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 Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 033396

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . ÇNational security restriction  
 TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . ÇMemorandum  
 CREATOR'S NAME . . . . . Jay Taylor  
 RECEIVER'S NAME . . . . . Brent Scowcroft  
 TITLE . . . . . Possible North Korean Initatives During  
 1976  
 CREATION DATE . . . . . 04/22/1976  
 VOLUME . . . . . 3 pages  
 COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 033700538  
 COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. NSC EAST  
 ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS STAFF FILES  
 BOX NUMBER . . . . . 35  
 FOLDER TITLE . . . . . Korean Military Situation (Working  
 File) (3)  
 DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 04/21/2011  
 WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST . . . . TMH

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
'Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 033397

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . ÇReport

TITLE . . . . . North Korea May Have Army Light  
Infantry Units

CREATION DATE . . . . . 04/23/1976

VOLUME . . . . . 10 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 033700538

COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. NSC EAST  
ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS STAFF FILES

BOX NUMBER . . . . . 35

FOLDER TITLE . . . . . Korean Military Situation (Working  
File) (3)

DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 04/21/2011

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST . . . . TMH

*Sanitized 3/30/04*

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2

DIA REVIEWED 16-Oct-2003: SANITIZED FOR RELEASE IN PART

## NORTH KOREA MAY HAVE ARMY LIGHT INFANTRY UNITS

(S/NOFORN) Brigade-sized light infantry units are believed to exist in five of the eight North Korean Army corps. The 8th Corps, sometimes referred to as the 8th Special Corps, contains four light infantry brigades. The three forward corps -- 1st, 5th, and 2d -- each has two such units and the 4th Corps has one. These brigades are believed to be the army's elite forces. Although not yet confirmed, light infantry battalions similar to the light infantry brigades may exist in infantry divisions. These battalions would be of great value as elite vanguard forces during a major ground attack against South Korea.

(S/NOFORN) [25x1] a North Korean Army (NKA) infantry platoon leader who defected on [25x1], claims that a light infantry battalion was subordinate to his organization, the [25x1] 5th Corps, on the South Korean border. He also said that the 73d Light Infantry Brigade (LIB) was subordinate to the 5th Corps and that another brigade-sized unit, generally referred to as a "sniper brigade," existed within the 5th Corps area.

(S/NOFORN) The NKA is believed to have 11 LIBs, two of which are unlocated and unidentified but are believed to be subordinate to the 5th Corps. Neither light infantry battalions organic to infantry divisions nor "sniper brigades" are presently included in the NKA order of battle. Although information concerning actual composition, structure, and mission of LIBs is sparse, it is now estimated that each has 3,200 men organized into eight lightly armed and equipped commando-type light infantry battalions. Personnel have reportedly been trained in such specialized missions as team- and small-unit

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23 Apr 76

DIA Weekly Intelligence Summary

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No Objection To Declassification 2004/03/30 : NLF-NSC\_EA\_PA-35-2-2-5

DECLASSIFIED, with portions exempted  
 AUTHORITY DIA PAC Review 10/16/03  
 BY [illegible] DATE 5/18/05  
 NLF-NSC\_EA-35-2-2-5



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DIA REVIEWED 16-Oct-2003. SANITIZED FOR RELEASE IN PART

## NORTH KOREA MAY HAVE ARMY LIGHT INFANTRY UNITS

(S/NOFORN) Brigade-sized light infantry units are believed to exist in five of the eight North Korean Army corps. The 8th Corps, sometimes referred to as the 8th Special Corps, contains four light infantry brigades. The three forward corps -- 1st, 5th, and 2d -- each has two such units and the 4th Corps has one. These brigades are believed to be the army's elite forces. Although not yet confirmed, light infantry battalions similar to the light infantry brigades may exist in infantry divisions. These battalions would be of great value as elite vanguard forces during a major ground attack against South Korea.

(S/NOFORN) [redacted] 25x1 a North Korean Army (NKA) infantry platoon leader who defected on [redacted] 25x1, claims that a light infantry battalion was subordinate to his organization, the [redacted] 25x1 5th Corps, on the South Korean border. He also said that the 73d Light Infantry Brigade (LIB) was subordinate to the 5th Corps and that another brigade-sized unit, generally referred to as a "sniper brigade," existed within the 5th Corps area.

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DIA Weekly Intelligence Summary

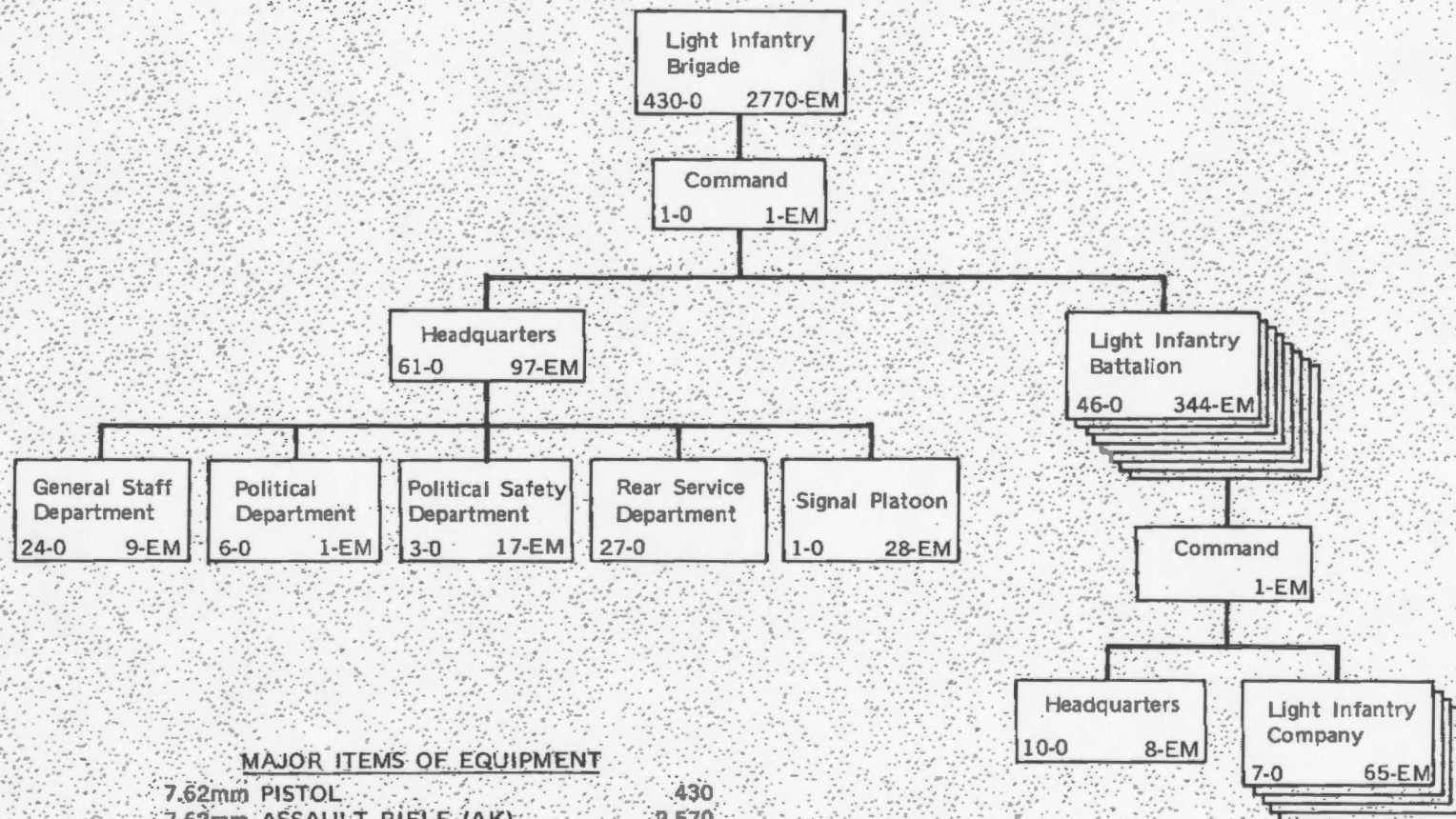
Page 11

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No Objection To Declassification 2004/03/30 : NLF-NSC\_EA\_PA-35-2-2-5

DECLASSIFIED, with portions exempted  
 AUTHORITY DIA RAC Review to 11/16/03  
 BY [redacted] ns-nc-ED 11-16-03  
 DATE 5/18/05  
 NLF, DATE 5/18/05

# ASSESSED LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



## MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| 7.62mm PISTOL             | 430     |
| 7.62mm ASSAULT RIFLE (AK) | 2,570   |
| 7.62mm LMG (RP-46)        | 200     |
| ANTITANK LAUNCHER (RPG-2) | 200     |
| 82mm MORTAR               | UNKNOWN |
| TRUCK (GAZ-69)            | 5       |
| TRUCK (CARGO)             | 42      |
| RADIO                     | 61      |
| AMBULANCE                 | 1       |
| MOBILE KITCHEN            | 9       |

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reconnaissance, ambush, line-of-communication (LOC) interdiction, assassinations, raids, and other special warfare- or special forces-type operations behind enemy lines. [25x1] indicated that light infantry battalions subordinate to NKA infantry divisions were established beginning in 1969 at the direction of President Kim Il-song. Subsequently, [25x1] claimed that the 73d LIB was activated directly subordinate to the 5th Corps.

(S) Prior to 1969, foot reconnaissance stations (FRS) were deployed in the forward areas along the DMZ. Their primary missions were reconnaissance and assisting North Korean agents to infiltrate through the DMZ into South Korea. FRS units also conducted cross-border raids. When the FRS were reportedly disbanded during major reorganizations in 1969-70, the LIB became a partial replacement. DMZ-reconnaissance and agent-infiltration activities were apparently not included among its missions. Recorded DMZ incidents declined from 542 during 1968 to only 71 in 1970.

(C/NOFORN) Although [25x1] could not provide a detailed list of LIB equipment, he did claim to have seen certain major items associated with these units. For example, LIB personnel were issued 7.62-mm AK-47 assault rifles that are lighter than the standard fixed wooden-stock model issued to divisional infantry personnel. This weapon is probably a North Korean-produced weapon similar to the Soviet AKM with a folding metal stock.

(S) In addition, 60-mm mortars and RPG-7 anti-tank grenade launchers were reportedly organic to the brigade. Although these weapons systems have not been confirmed in the LIB arsenal, it is conceivable that they were locally produced or procured models designed for units whose missions require speed, stealth, and rapid mobility. In

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25X1



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the case of the 60-mm mortar, it could be a North Korean-produced version similar to the Chinese Type 31 (M1942) or the improved Type 63, which is much lighter and easier to handle.

(S/NOFORN) 25x1 also said that LIB training emphasized offensive and ambush operations as well as activities in mountainous terrain. Earlier information had indicated that LIB personnel were instructed primarily in unconventional warfare and special forces-type tactics to be conducted behind enemy lines.

(S) The reference to offensive operations is particularly interesting. The two DMZ tunnels constructed by the North Koreans and discovered in November 1974 and March 1975, respectively, were obviously designed for infiltrating personnel behind South Korean forward defenses. In a coordinated offensive against the South, light infantry units would most likely use these tunnels. These lightly armed and equipped personnel would be employed against the rear areas of the forward South Korean divisions, forcing them to fight on two fronts. These tactics would create confusion and chaos in division command posts and support areas and perhaps more importantly, deny resupply and reinforcements. Armed with small arms, 60-mm mortars, and RPG-7 rocket launchers, such a battalion/brigade force would be difficult to destroy or dislodge quickly and could be instrumental in aiding a major breakthrough by regular NKA forces.

(S) It is misleading to categorize the LIB as an "unconventional warfare" force. If LIB forces have been trained for offensive tactics, they have the capability to augment regular infantry divisional forces in offensive operations, to act independently for short periods behind enemy lines, and to combine with other combat forces in a coordinated assault.

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25X1



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(S/NOFORN) [25x1] recalled two types of training facilities in the 12th Division area that were used for conventional offensive operations by personnel of the light infantry battalion. He said the first contained five or six dummy tanks constructed to scale from concrete and wood. These mock-ups were used for "tank-destruction training."

[25x1]

[25x1]

[25x1]

(S/NOFORN/NOINTEL) The second training facility described by [25x1] was an HONEST JOHN surface-to-air guided-missile site. The dummy missile was said to be the only training device used and was constructed of small logs less than one and one-half meters long.

[25x1]

(S/NOFORN) According to [25x1] description, the light infantry battalions organic to the forward infantry divisions would operate in South Korea up to a depth of 16 kilometers, whereas corps light infantry brigades would penetrate 40 kilometers. Thus, light infantry battalions would operate under divisional control against military targets along and to the rear of the South Korean forward edge of the battle area. Forward corps LIBs would operate against deeper military targets within the areas of responsibility of the 1st and 3d Republic of Korea Armies. It would logically follow that 8th Corps LIBs could be intended for long-range penetration missions; for example, against targets in the 2d Republic of Korea Army.

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25X1

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(S/NOFORN) Although not intended primarily for unconventional warfare, divisional and corps-level light infantry units would certainly be capable of such operations. In conjunction with a major NKA attack across the DMZ, their primary missions would be to assault and ambush such specified targets as command posts, LOCs, artillery, armor, and surface-to-air missile units to the rear of the forward or frontline South Korean defensive forces, as well as similar targets deeper within the combat zones of the 3d and 1st Republic of Korea Armies. The North has very likely organized special light infantry battalions organic to at least the frontline infantry divisions to function in a fashion similar to the corps' light infantry brigades.

(S/NOFORN/NOINTEL) Although reliable information on NKA divisional light infantry battalions is sparse, it is becoming increasingly apparent that Pyongyang will continue to emphasize the development of a highly flexible special-warfare force designed primarily for offensive operations. In recent years, there has also been increasing evidence<sup>[25x1]</sup> of light infantry unit training, pointing to a comparable emphasis by the North Koreans on improving these forces. (XGDS-2 Declassify upon notification of originator)

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|------|--------|
| 25x1 | DIR-2C |
| 25x1 | DIR-5E |

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25X1



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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 033641

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . ÇReport

DESCRIPTION . . . . . Re North Korea

CREATION DATE . . . . . 05/16/1976

VOLUME . . . . . 13 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 033700538

COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. NSC EAST  
ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS STAFF FILES

BOX NUMBER . . . . . 35

FOLDER TITLE . . . . . Korean Military Situation (Working  
File) (3)

DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 05/11/2011

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST . . . . TMH

21

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 033642

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . ÇReport

DESCRIPTION . . . . . Re North & South Korea

CREATION DATE . . . . . 06/04/1976

VOLUME . . . . . 1 page

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 033700538

COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. NSC EAST  
ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS STAFF FILES

BOX NUMBER . . . . . 35

FOLDER TITLE . . . . . Korean Military Situation (Working  
File) (3)

DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 05/11/2011

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST . . . . TMH



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 033643

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . ÇCable

DESCRIPTION . . . . . Re North Korea

CREATION DATE . . . . . 07/26/1976

VOLUME . . . . . 2 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 033700538

COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. NSC EAST  
ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS STAFF FILES

BOX NUMBER . . . . . 35

FOLDER TITLE . . . . . Korean Military Situation (Working  
File) (3)

DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 05/11/2011

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST . . . . TMH