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United States Department of State  
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

# The Secretary's Morning Intelligence Summary

September 2, 1994

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### China/DPRK: MAC "Recall"

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan yesterday announced that "considering the requirements of the DPRK and the fact that the DPRK has recalled its delegation from the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) and the commission has actually stopped operations, the Chinese government has decided to recall the Chinese People's Volunteers' Delegation from the Commission," according to press reports. Tang "expressed concern over developments on the Korean peninsula and said China hopes for a relaxation and stability" there.

In talks yesterday with the DPRK's special envoy, Vice Foreign Minister Song Ho Kyung, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said the Armistice agreement would "be effective until a new peace mechanism is established. All parties concerned should abide by the agreement." Qian also said China "sincerely hopes to see peace and stability on the peninsula" and that he "believes" the Korean people will "rally closely around the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee, headed by Comrade Kim Jong Il."

**Comment:** That the vice minister, rather than Foreign Minister Qian, announced the "recall," and the almost apologetic language of the announcement, suggest little enthusiasm on Beijing's part in taking this step. That it did so as

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a sign of support for Kim Jong Il is hinted at by Qian's reference to the "central committee headed by Kim Jong Il"; more important may be the Chinese reference to Song's bringing greetings from "North Korean leaders" – reinforcing the impression that a more collective leadership is currently in charge in Pyongyang.

It is unclear whether the North sees its MAC move as playing into the next round of US-DPRK talks or whether it is looking ahead to broader questions of peace and security on the Korean peninsula after further progress on the nuclear issue. Pyongyang has long seen demonstrating an end to hostility with the United States as important in justifying new policy departures, especially on the economic front.

Putting the past to rest is also vital to the North's effort to broaden its diplomatic contacts. Pyongyang had asked the PRC to bow out of the MAC in April, when it announced the withdrawal of its representatives, and has been openly talking of "next moves" for months in working-level discussions at Panmunjom.

The DPRK is aware of the issue's sensitivity – the North's chief negotiator treated it gingerly in the Geneva talks, and there have been indications of differences between the military and the foreign ministry on the question. The latest push on the issue began last spring after our Patriot missile deployment, but even then Pyongyang emphasized that – although the MAC mechanism had become obsolete – it would continue to abide by the essential provisions of the armistice.

Kim Jong Il has been personally identified with the North's position on this issue. The question arose in 1991 – as Kim was taking charge of the military – when a South Korean general was installed as the UN Command's chief representative to the MAC. Pyongyang warned that because in its view the South Koreans were not a party to the armistice, the move would paralyze the commission.

Pyongyang nonetheless has come to acknowledge that South Korea needs to be a participant in the process of replacing the armistice. When it announced its withdrawal from the MAC in April, it called for replacing the armistice with a "peace arrangement" rather than a US-DPRK peace treaty. This new terminology implies a role for Seoul, though not an exclusive one, in accordance with the North's interpretation of the December 1991 North-South agreements.

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