

North Korea Creates a New Corps

North Korea has created a new corps, the Tenth, in one of its provinces bordering the People's Republic of China. (<http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=7152>).

“North Korea has created a new military body, the 10th Corps of the Chosun People’s Army, charged with security and order in Yangkang Province.” Yangkang (Yanggang) Province extends along approximately one-quarter of the North Korea-PRC border and is located from approximately the center of North Korea extending east to about 60 miles due west of Chongjin.

The source explained the possible background to the founding the 10th Corps, saying, “In fact, the value of military strength in Yangkang Province has dropped more than people think. Considering the fact that major strategic facilities such as Samjiyeon Airport, Samjiyeon Missile Base, Baekam Radar Base and Huchang Missile Base are all here, Local Reserve Forces are not sufficient to cover provincial defense.”

He added, “There is significance in the foundation of the 10th Corps, in that defense of a strategic position has been reinforced, and moreover may have the effect of coping with possible Chinese military moves which actually could occur,” and went on, “It might also have been a measure reflecting the concern which Pyongyang has had since its first nuclear test, whereby, ‘We don’t know when China will betray us.’” (Bold mine.)

Now, the North Korean military consists of nine official corps: the 1st Corps stationed in Hoiyang, Kangwon Province, 2nd in Pyongsan, North Hwanghae Province, 4th in Haeju, South Hwanghae Province and 5th in Pyeongyang, Kangwon Province, which cover the DMZ and the front line; and the 3rd Corps in Nampo, 7th in Hamheung, South Hamkyung Province, 8th Corps in Youngju, North Pyongan Province, 9th in Chongjin, North Hamkyung Province and the newly created 10th in Hyesan, Yangkang Province, which are in charge of rear defense.

As previously noted, the 6th Corps has not existed since shortly after an attempted coup in North Hamkyung Province in 1995.

Each corps consists generally of one or two combat brigades, three or four mechanized brigades and several battalions.

Besides these, there are special corps disguised as “training centers” in order to draw a veil over the reality, which is that in practice their military power is much greater than that of the general corps. While the first obligation of the general corps is local defense, these training centers are designed to push into the South.

Among the best known of these “training centers” are No. 425 Training Center stationed in Jungju, South Pyongan Province, No. 806 in Muncheon, Kangwon Province, No. 815 in Seoheung, North Hwanghae Province, No. 820 in Sariwon, North Hwanghae Province and No. 620 in Shinkyu, North Hwanghae Province.

Additionally, there is the “Artillery Bureau” which conducts artillery attacks, “Education Bureau” designed to penetrate the rear of enemy lines, and “No. 91 Training Center”, Pyongyang Defense Command, which is charged with defending the capital.

Please read the entire article for more important information.

Analysis. The real significance of this article is the bold paragraph. North Korea does not trust the PRC and has upgraded defenses in the province that contains their nuclear and long range missile test facilities at the very least. Whether or not this is in conjunction with the reported digging of a new test shaft for a possible nuclear test is unknown. However, my belief in coincidences is extremely low.

This article also paints a picture of the current level of paranoia in the DPRK. If Kim is even remotely afraid of his patron, the last meeting Kim had with President Hu must have been a face ripper. Even though the PRC will not condemn North Korea in public for its recent violent acts, it is most probably true that the PRC is not far short of severely pissed. Not only have the North's actions brought too much bad ju-ju upon Kim, they have also brought the US Navy into the Yellow Sea. That is a show stopper for the PRC.

While it is highly doubtful that the People's Liberation Army would be sent into North Korea to live up to its name and actually liberate people, the Kim family must have some rather strong idea that it might. Or, at the very least the PLA might try to seize the nuclear and long range missile facilities to prevent additional testing or actual use against the United States.

In addition, Joongang Ilbo is reporting that artillery exercises will be conducted on YP Do sometime between 18 Dec and 21 Dec Korean time (Z+10) during daylight hours. The Notices to Mariners have already been issued. (<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2929803>). “Concerns quickly grew that North Korea would stage an additional provocation after the drill, and an official from the Joint Chiefs made clear that the South Korean military would begin the exercise with full readiness to retaliate against any attack.

“We will stage the drill with a determination to strongly and sternly counter any additional provocation with the joint forces of the Army, Navy and Air Force,” he said.”

Nor apparently is the South going to dial back the pressure on Kim take responsibility for his bad acts. While this is commendable after all the years of the “Sunshine Policy”, it is making everybody in the area very nervous. One might even consider that President Lee, after predicting a “reunification event” in the near future, will continue to turn the screws on North Korea in an attempt to topple the regime from the inside. We should all pray real hard that President Lee knows exactly what he is doing. Otherwise, Christmas in Korea may not be very merry.