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North Korea II [1]

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Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. memo	Richard Wilhelm to Anthony Lake re support planning for Korea (6 pages)	06/17/1994	P1/b(1)
002. memo	Richard Wilhelm to Anthony Lake re support planning for Korea [duplicate of 001] (6 pages)	06/17/1994	P1/b(1)
003. memo	Richard Wilhelm to Anthony Lake re support planning for Korea [duplicate of 001] (6 pages)	06/17/1994	P1/b(1)
004. talking points	re concerns (1 page)	00/00/0000	P1/b(1)
005a. memo	Rich Wilhelm to George Tenet re review of study (2 pages)	05/00/1994	P1/b(1)
005b. memo	information, George Tenet to Samuel Berger re weekly meeting (3 pages)	06/07/1994	P1/b(1)
006. briefing slides	for National Security Advisor re status of recommendations (24 pages)	00/00/1994	P1/b(1)
007. report	re recommendations for Korean Peninsula (149 pages)	05/12/1994	P1/b(1)

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2009-0528-F

kc1435

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N. Korea Has 5 Nuclear Warheads, No Delivery System, Defector Says

By Lee Keumhyun
Special to The Washington Post

SEOUL, July 27—A defector who identified himself as the son-in-law of North Korea's prime minister said at a news conference today that a high-ranking North Korean official told him the country has built five nuclear warheads but does not yet have a delivery system to use them as weapons.

Kang Myong Do said he also had heard the Pyongyang regime plans to have 10 plutonium-fueled warheads built by the end of this year and is working on a missile system to carry them. At that point, Kang said, he believes North Korea will reveal its nuclear arsenal to the world in hopes of gaining global respect.

The defector's remarks were greeted with some official skepticism in Washington. While the Clinton administration has warned that North Korea might develop up to five new nuclear weapons later this year, it has maintained since last November that the country now may have one or two such weapons at most.

"He's made some statements . . . that are not consistent with information within our own intelligence community," State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said, adding that Washington has requested more details from Seoul about the claim.

Defense Secretary William J. Perry said that while Washington saw no reason to change its intelligence estimate, "we do take . . . seriously" the defector's claim. He noted that U.S. estimates of the size of North Korea's arsenal are based on assumptions that the country lacks sophisticated bomb-making technology. "If they had a very advanced technology, they could make five bombs out of the amount of plutonium we estimate they have," Perry said at a news conference.

Kang, 36, said he was an executive for a government-run trading company when he fled to South Korea through China in May. He said his information about nuclear weapons came from a North Korean intelligence official who told him about the secret warheads at a wedding reception last year.

Since his arrival in South Korea, Kang has been supported by the National Security Planning Agency, Seoul's version of the CIA, which routinely orchestrates appearances by defectors who denounce their former homeland. The agency arranged Kang's three-hour appearance in Seoul this afternoon, after a spate of embarrassing publicity about arrests of South Koreans trying to visit the North.

If Kang is indeed the husband of Prime Minister Kang Song San's daughter, he would be one of the most important defectors ever to leave the isolated, hard-line communist state. He would be particularly prized for any insights he might provide about North Korea's decision-making on its nuclear program and its willingness to trade away its nuclear capability in talks with the United States scheduled to begin on Aug. 5.

The Clinton administration has known about Kang's defection for weeks and generally believes Kang is who he claims to be. But it was not aware of his assertions about the size of North Korea's nuclear arsenal until today's news conference.

"He is an enormously interesting guy," said a senior U.S. government analyst, noting that only rarely has Washington had an opportunity "to talk to someone who functioned at that level" in the secretive North Korean government.

But some South Korean analysts raised questions. If the son-in-law of North Korea's prime minister had fled the country two months ago, the prime minister would presumably have been in serious trouble in that strict regime.

Broadcasts in recent weeks have repeatedly shown Kang Song San in positions of high honor and have cited him as the third-ranking official in the Pyongyang hierarchy. But he failed to appear at a major military ceremony in Pyongyang today, after the defection was announced.

Kim Jong Il, son of and presumed successor to the late long-time dictator Kim Il Sung, also was absent from the ceremony, at which he had presided a year ago. Moreover, Pyongyang's state-controlled radio referred to Kim Jong Il as secretary of the Workers' Party, a title he held for years while his father was party chairman. But the meaning of these

events was not clear.

"Whether or not what Kang Myong Do said is true remains to be seen," said Kim Chang Soon, director of the Institute of North Korea Studies in Seoul. "If it's true, Kang Song San will not survive in the North."

Kang Myong Do displayed family photos and official documents to establish his bona fides at the news conference. He said: "The highest-ranking person in charge of the nuclear program . . . told me last October that the North developed five nuclear bombs. . . . When North Korea possesses 10 nuclear bombs, Kim Jong Il will make it public, and then bargain with the United States

and Japan for economic concessions and the establishment of diplomatic relations."

Kang also discussed severe economic conditions in the country, including power shortages that forced the nation's largest chemical and steel plants to shut down for weeks at a time. He endorsed the consensus view in Seoul and Washington that ultimate power in North Korea will initially pass to Kim Jong Il. But he said the shortages are so severe that Kim could have trouble hanging onto power.

Only about a dozen or so defectors reach South Korea from the North each year, partly because the Pyongyang regime reportedly tortures and kills the families of anyone who leaves. But Kang expressed no concern for his family today. He said he was permitted to go to China to follow up on an export contract this spring. While there, he said, he heard rumors that Kim Jong Il wanted him killed, so he made his way to the South, where the intelligence establishment took him in.

Correspondent T.R. Reid in Tokyo
and staff writer R. Jeffrey Smith in
Washington contributed to this report.

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