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United States Department of State
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

The Secretary's Morning Intelligence Summary

July 23, 1994

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DPRK: Not Much Movement

Pyongyang has yet to confirm that Kim Jong Il has inherited his father's formal positions. The North's policy of engagement with the United States appears on track, but prospects for a North-South summit have worsened.

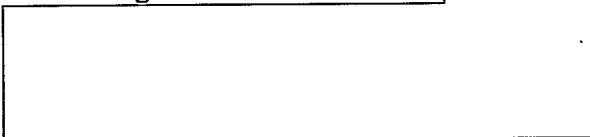
Leadership

On the surface, the succession has proceeded smoothly, with much the same methodical precision that has marked the process over the past two decades. Kim Jong Il is ranked first in the leadership and is receiving expressions of allegiance from the people and the media as the successor. He has appeared numerous times since his father's death and had meetings with several foreigners. Pyongyang is making a special effort to overcome the impression that Kim does not like meeting outsiders or cannot handle foreign affairs.

There is no information, one way or the other, to judge the security of Kim's position or the situation inside the leadership. The leadership turnouts for Kim Il Sung's funeral reflected no changes in ranking, other than the placement of Kim's widow among the party Political Bureau members – much higher than her normal position. An editorial in the party newspaper yesterday – the first authoritative comment in the post-Kim Il Sung era – contained what might be an early hint of differences in the leadership. The editorial warned Delphically that there must not be "the slightest attempt to damage" Kim Il Sung's accomplishments, which must be upheld "without the slightest deviation."

US-DPRK talks

All signs suggest the policy of engagement with the United States remains on track. Even before the July 21 meeting at which it set the date for resuming the third round, the North had used the New York channel several times to emphasize that it wanted to get back to the talks soon.



In the most telling signal, the North has kept the public atmosphere good for another meeting. It has clearly avoided criticism of the United States – even to the extent of dropping routine references to the US role in the Korean war – while playing up the official US reaction to Kim's death. A good test of how far the North intends to go in this direction will be the treatment of the July 27 anniversary of the 1953 armistice agreement, when Pyongyang will have a chance to point to the possibility of a new relationship with the United States.

Positive as all the signals are, however, they do not necessarily confirm that the general position Pyongyang advanced at the opening session of the third round on July 8 remains on track. As yet there has been nothing specific on which to hang a judgment about the North's probable course at the next meeting.

DPRK-ROK summit

The atmosphere for a summit has soured, with Pyongyang continuing to criticize the South for its treatment of Kim Il Sung's death. Pyongyang understands there is a link between a deterioration in North-South relations and US-DPRK talks and that a downturn in inter-Korean relations risks slowing progress in Geneva. It knows the problems that arise when Seoul feels slighted, which is why it decided last month that the best way to ensure progress in US-DPRK talks was to engage the South.

Tactically, the North can use the negative turn in inter-Korean ties to its advantage at the next Geneva meeting – for example, to counter the US position that there should be early progress in implementing the North-South denuclearization declaration. Whether Kim Jong Il himself wants to exploit the North-South difficulties in the talks with

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the United States remains to be seen. The toughest comment to date against the South has come from the Vice Defense Minister, at Kim Il Sung's memorial service on July 20. Otherwise, Pyongyang has stuck to low-level or indirect criticism of Seoul,

leaving the way open for resumed North-South dialogue.
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