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B1, 1.4(C), 1.4(D)



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United States Department of State
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

~~D~~ (P)
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The Secretary's Morning Intelligence Summary

1.4(C,D)

March 29, 1994

Dept. of State, ISS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.

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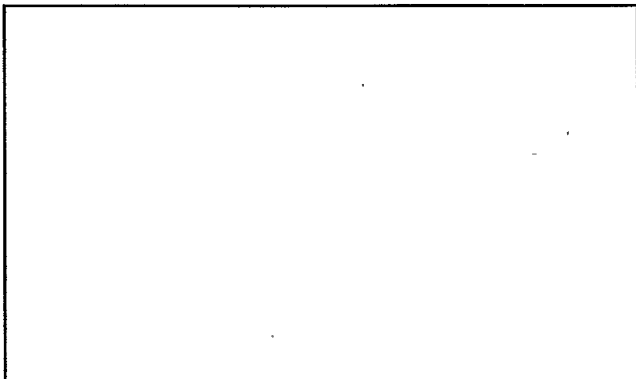
DPRK: Hoping for Best, Bracing for Worst

Pyongyang appears to believe the current crisis with the United States is moving toward war. Surprised by the speed with which the situation has deteriorated since March 15, the North Koreans hope a US signal will reactivate the diplomatic track but are gearing up for a major confrontation in case, in their view, they are left with no other option.

A Korean People's Army officer, at a meeting at Panmunjom on March 25, said that if the United States offered "a hand of reconciliation, we would take it."
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To keep open the possibility of resuming talks, the North has been carefully calibrating its language toward Washington; despite escalating rhetoric about threatening moves by "US imperialist aggression forces," it continues to refer in neutral terms to President Clinton.



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Don't tread on me

At the same time, the North is readying for the worst. At the March 25 Panmunjom meeting, which was otherwise held in a cordial atmosphere, the North Koreans laid out with remarkable frankness a pre-emptive attack scenario: "This will not be a situation like the Iraq war. We will not give you time to collect troops around Korea to attack us. We will not attack the South first, but if it is clear you are going to attack, then we will attack." This is the same message the North is signaling in their media, albeit with less precision.

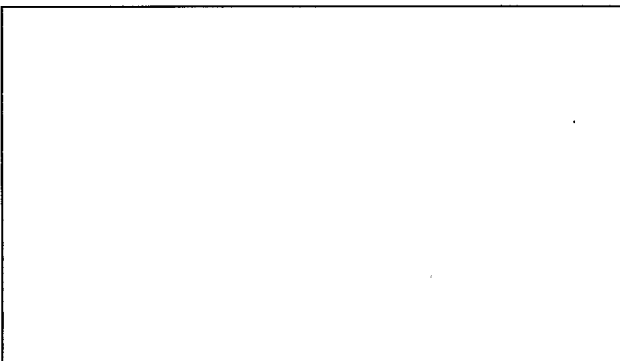
These military moves, many of which entail significant economic costs, are not just for show; the North is preparing its population for any eventuality. Warning that the situation continues to worsen, DPRK media have focused on remarks by US officials about plans to reinforce forces on the peninsula and, especially, to move aircraft carriers into the vicinity.

A foreign ministry statement yesterday on the deployment of Patriot missiles struck an especially alarmist tone, claiming the missiles were offensive weapons that could hit anywhere on the peninsula. The statement warned that the United States would be in position to launch a pre-emptive strike against the North once the missiles arrived.

War preparations

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Domestic angle

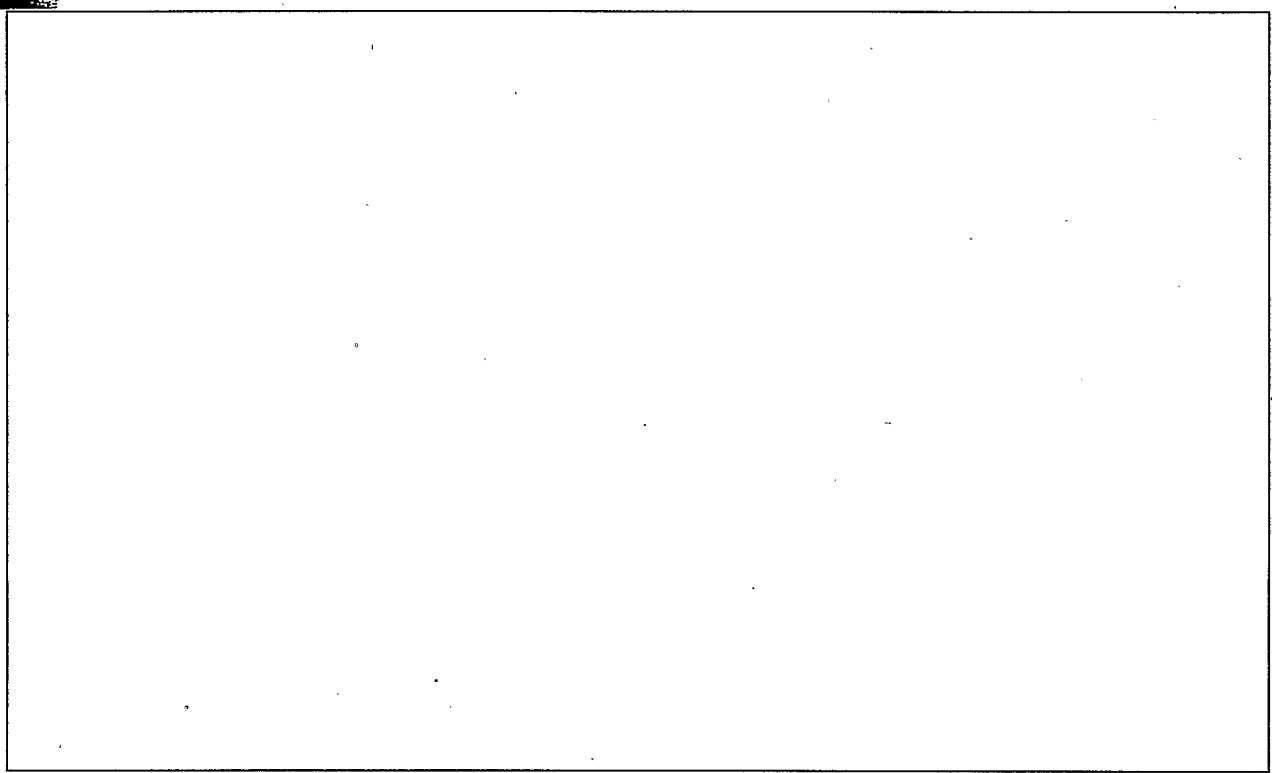
The North's handling of the current crisis may be related to internal political dynamics. Kim Jong Il, who has been closely associated with the DPRK-US negotiations on the nuclear issue, may now have to scramble to prove he was not taken in by Washington and is capable of standing up to outside pressure.

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