

DATE

TRANSMITTAL SLIP

5 Apr 88

TO:

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REMARKS:

David -
I believe your
suggestions will help --
More than a little.

Fred

NIO for East Asia
Room 7EG2, CIA Hqs

FROM:

[Redacted]

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #00670-88/2
5 April 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Acting Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Carl W. Ford, Jr.
National Intelligence Officer for East Asia

SUBJECT: NIE 14.2-88: North Korea: Prospects for the Succession and Internal Stability

1. Attached is a precoordination draft of NIE 14.2-88: North Korea: Prospects for the Succession and Internal Stability. It was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for East Asia and was drafted by [redacted] of the Office of East Asian Analysis.

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2. This is the first Estimate that looks at the issue of succession in North Korea. It examines the prospects for a successful transfer of power from Kim Il-song to his son, Kim Chong-il; establishes some scenarios for political change and assesses their effect on the political stability; and looks at the implications for the United States.

3. Several changes have been made to this draft in response to the Senior Review Panel's comments. Specifically:

The Executive Summary has been dropped.

[redacted]

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The box on Kim Il-song's health has been modified to reflect the degree of uncertainty of his illnesses.

The title of BOX 4 has been changed to Policy Issues: Potential for Disagreement. [redacted]

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[redacted] In addition, we have added the phrase--as yet unidentified--to the discussion of Policy Differences, paragraph 33 [redacted]

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Several thoughts have been added to the text regarding economic issues, including:

"Nonetheless, even minor shifts to a more open economy would send shock waves throughout the society and could put his political controls at risk." added to paragraph 34.

"North Korea is seriously in arrears in payments on its \$3 billion foreign debt; its volume of trade has stagnated since 1980; and shortfalls in energy are adding to already severe bottlenecks in its industrial output." added to Box 2.

4. The Senior Review Panel's question on Tension Reduction has not been addressed, however. The drafter points out, and I agree, that there is no good evidence of serious problems at present with "older cadres, fractious family members, and the military." Reference to these groups in the Estimate is in the context of possible difficulties after Kim Il-song's death, not before. We believe that resistance to the succession is unlikely while Kim Il-song is alive.

5. Likewise, we take some exception to the Panel's comment on the North's peace offensive. We mentioned the North's forward deployment of military units in paragraph 15--actually this movement has been underway since about 1980. Anti-Team Spirit campaigns are becoming fairly routine, nevertheless--in paragraph 15--we state the North has not abandoned its objective of extending its hegemony of the entire peninsula. In addition, there are several other factors--like generally lowered training levels--that could have been explored in this Estimate. However I believe that these are more appropriate for a future Warning of War Estimate.

6. Community representatives will meet to coordinate this paper on 22 April 1988, and we plan to complete the SNIE in time for presentation to NFIB in early May.

IS/
Carl W. Ford, Jr.

Attachment

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DECL OADR

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NIC #00670-88/2
5 April 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Acting Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Carl W. Ford, Jr.
National Intelligence Officer for East Asia

SUBJECT: NIE 14.2-88: North Korea: Prospects for the Succession
and Internal Stability

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC-00598-88

9 March 1988

Senior Review Panel

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Senior Review Panel Comments on Draft
NIE 14.2-88: North Korea: Prospects
for the Succession and Internal Stability,
internally dated 22 February 1988

1. The Panel finds this draft both commendable and worrisome. The author is to be commended for organizing the material in such a way as to make clear the strange character of the socialist dynasty in North Korea and to explore the range of succession problems. The draft is worrisome because it reveals how [redacted] dangerous North Korean regime. [redacted]

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2. The draft Estimate is remarkably compact--sufficiently so that we do not believe an "Executive Summary" is really necessary. The four Box Texts provide useful elaboration. We do have a few comments on them:

a. Kim Il-Song's Health. Are we sure that the ageing despot suffers from all the illnesses listed, or is it that various reports have from time to time mentioned these maladies?

[redacted]

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c. Who Are the Players? Box 4 discusses groupings--hawks vs. doves, technocrats vs. militarists, etc., yet not a

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single name is mentioned. Given the recent purge of Defense Minister O Kuk-Yol, the activities of Foreign Minister Kim Yong-Nam, or the records of who travels with Kim the elder and Kim the younger, we believe it would be helpful to have a listing of the key players immediately under them.

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3. Economic Problems. In both the text and in Box 2 there is general reference to North Korea's stumbling economy. It would help the reader of this admirable NIE to have a few illustrations of current problems: the extent of debt default, trends in production and foreign trade, and especially current energy shortages. These would help to portray the magnitude of the challenges Kim Chong-Il will face. Even if the younger Kim were to face up to his economic problems, what is the likelihood he could do something about them without putting his political controls at risk?

4. Tension Reduction. The draft argues (paragraph 14) that Kim Il-Song may opt for tension reduction in order to smooth the transition. We wonder whether the opposite might also be the case; he could feel that heightened tension would help bring the older cadres, the fractious family-members, and the military into line. The Panel also feels that the description of the DPRK "peace offensive" since 1984 might be a bit overplayed. The forward deployment of second and third echelon military units (1984-85), the intensity of the anti-Team Spirit campaigns (1985, 1986, and 1987, and now especially strident in 1988), and other activities are hardly reassuring.

CP
Courtland D. Perkins

JBM
John B. McPherson

RLW
Richard L. Walker

cc: AC/NIC (Mr. Hutchinson)
VC/NIC (Mr. Gries)
NIO for East Asia

ODCI/SRP:thelma

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