

# North Korea's mystery man

**Kim Jong-il – the leader of North Korea's totalitarian regime – assiduously follows international events on cable TV and the internet. He enjoys horse riding, watching and directing movies, driving fast cars, and has a reputation as a drinker, favouring cognac and white wine**

■ **1999:** Kim's alleged **supernote** scam takes off. Extremely high-quality copies of foreign currency – U.S. dollars, Japanese yen, Thai bahts, and later, euros – start circulating through North Korea **Zokwang Trading Company** in Macau

■ **2001:** Pyongyang sends condolences to U.S. President **George W. Bush** following 9/11 attacks

■ **Jan 2002:** President Bush brands North Korea, along with Iraq and Iran, as part of **axis of evil**"

■ **Oct:** U.S. halts oil deliveries. With invasion of Iraq looming, Kim becomes increasingly convinced Bush wants to overthrow him

■ **2003:** U.S. threatens sanctions. Pyongyang resumes nuclear weapons programme and expels United Nations inspectors

**Kim's favourite drink – Hennessy VSOP cognac**

■ **2004:** In explicit threat, Kim warns that South Korea and Japan will be immersed in **nuclear sea of fire** if U.S. attacks North Korea

■ **2005:** U.S. imposes financial sanctions and accuses Kim of complicity in currency counterfeiting and money laundering

■ **Jan 2006:** Pyongyang says it won't continue nuclear talks unless U.S. lifts financial sanctions

■ **Sep:** In speech to UN General Assembly, Pyongyang again blames U.S. financial sanctions for deadlock in nuclear talks

■ **Oct 9:** Kim orders nuclear weapon test

■ **Feb 1941:** Born either in Siberia, when his father, **Kim Il-sung** was in exile or in **1942** at his father's guerrilla base in North Korea

■ **Jun 1950:** Soviet-backed Kim Il-sung attacks South Korea, triggering Korean War



■ **Jul 1953:** Korean War ends in truce without formal peace agreement. North and South still technically at war

■ **1964:** Kim Jong-il graduates from university

■ **1970s-80s:** Appointed head of North Korea's special forces. Allegedly linked to 1986 bombing of **Korean Airlines** jet, killing 115 people

■ **1973:** Heads cultural division of **Korean Workers' Party**

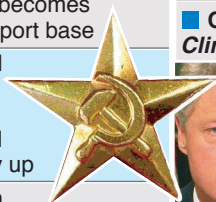
■ **1978:** Organizes kidnap of South Korean film director and his actress girlfriend in bid to improve North Korea's film industry

**Kim believed to have library of 20,000 movies. Favourite characters are Rambo and James Bond**

■ **1980:** Officially designated successor to his father. Appointed commander of army, which becomes his main support base

■ **1991:** Fall of Soviet Union. Vital source of aid begins to dry up

■ **1993:** Kim takes over responsibility for nation's defence



**Height: 5 feet 3 inches**

**Wears platform shoes and bouffant hairstyle**



**2001: Publishes book On the Art of Cinema**



■ **1994:** Death of Kim Il-sung. Famine kills as many as two million people in North Korea

■ **Oct:** U.S. President **Bill Clinton** forges pact with Pyongyang to abandon its atomic weapons programme in exchange for fuel aid and help to build two reactors



■ **Nov:** Republicans gain control of U.S. Congress – Clinton's pact grinds to virtual standstill

■ **1997:** After mourning period Kim becomes head of state. Under his **military first** policy army gets first choice of resources

■ **1998:** Kim initiates **missiles for nuclear technology** deal with Pakistan and launches Taepo-dong-1 missile over northern Japan

