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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. memo	George Tenet to Anthony Lake re Weekly Meeting with the DCI (3 pages)	06/14/1994	P1/b(1)
002. memo	Richard Wilhelm to Anthony Lake re Intelligence Support (6 pages)	06/17/1994	P1/b(1)

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
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TO: LAKE

FROM: SACHAROFF, MARK

KEYWORDS: KOREA NORTH
MEDIA

PERSONS: KIM DAE JUNG

KOREA SOUTH

KIM IL SONG

SUBJECT: LTR TO LAKE FM MARK SACHAROFF RE KIM DAE JUNG INVITING KIM IL SONG
TO SPEAK AT NATIONAL PRESS CLUB & FWDS PAPER PREVENT WAR IN KOREA

ACTION: PREPARE MEMO FOR LAKE

DUE DATE: 07 JUN 94 STATUS: S

STAFF OFFICER: KRISTOFF

LOGREF:

FILES: PA

NSCP:

CODES:

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Department of English

PRESS RELEASE

A distinguished South Korean statesman, Mr. Kim Dae-Jung, has proposed that the National Press Club invite President Kim Il Sung of North Korea to speak. National Press Club officials have agreed to do so, and an invitation was expected to be issued May 20.

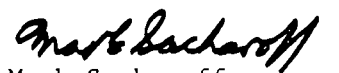
The South Korean Embassy reacted with considerable distress and protested the invitation. South Korean journalists have inquired in some numbers at the Press Club, according to Melissa Binder, secretary to the president. As of May 19, the U.S. media have shown no interest in the new development.

Mr. Dae-Jung made his remarks May 12 during a 30-minute talk at the Press Club, covered by C-Span. Prominent among the questions following the talk were: Is President Kim Il Sung, at 81, able to make the trip? Will he be willing to speak in the United States when his absence from North Korea may lead to his ouster there? Mr. Dae-Jung replied that the North Korean president would be physically able to make the trip and that he would accept the invitation, because if he did not he would be criticized by many around the world seeking to defuse the Korean crisis. He also proposed that an elder statesman from the United States go to North and South Korea and act as a mediator. In answer to the question of whether he meant former President Jimmy Carter, he strongly implied that the questioner was correct.

Mr. Dae-Jung has been a member of the South Korean Assembly six times. He has served as co-chair of the Democratic party and was nominated three times for the Presidency.

For information about the issuance of the invitation, please contact Melissa Binder, secretary to the president, National Press Club, 1-202-662-7500.

A related story is that the Rev. Billy Graham transmitted a message from Kim Il Sung to President Clinton about four weeks ago. The contents of that message should be of some interest; Rev. Graham indicated that it was highly conciliatory. News outlets may well be curious about Kim Il Sung's communications with President Clinton at a time when, according to Secretary of Defense William Perry, the two nations may be heading for a confrontation in a few weeks.


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Department of English

April 11, 1994

Enclosed is my paper, "To Prevent War in Korea." Paul Warnke has read it and agrees with my main points. I proposed to him that a delegation of former Presidential advisers consult with the President's current advisers and lay out the numerous and significant reasons why the present North Korean policy needs to be reassessed.

I suggested that the following former high officials be approached: Cyrus Vance, Marshall Shulman, Stansfield Turner, Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Schlesinger, Ted Sorensen, Lawrence Korb, and Mr. Warnke himself. Naturally, only those who support the idea that war with North Korea may be inevitable under our present policy and is also preventable would become part of the delegation.

Since there would be the dual danger of high casualties and great political damage to the Democratic party as a result of such a war, political professionals like Robert Strauss ought to be included. Former President Jimmy Carter also should join the group. Some experts on North Korea, including Selig Harrison, would provide hard information about the problem.

The Institute for Peace issued a position paper a month ago that presents views that generally coincide with those in my paper. Their statement or mine or both could be used to solicit support from potential members of a high-level group.

The idea of a delegation of Wise Men who would discuss a key foreign policy issue with top U.S. officials may seem fairly grandiose, but the North Korean problem and its possibly disastrous outcome urgently warrant such a move. Position papers are no substitute for a face-to-face meeting between current policy-makers and their respected colleagues of an earlier period. (E.g., Cyrus Vance was Warren Christopher's boss during the Carter Administration.)

I am sending this letter in the hope that some former officials will find the idea of a delegation worthy and plausible and will consult with each other toward its formation in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

cc: Marshall Shulman
Selig Harrison
Sheryl Brown
Lawrence Korb
Senator Harris Wofford
Marcus Corbin
Alfred Rieber
Arthur Schlesinger
Roy Kim

Professor Mark Sacharoff
Temple University



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C O P Y

April 27, 1994

Paul C. Warnke
Howrey and Simon
1299 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20004-2402

Dear Mr. Warnke,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Special Report on North Korea's Nuclear Program, issued by the U.S. Institute of Peace. In many respects I agree with the positions in this report, especially that the goal of the United States should be to eliminate "the nuclear threat from Pyongyang without either acquiescing in its proliferation activities or precipitating armed conflict."

However, on six crucial points I believe that the report--like U.S. North Korean policy--continues to maintain views that admittedly are reasonable and therefore should work, but in the post-Cold War world very likely will not work. The six points in the report with which I disagree are:

(1) That North Korean compliance with IAEA regulations absolutely must precede high-level negotiations and the awarding of trade and development to North Korea;

(2) That a credible U.S.-South Korean military deterrent will help persuade Pyongyang to comply, or that it will prevent unacceptable devastation to South Korea if the North Koreans decide to initiate war with a massive artillery and rocket-launcher attack;

(3) That the old-style Pavlovian diplomacy--rewards and punishment, incentives and disincentives--will encourage Pyongyang to become reasonable and act in its own best interests. This either-or, take-it-or-leave-it strategy suffers from a major fault, i.e., the U.S. superpower is establishing the terms of any agreement unilaterally, without consulting the weaker power to create mutually acceptable terms of agreement; in short, an ultimatum;

(4) The report also accepts the inevitability of sanctions if the North refuses to comply--along with the heightened prospect of war if sanctions are imposed (p. 21, middle).

(5) Moreover, the authors of the report, like U.S. policy-makers, envisage the possibility of war as a necessary option, however undesirable (p. 3, point 3; p. 8, bottom quarter; p. 16, bottom line; p. 22, middle; p. 23, bottom).

(6) Finally, the authors of the report do not propose a face-to-face meeting with U.S. officials, a meeting for which no written report can substitute.

--DRAFT--

TO PREVENT WAR IN KOREA, PART II

By Mark Sacharoff

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The United States and North Korea continue to move on a collision course, one that could result in a war within three to six months. The foreign policies of both nations are being directed by rigid slogans: "Trade Before Compliance" (North Korea) and "Compliance Before Trade" (the United States). An impartial observer might conclude that the two potential belligerents are quarreling not about two intrinsic values (trade and nuclear compliance), which both of them ultimately want, but about the chronology by which these aims would be set in place.

Statements from the American side in late March and early April of 1994 provided a study in paradox and ambiguity about this stand-off. For example, Secretary of Defense William Perry, in an interview on Meet the Press April 3, made remarks considered conciliatory by some and inflammatory by others. A preemptive strike has been ruled out at this time, he said--but not under all circumstances. War now is unlikely, and the current situation "is not yet a crisis." On the other hand, he acknowledged, the firm stand and future strong actions of the U.S. might conceivably "provoke the North Koreans into unleashing a war, and that is a risk we're taking."

This mixture of a hard-line policy and a moderate implementation of that policy sounds prudent and plausible, but its underlying premise makes its success questionable. The

premise to which I refer is that small, weak powers must eventually submit to the will of major powers if those major powers apply escalating pressures until they become intolerable. But recent history clearly contradicts this supposition.

Since the end of the Cold War--indeed, since the end of World War II--the power-relations between large and small nations have shifted markedly. North Vietnam, a poor Third World country, was supposed to fold in a few weeks after the U.S., a nation of enormous power, began to bomb it. The U.S. harangued and threatened Sadaam Hussein for five months, yet we had to go to war to gain our ends. That we won is hardly the point.

Similarly, Khomeini, Aidid, the Bosnian Serbs, and the Haitian junta have, with varying degrees of success, defied the major powers. In short, several smaller nations have recently shown that they refuse to be intimidated by ultimatums, threats, and pressures. Rather, these can increase the appetite for defiance. And North Korea promises to rival or surpass Iraq in its obduracy. The odds are much greater than 50-50 that the gradual escalation of pressures will only postpone by several months the inevitable outcome of coercion: continued North Korean intransigence and the outbreak of armed hostilities.

In spite of its outdated armaments, North Korea has a great capacity for destruction: it has amassed 8,400 artillery pieces and 2,400 rocket-launchers within striking range of Seoul. If its leaders conclude that the major powers plan to attack or to fatally weaken North Korea's society by economic strangulation, they could very well launch a massive first strike. No amount of

For what it's worth that's a different kind of stuff

defense, even with early warning, could prevent very large and unacceptable damage to Seoul, to its people, and to some of the 37,000 U.S. soldiers and their 65,000 dependents stationed in South Korea.

Patriot missiles, aircraft carriers, retaliatory bombing, Team Spirit exercises, and troop-reinforcements would all be futile against a first-strike attack by the North Koreans. The idea of a genuine defense that would reliably prevent such an attack is illusory and self-deceptive: we should not confuse attempted deterrence, mobilization, and retaliation with prevention. All we can do is attempt to deter and hope that this will work; if it does not, we can and must retaliate; but retaliation and a military victory over the North Koreans could not erase the devastation, loss of life, and political damage produced by their initial strike. Thus, the prudent measures being undertaken by the Clinton administration may ultimately have no positive effect, and could have the negative effect of convincing the North Koreans that we are preparing for war.

Some might well argue that we too should not be intimidated, especially by a small nation. More important, to back down, even because of North Korea's extremely favorable military position, would provide dozens of pre-nuclear nations with a rationale for violating the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

These points carry much weight. No one disputes that non-proliferation ranks with almost any present and future goal of the international community. But counterpoised against these

points are the questions, Is non-proliferation worth a war? and Are there no alternatives? The theme of this article is that there are alternatives that will promote non-proliferation in North Korea, and that therefore the values of national pride and non-proliferation do not necessitate an inflexible policy that could lead to war.

The present policy of the Clinton Administration carries with it the danger that we will precipitate a war in order to prevent one. The very tactics we have employed to deter war would be viewed by disinterested observers--and certainly by the North Koreans--as provocative. For example, Patriot missiles are not purely defensive. Like Star Wars or any other ABM system, Patriot missiles have the capability of shooting down retaliatory missiles launched by an adversary after we have carried out a first strike. Hence, adversaries take them as an essential component of a two-part offensive strategy. Similarly, the reinstatement of the Team Spirit exercises, in spite of long-standing North Korean claims that they are provocative, may satisfy our urge to match their nose-thumbing. But--perception being reality--since they perceive them as provocative, they are. Moreover, although a very large and prosperous nation like ours, virtually exempt from economic sanctions, may consider them quite civilized and relatively harmless, North Korea, one of the poorest countries in Asia, regards them as the final blow that would lead to complete economic ruin. Our policy-makers' threats to promote sanctions are therefore far less civilized and far

less prudent than they might imagine. Indeed, the severe hardships suffered by the innocent people of Haiti, Serbia, and Iraq as a result of sanctions have demonstrated that economic constriction against poor countries may be essentially inhumane and may have to be reassessed.

A remarkable feature of the impasse is that the two potential belligerents have parallel aims in four out of five areas: (1) North Korea seeks aid and development, and the United States sees the value of a growing North Korean economy; (2) North Korea wants to establish trade with its prosperous Asian neighbors and with others, and the Clinton Administration considers free and expanded trade as a vital ingredient of the global economy; (3) North Korea desires high-level talks with the United States, and we were prepared to engage in them until North Korea failed to allow complete inspections; (4) North Korea wants to end its isolation and become part of the international community, and U.S. officials have frequently alluded to the desirability of such an outcome--but only as a reward for complete inspections.

Thus, only the fifth objective, complete inspections, impedes a satisfactory resolution of the impasse. Two nations with knowledgeable and astute leaders are unable to reap the mutual benefits of a resolution because of a sticking-point about which they profoundly disagree. And neither side sees a third way.

Meanwhile, as a senior Pentagon official stated March 23,

the danger of miscalculation by one or both sides increased considerably in late March. On the U.S. side, the perennial danger that we will underestimate the enemy should rank high among our leaders' caveats. They should also not mistake an elation-producing firm decision after a long period of frustration for a practical plan that will stand up to the harsh conditions of actuality.

Our policy-makers also ought to consider two other values that seem to have been buried in the rush of stressful events. First, U.S. policy during the Korean crisis has violated our new philosophy of multilateralism, which kept us from precipitous action in Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia. That there are other interested parties in the conflict does not amount to multilateralism. South Korea, still a client of the U.S., can hardly be considered a full ally; Japan is basically a non-military partner; we have a stormy relationship with China. We would thus not be fulfilling our commitment to multilateralism--indeed, we would be reverting to our policeman-of-the-world role--unless we acted in concert with the United Kingdom, France, Canada, and other Western and Eastern powers to forge an effective policy that both averted a war and achieved our goals.

Secondly, a war starting with a massive attack by North Korea on Seoul would wreck Bill Clinton's Presidency much as the Vietnam War wrecked Lyndon Johnson's. The American public will not tolerate heavy casualties, and, added to those caused by the initial attack, would be those suffered during the brutal

engagement that would follow--a total that some estimate would reach 400,000.

Why Does North Korea Want A-Bombs?

The premise of advisers to the President seems to be that North Korea wants A-bombs to threaten its neighbors, achieve strategic and geopolitical ends, and even invade other nations with impunity. However, a broad spectrum of experts has an entirely different assessment. Jane's Intelligence Review released a special report on North Korea in late March. The author concluded that North Korea started its nuclear program as a low-cost deterrent when its 1.2 million men army became too expensive, especially since its economy began to deteriorate. Joseph Bermudez, Jr., a frequent contributor to Jane's, also called the nuclear program North Korea's only bargaining chip.

Professor Kongdon Oh, a frequent visitor to North Korea, has also articulated the deterrence thesis and has emphasized that the North Koreans feel under the threat of our nuclear weapons, which have targeted them for 36 years. Kim Kyong Won, former South Korean ambassador to the UN, also maintains that the nuclear weapons are designed to squeeze concessions out of the United States--in other words, they are a bargaining chip. Selig Harrison of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, who also visits Korea frequently, criticizes our policy because "We say 'First give away the family jewels.' " The whole idea of a bargaining chip is that it assures its owner that the promise of

concessions--in North Korea's case, trade and economic investment--will be honored.

Kim Sam Hoon argues that North Korea may not even be able to produce A-bombs. Further, manufacturing more than two weapons would be quite expensive and out of reach for the impoverished North Koreans. They may even be pretending to have them, he concludes, so that they will have "a card"--i.e., a bargaining chip. Some analysts in Seoul support this view--that Kim Il Sung is pretending to hide a bomb that doesn't exist. Such a deficiency would provide an alternative explanation for why the North Koreans adamantly refuse full inspections. As far as the alarmism about North Korean missiles is concerned, some nuclear experts say North Korea lacks the technical sophistication needed to fit nuclear weapons into missiles.

Thus, rather than concede that North Korea may want a nuclear program as (1) a deterrent, (2) a bargaining chip, (3) a means of forcing the world (which has ignored them for years) to pay attention to them, so that they can build up their economy, our policy-makers have focussed exclusively on (4), the use of nuclear weapons for aggression. This is a classic example of a worst-case scenario. The question is, should a firm foreign-policy decision by the United States on matters of war and peace be determined by the worst-case scenario mentality?

Kongdon Oh also relates that North Korea would like to become like China, retaining socialism but introducing robust free-market practices. Similarly, Song-ae Yu, who has visited

North Korea many times as part of a delegation sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, has revealed that the North Koreans already have embarked on a number of free-market projects.

The U.S. Mindset

Our national security adviser, Anthony Lake, appeared on ABC's Nightline March 23 and made a number of disturbing statements. Ted Koppel, showing unusual directness for a foreign policy issue, presented Lake with a concise summary of major objections to our North Korean policy. All experts agree, Koppel said, that an artillery and rocket-launcher attack would have a devastating effect, with large South Korean and U.S. casualties. Does the United States want to take that risk? "Why is it provoking North Korea?" Koppel asked.

Lake granted the situation is serious and that is why the U.S. is taking prudent measures. But as we have seen, these prudent measures--reactivation of Team Spirit, Patriot missiles, cancellation of high-level talks, a call for sanctions, and talk about increased troops (Senator Dole) and aircraft carriers (Representative Gephardt)--all these measures are in fact drastic. In addition, Secretary of Defense Perry revealed March 26 that he has ordered the Air Force to build up munitions and spare parts in South Korea to be used on F-117s and F-15Es if they have to be rushed to the area. New attack Apache helicopters will also be sent, and preparations are being made to

improve the U.S. Army's ability to send reinforcements. As a whole, these actions would be taken by any adversary as an escalation of military and psychological pressures; by the North Koreans, as war-preparations.

Lake also made the troubling assertion that the United States or South Korea could win a war against North Korea. This is undoubtedly true, but to state it on national television might easily be interpreted as an announcement that the U.S. is fully prepared to go to war if North Korea does not yield on ^{inspections.} ~~sanctions~~. This kind of statement shows the same kind of imprudence as the revelation by a Pentagon official (New York Times, Feb. 6) that our plan in the event of a North Korean attack would be to counter-attack, drive all the way to Pyongyang, and topple the North Korean premier, Kim Il Sung. Since a South Korean official also remarked March 23 that an attack by North Korea would be useful because it would lead to reunification (i.e., South Korea would conquer the North), it would not be surprising if North Korean analysts concluded from these three statements that the South and the U.S. are seriously preparing for war.

Koppel asked another very pertinent and astute question: If the U.S. public reacted so negatively to the loss of 18 soldiers in Somalia, how would they react to the loss of thousands in Korea? Lake's answers were astonishing for their lack of insight and historical understanding. He said that the American public will understand if the President explains to them the nuclear danger of North Korea. Apparently, he never experienced or does

not remember the dozens of painful national addresses by Presidents Johnson and Nixon--trying to explain the danger of North Vietnam to us--which failed to stem the rising opposition to the war.

His second point was equally misguided. He claimed that the U.S. public remembers the place of the Korean War in American history and will understand why that part of the world is important to us. But this is the height of wishful thinking and delusion. Americans, first of all, are notorious for not remembering anything. Except for that small percentage of history-conscious citizens, Americans are in essence historically illiterate. The only persons other than history buffs and Korean War veterans who might remember the Korean war are civilians who were 21 or older in 1950--i.e., who are now 65 or older. And even these did not at that time have any enthusiasm for the "police action," let alone clearly understand its purpose or place in American history.

If the President's advisers are using arguments like these at National Security Council meetings, then both the President and the country are being ill-served.

Apart from his answers, Lake's tone and bearing could be interpreted as ominous. He acted both resigned and elated, as if the decision to maintain an unshakable resolve to gain our ends--or, if necessary, go to war--reflected a belief that war is indeed inevitable. Nowhere did he seem cognizant that an unshakable resolve entails both gamble and bluff (as the North

Koreans are doing), that this kind of mutual gamble and bluff is precisely what often leads to war, and that the inhabitants of Seoul and the American soldiers there might have to be sacrificed so that U.S. policy-makers can achieve their ends.

An Alternative and a Compromise

The United States has always believed in intermediaries to prevent or end wars, and we ourselves have served well in this role. The Middle East and Bosnia are prime examples. Now the U.S. itself can use some intermediaries because it should be clear from this paper that the President's advisers are not determined to prevent war, or perhaps not capable of doing so. Vitaly Churkin, the Russian deputy foreign minister, has made a promising proposal--that several third-party nations convene a conference to resolve the conflict. A valuable group would be diplomats from Japan, China, Russia, the UK, India, France, and Norway. They would--at least at first--confer separately with North Korea, on the one hand, and with the U.S. and South Korea, on the other. In this way, the United States would not have to back down from its decision not to conduct talks with the North Koreans unless they allow full inspections. At the same time, the North Koreans would enjoy a measure of international acceptance, which they clearly desire. Action on sanctions should be put off until the talks are completed.

A compromise is indeed possible within such a conference, or apart from it. Alfred Rieber, professor of history at the

University of Pennsylvania, has proposed that a step-by-step series of confidence-building measures be worked out. The virtue of this idea is that each side will reap positive gains right away and will see increasing advantages as the steps progress. Following is one model of such a series, subject to changes in content and sequence.

(1) the U.S. and the prosperous Asian nations provide food, medicine, and development projects, while simultaneously (2) North Korea ends alert and starts to convert to light-water nuclear reactors*; (3) the U.S. and other nations start trade with North Korea, while simultaneously (4) North Korea reduces its border artillery to 5,000 and its border troops to 500,000; (5) the U.S. removes Patriot missiles, ends nuclear targeting of North Korea, and permanently cancels Team Spirit exercises, while simultaneously (6) North Korea removes rocket-launchers from the border; (7) the U.S. and North Korea initiate cultural exchanges; (8) North Korea reduces artillery to 2,500; (9) the U.S. and North Korea hold high-level talks; (10) North Korea returns to talks with South Korea; (11) both nations reduce troops at border to 200,000 each; (12) North Korea allows total inspections of its

* As Selig Harrison has pointed out, the North Koreans offered to convert to light-water reactors in mid-1993. This kind of reactor does not lend itself well to the production of nuclear weapons. The U.S. was supposed to fund the conversion--which strongly indicates a willingness to renounce A-bomb production--but the appropriation was cut from the U.S. budget. However, the new philosophy of cost-sharing and multilateralism ought to encourage the prosperous nations of the G-7 and of the Asian Tigers (who after all are the most concerned) to provide the necessary funds for this very significant conversion.

nuclear facilities; (13) if excessive plutonium is found, it is removed and North Korea renounces nuclear weapons; (14) U.S. recognizes North Korea diplomatically.

There is no authentic urgency in the North Korean crisis, an urgency that would require economic sanctions. The concern and extreme skepticism of our leaders toward North Korea stem from no hostile act. (Here, the amassing of troops, which South Korea and the U.S. have tolerated for years, should not be confused with the alleged production of nuclear weapons.) The source of contention consists entirely of four hypotheticals: (1) that North Korea has built, or is about to build, one or two A-bombs; (2) that they might manufacture several dozen more; (3) that they are capable of using missiles to carry the A-bombs; (4) that they might sell nuclear materials and bombs to other pariah nations.

It would be tragic to gravitate inexorably toward a war over four hypotheticals that U.S. policy makers believe must be solved at once, when a more prudent time-frame is possible and desirable. As I have pointed out, the first three hypotheticals have been given convincing answers by experts in their fields. The fourth concern would most likely fall into place once a step-by-step plan of détente began to be carried out, because North Korea would have no incentive to sell nuclear materials and bombs once its economy began to improve and once it became accepted by the international community. The dire need for cash and basic resources would be alleviated, and the pariah's perverse need for vengeance would lose its force. In addition, easing North Korea

into trade with its Asian neighbors now rather than later would have a beneficial effect because nations rarely adopt a belligerent stance toward their trading-partners.

A poll in late March showed that 55 percent of Americans questioned did not favor sanctions, while 39 percent did. Realistic policy-makers should accept the American public's aversion to war, especially wars far off our shores. These officials should avoid the trap of convincing themselves that vigorous persuasion (to many Americans, snake-oil) will bring the U.S. public around. Non-proliferation is a little-understood issue to most Americans, and they have very little interest in it.

Secretary of Defense William Perry made an earlier disquieting statement March 26 that further shows the precarious grasp our decision-makers have on the whole North Korean problem. He said: "We have a very limited knowledge of what drives the thinking of the leadership in the North Korean government." This gap of understanding, which no doubt is a major cause of our current dilemma, could easily be overcome. The State Department could get considerable insight into the North Korean leadership if they asked the many independent specialists who speak Korean and who visit North Korea. To do this, however, U.S. officials have to disabuse themselves of the perverse Cold War paradox that specialists who go to North Korea and bring back information that conflicts with State Department doctrine cannot be trusted--because they went to North Korea.

President Bush insisted throughout late 1990 on a precondition before he would negotiate with Iraq: that the aggressors get out of Kuwait. That precondition eventually led, many say unnecessarily, to the Gulf war. Yes, we achieved many of our aims, but only at the cost of a war very damaging to the Iraqi people, alarming to the Israelis, and medically harmful to some American soldiers. Now we refuse to negotiate with the North Koreans unless they comply with our precondition that they allow inspections.

We are gambling that North Korea is bluffing, will never embark on a suicidal war, and after the severe hardships of sanctions, will eventually comply with the demand for inspections. But do we enjoy certainty or even near-certainty that sanctions will not provoke them to attack? Shouldn't a 20 percent--or even a 10 percent--chance that they would attack give us pause and subdue our insistence on immediate compliance? If we go to war, explaining its absolute necessity may prove even harder than explaining the complexities of health care reform.

We would be much better off if we listened to the Chinese, who favor high-level negotiations with no preconditions. As Zhang Tingyan, Chinese ambassador to Seoul, puts it, "It's an international rule [required by the U.N. Charter] to solve all issues by dialogue. Why should the North Korean nuclear problem be an exception?"

Addendum to "To Prevent War in Korea"

Two issues were not considered in my paper. One is the delicate question of a U.S. preemptive strike against North Korean artillery massed near the DMZ. The other is the problem of harsh criticism from hawkish legislators and former Bush advisers if the Clinton Administration "caves in" and does not require immediate nuclear compliance from the North Koreans.

Secretary of Defense William Perry has already stated that a preemptive strike against North Korea cannot be ruled out, but is not being considered at this time. Yet, a cogent solution to the strategic problem discussed in "To Prevent War in Korea" would be to launch a crippling strike against the artillery, rocket-launchers, and troops provocatively deployed near the DMZ.

However, three arguments militate against this solution. First, no matter how justified a preemptive strike may appear to the nation that launches it, large elements of the international community may view it as a form of aggression or even as a sneak attack. Some UN members might also bring up the requirement of the UN Charter that military action can be taken only if all attempts at negotiation have been exhausted.

Secondly, Third World nations especially can be expected to deplore the vast expenditure of firepower, the destruction, and the loss of life that an effective initial strike would involve, all concentrated on a small, impoverished Third World nation.

Finally, no preemptive strike can eliminate the entire force of an enemy nation. The remaining armaments and personnel (the surviving portion of the 840,000 men now on the border) could

still inflict serious damage on Seoul. In the meantime, about 280,000 North Korean soldiers plus untold militia farther in the North would presumably fight to the death against U.S. and SK forces. Casualties on both sides of this brutal conflict would still be quite high. A preemptive strike thus cannot fully neutralize North Korea, but can only reduce its capacity to inflict damage and casualties on the U.S. and South Korea.

Fear of harsh criticism from the hawks if the Clinton Administration shifted from a coercive policy to a genuinely diplomatic one would be misplaced. If President Clinton had decided, for instance, to launch a preemptive strike, he would assuredly have to address the nation to justify his decision. In the same way, if he decides to avoid war, there would be every reason for him to address the nation to explain the reasons for this policy.

The speech would provide an occasion for the President to disarm expected conservative criticism with a discussion of the extremely negative consequences of a war against North Korea both on the battlefield and in the nation. In fact, the address could turn the problematic side of the decision not to use force on its head -- if the President presents himself as a judicious leader who has resisted the arguments of those who favored military action, and thus has saved the nation from war. Moreover, he would not present his decision publicly until the U.S. had a comprehensive agreement with North Korea involving nuclear compliance, the draw-down of military forces on both sides, and the opening up of trade. Hence, President Clinton could present

evidence of concrete achievements and advantages to the American public. These would tend to muzzle hawkish complaints.

If the advocates of a hard line continued to argue for coercion and quick compliance, as opposed to a peaceful comprehensive agreement, their recalcitrance could make them seem like war-mongers to many Americans. Thus, even though a decision not to force the North Koreans to comply would inspire a heated national debate, the bellicose side of the debate could well be caught in a no-win situation and could end up digging a hole for itself.

One further important point. No doubt advocates of immediate nuclear compliance have raised the problem of nuclear blackmail and the bad precedent a trade-for-compliance solution would set vis a vis the many pre-nuclear-weapons nations. However, this concern overlooks one of the realities of the North Korean crisis, namely that the U.S. position for some time has been to offer trade and other advantages in exchange for compliance. The only difference between the U.S. and North Korean positions has been the question of which will come first, compliance or trade; or will the two be initiated simultaneously? Thus, we have already undertaken the trade-for-compliance solution and have already set a precedent for nations with weapons-grade materials.

Will this policy lead to a pandemonium of Third World nations, all seeking economic aid and all willing to start nuclear-weapons programs in order to extort money from the United States?

First, since economic incentives have already been used in the North Korean situation, their more effective use in a series of trade-offs to achieve compliance will not increase the force of the precedent. Secondly, the United States should forcefully point out to all concerned that it cannot and will not become the sole provider of aid to nations on the verge of a nuclear-weapons program. Non-proliferation is an international problem, not a U.S. problem. The organization pushing for North Korean compliance is the I&EA, not the USAEA.

Hence, if economic incentives need to be employed in the future (and in all probability they would have had to be even without the NK crisis), then the problem must be viewed as one for the international community as a whole and not simply for the United States. On the other hand, trade incentives are a valid tool for achieving political and diplomatic ends, and in many cases can benefit the donor nations (e.g., in China and Vietnam) because of the expansion of free-market opportunities.

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By Selig S. Harrison

"Yes, we have slain a large dragon," C.I.A. Director James Woolsey said in his Senate confirmation hearing, "but we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes."

Woolsey singled out North Korea as a prime example of the malignant forces that confront the United States in the aftermath of the cold war. In the black and white world that he described, countries are inherently good or evil. The Kim Il Sung regime is by its nature evil, a monolithic polity in which there are no policy struggles within the leadership over what the country should do and no rivalries among competing interest groups and power elites.

This oversimplified image is increasingly unrealistic at a time when Pyongyang has lost its Russian and Chinese economic subsidies and is actively pursuing improved relations with Washington and Tokyo. While the power structure in Pyongyang is indeed monolithic, an increasingly sharp policy conflict within the ruling Workers Party has become apparent during the past five years, especially over the issue of whether or not the North should continue to pursue the nuclear option. The current negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington over the nuclear issue can only be understood in the context of this conflict.

On one side in the Pyongyang debate are pragmatists and technocrats with some experience of the outside world who have long argued that a changing international environment requires major changes in North Korean policy. These leaders have recognized that

the end of Soviet and Chinese subsidies would bring economic hardship with potentially destabilizing political consequences. To preserve the regime, they have advocated a twofold reform program: first, a significant opening of the economy to increase export earnings and to attract large-scale inputs of capital and technology from the South, the United States and Japan, especially through export-oriented special zones similar to those in China; and second, efforts to reduce defense spending through arms and force reduction agreements with the South. Above all, they have called for suspension or termination of the nuclear weapons program as a prerequisite for getting external economic help.

Arrayed against the more pragmatic and cosmopolitan elements in the North has been a powerful old guard centered in the armed forces and a military-industrial complex that includes the nuclear establishment. The hard-liners have warned that Seoul, Washington and Tokyo would seek to exploit the vulnerability of the North resulting from changing Soviet and Chinese policies by pursuing a German-style unification-by-absorption. Far from agreeing to negotiate arms and force reductions, in this view, the South would continue to step up defense spending, leaving the North no alternative to the continuation of its own high defense budgets. Pointing to the U.S. nuclear umbrella over the South, the hard-liners have emphasized the need for a nuclear capability as the "last card" necessary to assure the North's survival.

In economic terms, the nuclear option was initially attractive as a cheaper route to national security than an indefinite

conventional arms race with the South and high defense spending levels that diverted needed resources and labor from consumer good industries. The economic rationale appeared particularly persuasive as the South's growth rates and margin of economic superiority soared during the 1970's. However, this rationale lost its force as the costs of the nuclear program mounted and as multiplying technical problems made it increasingly unclear when, and if, the program would ever be successfully completed in the absence of the foreign exchange needed to import vital equipment. In 1985, Moscow pressed Pyongyang to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (N.P.T.), arguing that this would help in persuading the U.S. to withdraw its nuclear weapons from the South. The hard-liners resisted, but Pyongyang finally decided to pacify Moscow by signing the N.P.T. while, at the same time, refusing to sign a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (I.E.A.A.) as required under the treaty.

The most inflammatory aspect of the cold war American posture in North Korean eyes was the presence of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Korea and the fact that the possible use of these weapons has figured in the periodic "Team Spirit" exercises staged by U.S. and South Korean forces. Thus, when President Bush announced the worldwide withdrawal of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons on September 27, 1991, the hard-liners lost one of their most potent arguments. In the months thereafter, evidence of confusion in Pyongyang's pronouncements on the nuclear issue indicated that a major internal controversy was in progress.

The debate came to a head during a meeting of the Workers Party Central Committee in late December, 1991. In conversations with North Korean officials and diplomats, I have since learned that the reform leaders won a conditional victory at the December meeting. If Pyongyang agreed to I.A.E.A. inspections, the pragmatists argued, this would lead to economic largesse and the normalization of diplomatic relations with the United States and Japan. The pragmatists said in effect, "let's test them." The hard-liners agreed to suspend, but not to terminate, the pursuit of the weapons option, confident that American and Japanese economic help and political recognition would not be forthcoming.

Soon after the December meeting, Pyongyang signalled its readiness for a nuclear compromise. This opened the way for the meeting in January, 1992, between Undersecretary of State Arnold Kanter, the third-ranking official in the State Department, and Kim Yong Sun, International Affairs Secretary of the Workers Party, followed by U.S. suspension of the "Team Spirit" exercises and the North's decision to sign and ratify the I.A.E.A. safeguards agreement and to permit the formal initiation of inspection procedures in June, 1992.

The Kanter-Kim Yong Sun meeting was the highest level meeting ever held with North Korea. From the U.S. perspective, having this meeting at all was a big concession, and the Bush Administration wanted to see how the I.A.E.A. inspections worked out before meeting again. But what Kim Yong Sun needed internally was a continuing series of meetings with trade-offs along the way

involving concrete American commitments in the economic and security field to show the hawks what the North would get if it gave up the nuclear option.

Confronted by the U.S. refusal to engage in further high-level dialogue, the pragmatists soon found themselves on the defensive in Pyongyang. Thus, the North responded with a tough posture of its own when the I.A.E.A., embarrassed by its record in Iraq, made a more aggressive effort to implement inspections in the North than it had ever made in any other country. In addition to its standard procedures for inspecting declared nuclear facilities, the I.A.E.A. attempted to conduct ad hoc "special inspections" at undeclared facilities. The agency said that such inspections were necessary at two waste dumps under Army control in order to establish whether the North has accumulated more plutonium than it has admitted. But the armed forces in the North argued that once the I.A.E.A. has the right to conduct "special inspections," it will seek access to military installations throughout the country in the name of uncovering hidden nuclear weapons. Depicting the agency as a front for the C.I.A. and South Korean intelligence, Pyongyang rejected the I.A.E.A. demand.

As the stalemate with the I.A.E.A. deepened, North Korea made a dramatic move to improve its bargaining position in May, 1993, announcing its withdrawal from the N.P.T. Kim Il Sung "moved the goalposts" in an unabashed effort to draw the U.S. into a dialogue, and the strategy worked. In June, Washington and Pyongyang resumed high-level negotiations. However, the U.S. was represented by the

Assistant Secretary of State in charge of non-proliferation policy, not by the Undersecretary of State as in 1992. After two rounds of negotiations in June and July, 1993, the talks broke off over a procedural argument and will be resumed in February.

The U.S. has attempted to restrict the discussions to North Korea's return to the N.P.T. and its observance of I.A.E.A. safeguards under the treaty. North Korea, by contrast, has insisted on a "package solution" in which it would comply with I.A.E.A. safeguards, but only in return for simultaneous concessions by the U.S., among them diplomatic recognition, an end to cold war restrictions on economic relations and a formal bilateral or multilateral U.S. commitment not to use or deploy nuclear weapons in Korea. Washington has agreed to discuss a comprehensive settlement with Pyongyang, but not until the North fulfills its I.A.E.A. obligations. Otherwise, the U.S. argued, it would be submitting to "nuclear blackmail," setting a dangerous precedent.

The tortuous diplomatic exchanges between Washington and Pyongyang during late 1993 and early 1994 have centered largely on the scope and character of the inspections that Pyongyang would have to accept before the resumption of high-level discussions in which a comprehensive settlement would be discussed. In early January, 1994, North Korea told the U.S. that the I.A.E.A. could conduct the inspections necessary to assure the "continuity of safeguards." When these inspections occur, the U.S. agreed, it would call off the 1994 "Team Spirit" exercises and the nuclear

dialogue could be expanded to include political and economic issues. The North sharply distinguished these promised inspections from more comprehensive "regular" inspections that would follow its return to the N.P.T. under a comprehensive settlement.

In late January, differences between Pyongyang and the I.A.E.A. surfaced over the extent of inspections necessary to assure the "continuity of safeguards." North Korea envisages only what is necessary to maintain operation of the safeguards equipment already installed. The I.A.E.A. wants to make certain that plutonium has not been diverted from the five megawatt reactor at Yongbyon since its last inspection in September, 1993.

Pyongyang says that the nuclear problem can be "fully resolved" if the U.S. agrees to a "package solution," hinting that it would permit access to the two suspect nuclear waste dumps that the I.A.E.A. wants to inspect. However, Pyongyang is unlikely to accept "special inspections" of other undeclared nuclear sites. Nor is it clear what political and economic steps the U.S. is prepared to take in return for the North's nuclear concessions. Hard bargaining over a period of many months appears likely, especially if the U.S. presses the North to turn over its accumulated fissile material to the I.A.E.A.

In insisting on a simultaneous "package solution," the North has been motivated in part by a desire to drive the best bargain possible. But this strategy also reflects deep suspicions in Pyongyang, especially among the hard-liners, concerning U.S. and South Korean intentions. Despite the stated desire of the Clinton

administration for improved relations with Pyongyang and the South's repeated declarations that it cannot afford the costs of a German-style unification, Pyongyang suspects that the real goal of American, South Korean and Japanese policy is the absorption of the North by the South following the death of Kim Il Sung.

The pragmatists, it should be emphasized, are not a clearly-defined group, and there is no power struggle between factions in Pyongyang. Kim Il Sung and his son and successor, Kim Jong Il, manipulate the policy debate to suit their purposes. On some issues, a given individual may be a hawk; on others, a dove. Once a decision has been taken by the Workers Party, the leadership shows remarkable unity. Nevertheless, certain figures in the leadership are clearly identified with a pragmatic approach on the liberalization of foreign economic policy and the need for improved relations with the U.S., Japan and South Korea.

The most prominent of these are five relatives of Kim Il Sung: Vice-President Kim Yong Ju, his younger brother, who became one of four vice-presidents in December; Prime Minister Kang song-san; Kim Jong U, chairman of the Committee for the Promotion of External Cooperation; Hwang Chang Yop, chairman of the Foreign Policy Commission of the Supreme People's Assembly and a Politburo member; and Kim Yong Sun, former International Secretary of the Workers Party. The Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Kim Yong Nam, who is also a Politburo member, is more circumspect but is generally aligned with these five.

The most significant victory achieved by the pragmatists in

foreign economic policy has been the establishment of the new free-trade and investment zone at Rajin Songbong. Patterned after China's "special zones," the new zone is part of the Tumen River Delta Development Project sponsored by the U.N. Development Program in cooperation with Russia, China and North Korea. Fully foreign-owned enterprises will be permitted to operate in the free trade zone. Pyongyang is offering foreign investors there a five-year tax holiday, a 14 percent corporate tax rate and entry to the zone without visas.

The role of Kim Jong Il is a subject of controversy. As part of his effort to cement his control over the armed forces in preparation for the succession, he has reportedly taken a tough line on how to deal with the nuclear issue. But he is clearly on the side of a controlled economic opening to the outside world.

On my visits to the North in 1972, 1987 and 1992, I have been struck by the contrast between the reverence universally displayed toward the 81-year-old "Great Leader" and the more ambivalent attitude toward the 51-year-old "Dear Leader." Questions about Kim Jong Il generally produce defensive, recitative replies extolling his ability with little conviction. The idea of a dynasty has been controversial within the ruling Workers Party, and tensions persist between those who are Kim Jong Il loyalists and those who are not.

Kim Il Sung, whom I met for two hours in 1972, is a magnetic, imposing figure. He exudes earnest intensity, parrying questions knowledgeably and perceptively. Kim Jong Il, pudgy and puffy-faced, has turned up for televised state occasions in sloppy sports shirts

and baggy trousers. Since he has refused to meet foreigners, with the notable exception of several Chinese and Soviet leaders, he remains a man of mystery. The Chinese assessment is that he is more intelligent and serious than his unimpressive appearance and playboy reputation would suggest.

Kim Jong Il has systematically taken control of the levers of power and is likely to exercise effective control in the immediate aftermath of his father's death. However, it is doubtful that he will remain in control for more than a few years. Will the regime then implode or collapse? While this possibility cannot be ruled out, it is more likely, in my view, that the Workers Party will hang together for its survival, with commissars in the armed forces and the intelligence services wielding increased power.

Much will depend on whether Washington, Seoul and Tokyo decide to help the North to resolve its economic problems as part of a gradual process of Korean unification over several decades -- or to isolate and pressure Pyongyang in the hope of promoting a German-style unification-by-absorption in the years immediately ahead.