

Ministry of People's Armed Forces

The Ministry of People's Armed Forces is directly subordinate to the National Defense Commission. Despite being a Ministry, the MPAF is neither part of nor subordinate organizationally to the DPRK Cabinet. It was organized and operational on 4 February 1948 as the National Security Bureau, and it has undergone several name changes and control channels. From 1998 to 9 September 2000, it was called the People's Military Forces Department. The MPAF was once part of the State Administration Council, but was seceded from the SAC in April 1982. The MPAF is a large umbrella organization that encompasses the Korean People's Army, Korean People's Navy and the Korean People's Airforce, as well as a score of subordinate bureaus and departments. Command and control over the DPRK's armed forces is roughly divided between the General Staff and the General Political Bureau, although the General Staff is more of an administrative and coordinating body with actual political power over the DPRK's armed forces residing with the General Political Bureau.

The General Staff of the MPAF is responsible for the administrative and logistical needs to the KPA. It has direct control in the Rear Services Bureau which is tasked with NCO training, professional military education (PME), food and quartering of the DPRK's armed forces. The Rear Services Bureau also contains construction units that are mobilized for construction projects within KPA bases, as well as the civilian infrastructure in North Korea. The General Staff is also responsible for coordinating the DPRK's armed forces' holding corporations (such as the Maebong Trading Company) which connects it directly to the KWP's Third Floor and Kim Jong-il's Personal Secretariat. The General Staff is also tasked to coordinate the MPAF's intelligence operations and analysis. Primary among these, under the General Staff's direct control, is the Electronic Warfare Bureau. The Electronic Warfare Bureau is the DPRK's primary signal intelligence (SIGINT), radar and telecommunications intelligence agency. Recent attacks on South Korean computer systems, which were allegedly perpetrated by the DPRK, would be coordinated out of the Electronic Warfare Bureau in conjunction with the NDC (formerly KWP) Operations Department. Finally, the General Staff has command and responsibility over the Reserve Forces which are Worker-Peasant Militias, Reserve Military Training Unit and the Youth Red Guards.

The MPAF links to the KWP Department, KWP Central Military Committee and the KWP Organization and Guidance Department. Under the auspices of the Reserve Military Training Unit, the MPAF coordinates with the KWP Civil Defense Department. The current Minister of the People's Armed Forces is Kim Yong-chun. The MPAF is located in Changsan-dong, Sosang District (*kuyok*), Pyongyang.

One further note about the MPAF; in the event of military hostilities with South Korea or some other national contingency requiring the mobilization the DPRK's armed forces, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (and Chair of the National Defense Commission) who is Kim Jong-il, can bypass the MPAF General Staff's chain of command, and command the armed forces and the Reserve. A process seems to be

underway to transfer the MPAF's subordinate bureaus to the National Defense Commission.