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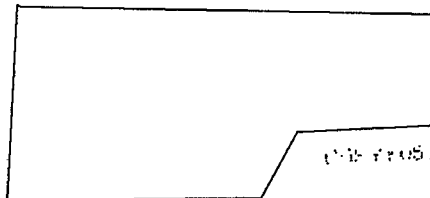
Director of Central Intelligence

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY

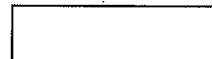
Thursday, 18 March 1993



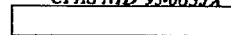
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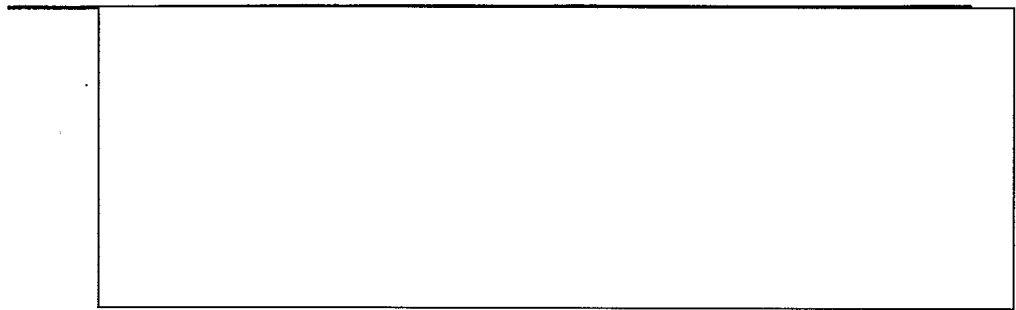
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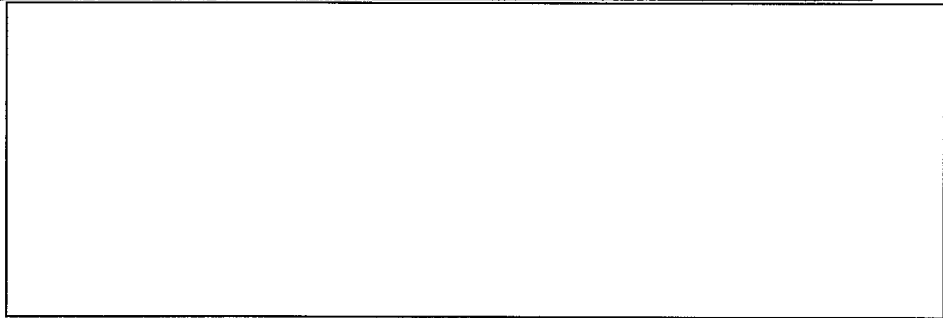
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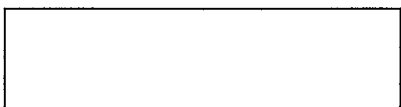
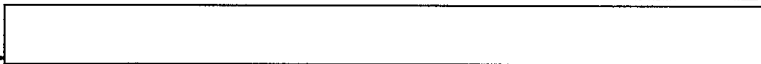


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Special Analysis

NORTH KOREA: The World Through P'yongyang's Eyes

North Korea's reversion to a hardline stance toward the IAEA and the West is rooted both in the regime's view that in international relations compromise equates to capitulation and in the leadership's personal stake in standing up to perceived adversaries. [redacted]

P'yongyang continues to behave in ways that are counterproductive to its desperate need for Western economic assistance. It probably hopes that allowing some IAEA inspections and signing a reconciliation accord with Seoul would help it overcome international concerns about its offensive military posture, its export of missiles and missile technology, and its suspected nuclear weapons program. Once it became clear that this approach would fail, the North had to choose between pushing forward with fundamental changes or reversing course. [redacted]

P'yongyang's reversion to a hard line probably was driven by its historical view of the world. North Koreans see themselves as surrounded by larger powers that seek to manipulate them. They mistrust the outside world and view international relations as a win-lose game in which they hold a weak hand. As a result, the country's leaders have historically tried to counter pressure with a belligerent defensiveness. [redacted]

This perspective also has a domestic political dynamic. President Kim Il-song and his son, Armed Forces Supreme Commander Kim Chong-il, probably see foreign pressure as a personal test, particularly since the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and what was the Soviet Union. To an extreme degree, they have staked their legitimacy on defending North Korea against its adversaries. In this environment, it is not surprising that, under pressure from the IAEA, they returned to a hardline approach. [redacted]

This dynamic probably was particularly powerful for the younger Kim, who may be seeking a symbolic victory over Korea's "enemies." He is deeply aware that his father's mythicized anti-Japanese struggle is the cornerstone of Kim Il-song's political legitimacy. By standing firm against the IAEA and the US-South Korean Team Spirit exercise, he may have hoped to convince his critics that he can be entrusted with the country's future, particularly in view of his close identification with failing economic policies and fruitless overtures to the West, as well as signs of growing public dissatisfaction and rumors of military opposition. [redacted]

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