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United States Department of State
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

The Secretary's Morning Intelligence Summary

August 18, 1994

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ROK: Anxiety Attack

Blue House spokesmen played up the President's phone conversation with President Kim Young Sam yesterday as showing there is no daylight between Washington and Seoul on the North Korean nuclear issue, according to press reports. The ROK press has slammed the United States for giving away too much in the Geneva talks, failing to take ROK interests into account, and not pinning down the North on special inspections. Kim is also being criticized for promising to foot the bill for providing light-water reactors (LWRs) to the North without extracting firm concessions from Pyongyang.

Comment: As he did last autumn, Kim is responding to the political heat by trying to exert more influence over US-DPRK negotiations. He is trying to rein in US-DPRK working-level talks to discuss normalization and to tie provision of LWRs to resumption of inter-Korean dialogue – moves that will probably impede progress in our talks with Pyongyang.

It may be hard for Kim to regain public backing: there is a growing sense in the ROK that the South's unification policy has been inept, that the issue of condolences for Kim Il Sung was mishandled, and that Kim's administration is incapable of pursuing a consistent long-term strategy toward the North.
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