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22 OCT 86

KEY JUDGMENTS: NORTH KOREA: POTENTIAL FOR NUCLEAR WEAPON DEVELOPMENT [REDACTED]

The following Key Judgments are reprinted from a recently published Intelligence Assessment produced by the Office of Scientific and Weapons Research. [REDACTED]

A copy of the complete report [REDACTED] ~~Top Secret~~ [REDACTED] is available from CPAS. [REDACTED]

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- In December 1985, at the urging of the USSR, North Korea acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), renouncing acquisition of nuclear explosives and accepting safeguards on its nuclear activities.
 - North Korea's penchant for military secrecy makes it unlikely that it would locate a primarily military reactor at a known research center or agree, as it has with NPT adherence, to open it to international inspection.
 - The Soviet role in extracting the NPT pledge and subsequently selling North Korea a nuclear power reactor puts Moscow's prestige on the line in guaranteeing a peaceful program, with renewed economic and military aid the lever to enforce it.
- [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

We have little information on North Korea's ability to conduct the non-nuclear research, particularly that involving high explosives, required for a nuclear weapons research program.

[REDACTED] The North
Koreans already have a suitable nuclear delivery system in the MIG-23 fighter

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In considering whether to embark on a venture as costly, hazardous, and politically sensitive as a nuclear weapons program, P'yongyang would face a complex calculation of benefits versus costs as well as considerable uncertainty regarding the effect of such a program on its ultimate goal of reunifying the peninsula on its own terms. It might see nuclear weapons as a means of forcing political concessions from Seoul, as a hedge against possible South Korean development of a nuclear weapons capability, as leverage to gain a freer hand in paramilitary operations without provoking a military response, as deterring a US nuclear response to an attack on the South, or as a means of carrying out offensive operations in an all-out attack. [REDACTED]

P'yongyang would also see disadvantages, particularly if it recognized the difficulty of concealing such a program. Exposure could lead South Korea--with its superior nuclear technology--to develop nuclear weapons as a response. P'yongyang also would have to weigh the effect on the US commitment to Seoul under such an increased threat. Moreover, the North would have to calculate the less tangible, but still significant, impact on the diplomacy it has pursued for over two years aimed in large part at encouraging the eventual withdrawal of US forces. P'yongyang would also consider the likelihood that a weapons program would complicate its improved relations with Moscow. [REDACTED]

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