to the school principal, "students are very closed and aggressive when they enter the school, but most of them become more cheerful and open to others with time".²⁸³ The lack of recognition by the government has proved a serious problem in retaining students. "Since the government doesn't recognise those alternative schools, students don't receive any financial support from the government, so that they have to do part time work along with their studies. This difficulty leads some students to drop out".²⁸⁴ Recently, the government has begun to provide financial support to eight alternative schools.²⁸⁵

C. NEW GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PRIVATE RESPONSES

As the number of defectors arriving in the ROK has increased, the government has tried to adjust its policies for resettlement. Many of the issues and problems that emerged were not anticipated, and policies naturally required modification over time. As noted, the North Korean Refugees Foundation was established to address the coordination problems in linking defectors with appropriate governmental agencies and NGOs to deal with the multitude of long-term difficulties. There are several other new initiatives.

In July 2010, the MOU and Hyundai Motor Microcredit Bank signed an agreement to start a micro-finance program, the "hope store project [희망가게 프로젝트]", which is designed to provide training and financing for defectors to open their own shops. By December, the ministry had selected 27 defectors for the project, and a total of ₩970 million (about \$850,000) in loans had been provided. MOU and Hyundai plan to offer four rounds of training sessions

for about 80 defectors in 2011.²⁸⁶ The project will coordinate with the Rural Development Administration to provide training and assistance for those who wish to establish agricultural businesses. Under this project, the MOU also seeks to establish at least fifteen consortia among local governments, NGOs and large firms to work with defectors to create new economic opportunities.²⁸⁷

To address the needs of female defectors and single-mother households, the MOU is trying to allocate more resources for their needs and create new programs.²⁸⁸ Some of these efforts include the establishment of three shelter and retreat centres for women, mentoring and assistance for child-rearing and a ₩300,000 (about \$300) government contribution when giving birth. For those who are alone and destitute, the government has established eight facilities that provide rooms and some community living areas, and there are plans to build five more. The government also has provided ten "group homes" for defector children with no families or homes and is planning to make three more available.²⁸⁹

The MOU has established the "West program" to give defector college students leadership training, English language training, and an opportunity to study abroad in the U.S.²⁹⁰ The first group of five students was selected in April 2011 and is expected to depart for a six-month training and internship program in July 2011. The MOU collaborated with the U.S. embassy and the Ministry of Education and Science and Technology to choose the students and coordinate the program.²⁹¹

In April 2011, the Federation of North Koreans in the World [世界北韓人總聯盟], the Korea Future Foundation [韓半島未來財團] and Chung-ang University established a consortium to operate a leadership academy program for young North Korean defectors who are college students

²⁸³ Crisis Group interview, Wu Ki-sŏp, principal, Yŏmyŏng Alternative School, Seoul, 7 March 2007.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ In 2010, the government provided ₩170 million (about \$160,000), and in 2011 will provide ₩700 million (about \$660,000). Crisis Group email correspondence with MOU official, 13 July 2011.

²⁸⁶ "이귀원 [Yi Gwi-wŏn], "통일부 '올해 탈북자 창업자금 지원 강화' [MOU 'strengthen support for North Korean defectors to finance and start businesses']", Yonhap News, 5 January 2011.

²⁸⁷ "북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]", op. cit.

²⁸⁸ Crisis Group interview, MOU official, Seoul, 22 June 2011.

²⁸⁹ "북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]", op. cit.

²⁹⁰ Ibid; Crisis Group interview, MOU official, Seoul, 20 May 2011.

²⁹¹ 김경수 [Kim Kyŏng-su], "탈북대학생 7월 첫 미국 어학연수 [North Korean defector college students first language training in the U.S. in July]", *The Financial News*, 4 June 2011; "[뉴스 파일]탈북대학생 5명美연수 프로그램 참가 [[News file] 5 North Korean defector college students to participate in U.S. training program]", *The Donga Ilbo*, 6 June 2011.

or recent graduates. The MOU is providing ₩20 million (about \$18,800) for the program from its budget to support unification activities. Twenty-five defectors were selected for the first four-month program in April, and the plan is to train about 1,000 who could become influential in a future unified Korea.²⁹²

While government programs and private sector initiatives are critical for defector resettlement, smooth and effective assimilation is not simply a matter of defector actions and bigger budgets for more programs. South Korean society also will have to adjust and become more tolerant and considerate of defectors and the challenges they face. To increase mutual understanding, the MOU is supporting a summer camp for college students, where defectors and Southerners can spend time building trust and friendship through outdoor activities. The ministry also has begun to support special television programs and community broadcasts through cable networks on defector issues to increase community awareness.²⁹³

VI. NEW INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

That defectors face numerous difficulties when resettling in South Korea also raises questions for the international community. First, what role can it play in helping them adjust? Secondly, should some defectors be granted asylum and settled in other countries? Crisis Group interview data, research and media surveys and extensive Korean language literature have all identified limited English language capability as a serious obstacle for defector resettlement. A strong command of English is not necessary to excel and advance in South Korea, but widespread use of English words there that are unintelligible and alien to North Koreans disadvantages them. In the ROK's globalised economy, employers often see English as a prerequisite or as a screening device to sift through job applications. Without some English and computer skills, higher paying jobs are often out of reach for defectors.

Basic English education begins in primary school in the ROK, and private English education at expensive cram schools is beyond the means of almost all defector families. The English-speaking world could help bridge this gap by providing training programs, which can be tremendously helpful in developing skills and building confidence. For example, the UK began a pilot program in 2010, providing ten defectors with free English language training at the British Council in Seoul. The "English for the Future" program was expanded in 2011 to include one year of free English training for 50 individuals at the British Council and one scholarship to pursue a master's degree in the UK, as well as nine internships for three months with South Korean firms in Seoul.²⁹⁴ Canada and New Zealand are considering similar programs.²⁹⁵

Because of the difficulty in adjustment to South Korea, some defectors might have better luck in other countries. Many who leave the DPRK as economic migrants later change their minds and have no desire to return. It is common for defectors to spend considerable time in China before eventually arriving in South Korea, but China does not accept refugees from North Korea. Even children of female defectors and Chinese fathers are not granted legal status in the country; permanent settlement in China is, in short, not practical because of Chinese laws and practices.

In 2004, the U.S. enacted the North Korean Human Rights Act, which has several provisions designed to improve

²⁹² The four-month program will include lectures once a week; and the consortium has recruited 33 lecturers, including Georgetown University Professor Victor Cha and Kookmin University Professor Andrei Lankov, in addition to other well-known scholars and experts. See 조민정 [Cho Min-jōng], "탈북자 남북통합 역군화 아카데미 첫 개설 [First leadership academy opens for young North Korean defectors to produce a pillar of unification]", *Yonhap News*, 5 April 2011; 이영종 [Yi Yōng-jōng], "탈북 지식인 1000명 통일 주역으로 양성 [Training 1,000 North Korean intellectual defectors as a pillar of reunification]", *The JoongAng Ilbo*, 9 April 2011; Kim Young-jin, "Academy to open for young NK defectors", *The Korea Times*, 5 April 2011.

²⁹³ Crisis Group interview, MOU official, Seoul, 20 May 2011; "북한이탈주민 정착지원 현황과 정부의 역할 [Current status of settlement support for North Korean defectors and the government role]", *op. cit.*

²⁹⁴ Martin Uden, "English language training for North Koreans in South Korea", Ambassador to the Republic of Korea blog, 18 May 2011; Moon Gwang-lip, "British Embassy offers program for defectors", *The Korea JoongAng Daily*, 18 May 2011; Kim Se-jeong, "UK sets example of helping NK defectors", *The Korea Times*, 19 December 2010.

²⁹⁵ Crisis Group interviews, Seoul, June 2011.

humanitarian conditions for defectors, including the right to ask for asylum and settle in the U.S. However, as of 6 July 2011, only 122 North Koreans had been accepted for resettlement, and 21 had been resettled.²⁹⁶ Between 1994 and 2008, over 2,000 North Korean refugees settled in countries other than South Korea.²⁹⁷ Apparently, some defectors had become dissatisfied with their lives in South Korea and fled after having received ROK citizenship. Until recently, the UK has been a common destination. The exact number of Korean asylum seekers in the UK is unknown, but press reports give between 665 and about 1,000.²⁹⁸ Upon arrival, they destroyed their passports and subsequently requested asylum as North Korean refugees.²⁹⁹ Several cases are in court, and adjudication will require considerable time. After the large number of asylum claims around 2004-2006 (some coordinated with the aid of brokers), the UK tightened controls in an effort to screen fraudulent claims.

The UK government needs assistance from the ROK government to investigate and discern the true identities and claims of these asylum seekers. However, this has been held up because Seoul says South Korean privacy protection law prohibits the exchange of data for identity checks. The negotiations on the issue have been strained at times, but the two governments seem likely to reach a cooperative understanding and working relationship.³⁰⁰

Only a few defectors might prefer settling in other countries if difficulties (anticipated or experienced) in the ROK were eased. The South Korean government is trying to make adjustment and assimilation successful. South Korea is a developed liberal democracy with sufficient material resources to manage the integration of 20,000 North Korean defectors. The justification for third-country asylum after going through the ROK resettlement process would have to be exceptional and extraordinary. However, claims must be handled on a case-by-case basis, and all such by DPRK nationals should be reviewed and adjudicated according to international refugee law.

²⁹⁶ Crisis Group interview, U.S. official, Washington, DC, 8 July 2011. The first defectors did not arrive until 2006. "US has received 101 NK refugees since 2006", *The Korea Times*, 8 May 2011. Also see Congressional Research Service report, "North Korea: U.S. Relations, Nuclear Diplomacy and Internal Situation" 17 June 2011, which noted the limited numbers of North Korean refugees resettled in the U.S.

²⁹⁷ Park Si-soo, "NK defectors flee from Seoul to UK for asylum", *The Korea Times*, 27 August 2011.

²⁹⁸ "N Korean defectors fail to adapt to life away from home", *The Chosun Ilbo*, 16 May 2011; Park Si-soo, "NK defectors flee from Seoul to UK for asylum", *The Korea Times*, 27 August 2010.

²⁹⁹ Ibid; "8 N.K. defectors make apparent U.K. asylum bid", *The Korea Herald*, 23 March 2011.

³⁰⁰ Crisis Group interview, Seoul.

VII. CONCLUSION

During the Cold War, the small number of defections was manageable. The financial and social burden of integrating the mostly skilled defectors was so low as to be non-existent, while the propaganda value and level of compensation for these defectors were high. However, the end of the Cold War and the rapid increase in the number of defectors, many of them traumatised and destitute, created a number of problems.

Defectors in the South have become an issue that affects inter-Korean relations. Many proponents of engagement with the North have sought to downplay their significance or avoid mentioning them with the hope the issue will not undermine engagement. On the other hand, many conservative critics of the North view defectors as a legitimate instrument with which to assail or undermine Pyongyang. In sum, the defectors have become a political football in the South, which has consequences for their personal lives. Humanitarian principles dictate that they should be insulated from domestic politics. Furthermore, DPRK belligerence should not affect South Korean policies towards defectors and their integration into society.

Most of the support programs have been short term, but many defectors need long-term tailored help. The ROK government seems prepared to provide large-scale support – there is broad political backing in the National Assembly for funding programs.³⁰¹ To ensure resources are used efficiently, hard questions must be asked about effectiveness, but this is risky politically. Anyone questioning current government programs or approaches risks condemnation from political opponents. Independent oversight could be useful in making long-term assessments and recommendations on how best to integrate defectors. The problems are social and humanitarian in nature, not political. Areas that need attention are nutritional support and long-term mental health care, educational support and employment support. The international community, both the private and government sectors, also could assist by providing scholarships. The ROK government should take appropriate legal action to protect defectors from discrimination in the workplace.

The South Korean government and NGOs need to make more efforts to address the particular problems facing women and children. Women make up about 70 per cent of all the defectors entering the South. Support to ensure family stability for children is critical for their education and future. Investing in these families now would be much

³⁰¹ Crisis Group interview, Yun Yō-sang, president of the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), Seoul, 14 April 2011.

less costly than dealing in the future with adults who are unable to assimilate and become productive citizens. Those who are unable to excel in South Korea's competitive education system geared for college entrance should have access to vocational schools that provide skills required for sustained and productive employment.

The ROK government has recognised that it cannot do everything to ensure successful resettlement of defectors. Although the MOU has worked extensively with NGOs and provided financial support to them, coordination and communication could be better. The government could listen more to NGOs and be more open to suggestions for new or innovative programs. This does not mean every fresh idea must be implemented, but being unreceptive to good ones means opportunities are missed.

The difficulties of integrating about 20,000 defectors are a small taste of the problems that the South might experience if there were any sudden reunification with the North. The economic, social, cultural and psychological gulfs between the countries would take decades to close and overwhelm the resources and welcome offered by the South. Defectors are mostly a self-selecting group; the challenges of integrating those in the North who might not welcome reunification with a dominant South are difficult to assess.

The South Korean government recognises that a precipitate change in the North would present it with immense problems, but it should not allow such concerns or the occasional threats from Pyongyang on the resettlement of defectors to cloud the need to integrate them in the most effective way possible. Studies of defectors show that the health issues from their lives in the North and their difficult journeys South may take many years to resolve. Education and jobs may also be problems for long after they reach the South. Policies need to be devised that insulate the process from political changes and provide the support that is needed.

Seoul/Brussels, 14 July 2011

APPENDIX A

MAP OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA



Courtesy of University of Texas at Austin.

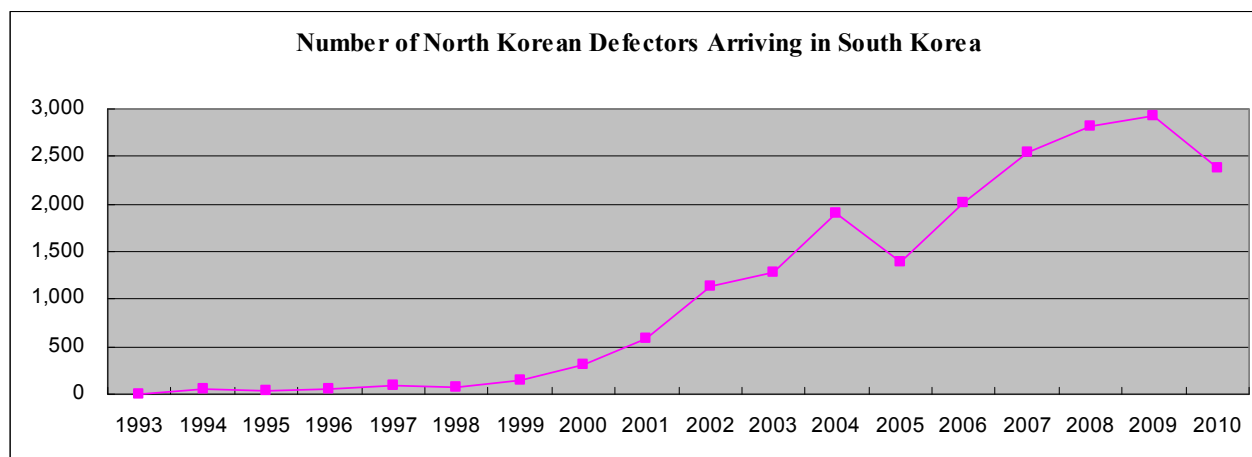
APPENDIX B

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Table One. Number of North Korean Defectors Arriving in the ROK by Year

Year	1950~92	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number	633	8	52	41	56	86	71	148	312	583
Total		641	693	734	790	876	947	1,095	1,407	1,990
Year	2002		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number	1,138		1,281	1,894	1,383	2,018	2,544	2,809	2,927	2,376
Total	3,128		4,409	6,303	7,686	9,704	12,248	15,057	17,984	20,360

Source: ROK Ministry of Unification



Source: ROK Ministry of Unification

Table Two. Resettlement Support for North Korean Defectors in the ROK

Category	Detail	Content
Financial Assistance for Resettlement	Basic support payment	₩6 million for one-person household
	Financial Incentives	For those who attend job training, acquire certifications, and find employment (up to ₩24.4 million)
	Additional Bonuses	Age 60 or older (₩7.2 million) Physically challenged (up to ₩15.4 million) Single-parents with children 13 years of age or younger (₩3.6 million per household) Long-term hospitalization (3-9 months; ₩800,000 per month)
Housing	Housing	Personal assistance in finding rental housing
	Housing Subsidies	₩13 million for one-person household
Employment	Job Training	The Ministry of Employment and Labour provides about ₩300,000 per month during job training period (depending on needs criteria)
	Wage Subsidy	MOU provides half of defector monthly salary (from ₩500,000 to maximum of ₩700,000 per month) up to three years
	Employment officer	Ministry of Employment and Labour provides counselling and help with job searches at 55 employment centres nation-wide
Social Welfare	Living Assistance Payments	Subsidy provided for those with incomes below the poverty line as prescribed in the National Basic Living Security Act (₩420,000 for a one-person household)
	Medical care	Class I medical assistance benefit
	National pension	Qualified to register for national pension if entering the ROK between the age of 50 and 60
Education	Special admission/transfer into universities	Special admissions or transfer into ROK universities
	Tuition benefit	Free enrolment for public middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities; 50 per cent tuition subsidy for private universities

Table Three. Gender of North Korean Defectors in the ROK (as of January 2011)

Year	1950-1998	1999-2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 January	Total
Male	829	563	506	469	626	423	509	570	612	666	578	41	6,392
Female	118	480	632	812	1,268	960	1,509	1,974	2,197	2,261	1,798	138	14,147
Total	947	1,043	1,138	1,281	1,894	1,383	2,018	2,544	2,809	2,927	2,376	179	20,539
Percentage Female	12%	46%	56%	63%	67%	69%	75%	78%	78%	77%	76%	77%	69%

Source: ROK Ministry of Unification

Table Four. Age of North Korean Defectors in the ROK (as of January 2011)

Age	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
Total	793	2,381	5,644	6,575	3,220	989	937	20,529
Percentage	4	12	27	32	15	5	5	100

Source: ROK Ministry of Unification

Table Five. Employment Status of North Korean Defectors in North Korea Prior to Defection (as of January 2011)

	Unemployed	Worker	Administrative	Professional	Arts, Athletics	Voluntary Service	Military or intelligence	Total
Total	10,248	7,901	381	439	187	798	585	20,539
Percentage	50	38	2	2	1	4	3	100

Source: ROK Ministry of Unification

Table Six. Education Level of North Korean Defectors Prior to Defection (Until January 2011)

	Preschool	Kindergarten	Primary School	Middle and High School	College	University and/or graduate school	Miscellaneous or unknown	Total
Total	552	186	1,270	14,477	1,873	1,503	678	20,539
Percentage	3	1	6	70	9	8	3	100

Source: ROK Ministry of Unification

APPENDIX C

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on the website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is chaired by former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering. Its President and Chief Executive since July 2009 has been Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.

Crisis Group's international headquarters are in Brussels, with major advocacy offices in Washington DC (where it is based as a legal entity) and New York, a smaller one in London and liaison presences in Moscow and Beijing. The organisation currently operates nine regional offices (in Bishkek, Bogotá, Dakar, Islamabad, Istanbul, Jakarta, Nairobi, Pristina and Tbilisi) and has local field representation in fourteen additional locations (Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Bujumbura, Damascus, Dili, Jerusalem, Kabul, Kathmandu, Kinshasa, Port-au-Prince, Pretoria, Sarajevo and Seoul). Crisis Group currently covers some 60 areas of actual or potential conflict across four continents. In Africa, this includes Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz-

stan, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan Strait, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; in Europe, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Russia (North Caucasus), Serbia and Turkey; in the Middle East and North Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Gulf States, Iran, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti and Venezuela.

Crisis Group receives financial support from a wide range of governments, institutional foundations, and private sources. The following governmental departments and agencies have provided funding in recent years: Australian Agency for International Development, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrian Development Agency, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Canadian International Development Agency, Canadian International Development and Research Centre, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Commission, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Federal Foreign Office, Irish Aid, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, New Zealand Agency for International Development, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish International Development Agency, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Kingdom Department for International Development, United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council, U.S. Agency for International Development.

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July 2011

APPENDIX D

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