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Robert D. Kaplan: When North Korea Falls Study Guide

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ROBERT D. KAPLAN: WHEN NORTH KOREA FALLS

STUDY GUIDE, 2006

Steven Alan Samson

The Atlantic, October 2006, pp. 64-73.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/10/when-north-korea-falls/5228/>

Study Questions

1. What sorts of talents and accomplishments have strengthened the father-son dynasty known as the Kim Family Regime? How has it established its historical credibility (and thus legitimacy)? What is the danger if Kim Jong Il falters? (64)
2. **The Nightmare After Iraq** How does unification of divided countries generally take place? How has North Korea's troop placement changed since 1980? Why is deployment to Korea often regarded as worse in some ways than Iraq? What makes the threat from the north so formidable? What makes life in North Korea resemble Albania during its communist years? (64-66)
3. **The Seven Stages of Collapse** What is one of the goals of Kim's missile program? What does Kim's decision to launch missiles reveal about his regime? What is the nature and potential magnitude of the challenge the United States may face? At what stage of collapse does North Korea appear to hover? What lesson did Kim learn from the collapse of the Ceausescu Family Regime in Romania? [The Roman Emperor Septimius Severus, a Syrian, instructed his sons: "Pay the soldiers; nothing else matters"]. How well cared-for is the Army? Would it defend the regime? (66-68)
4. **How to Prevent Another Iraq** What scenarios does Colonel Maxwell anticipate? What role might the US military play? What role could Japan play? What factors work in Beijing's favor? What is the best case scenario for South Korea? Why? What might make the difference between anarchy and prosperity on the peninsula? (68-70)
5. **If North Korea Attacks** In the unlikely event of an invasion, what strategy might be used by the North? Why would it fail? (70)
6. **What Now, Lieutenant?** Why would an intense but short artillery barrage trump the United States politically? What are the risks of economic warfare against North Korea? Why role is being played by China? (71)
7. **After Reunification** How does Japan fit into the picture? How would you characterize the history of Japanese-Korean relations? Why might a reunified Korea be helpful to Japan? What might happen to Korean-American relations? (72)
8. **China versus America** What would be the wisest course of action for the United States after the North collapses and is stabilized? Why are American air and ground troops training outside Korea? What do the Chinese hope to gain through their infrastructure investments? Why might America's basic policy fail? (72-73)
9. **North Korea and the Future of Asia** What makes the Korean peninsula the pivot? What is happening to the Yongsan Garrison? What may be the price of success? Why? (73)

Review

Kim Il Sung
DMZ
Army defections and morale
Yongsan Garrison

Kim Jong Il
Pyongyang (the capital)
Tumen River region

Choson Dynasty
chemical/biological weapons
Park Chung Hee