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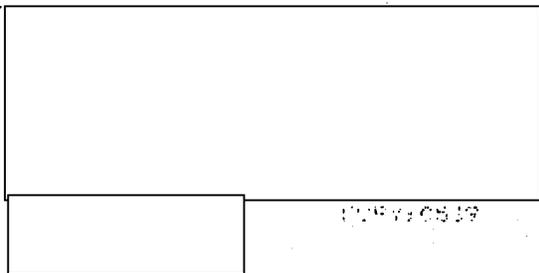
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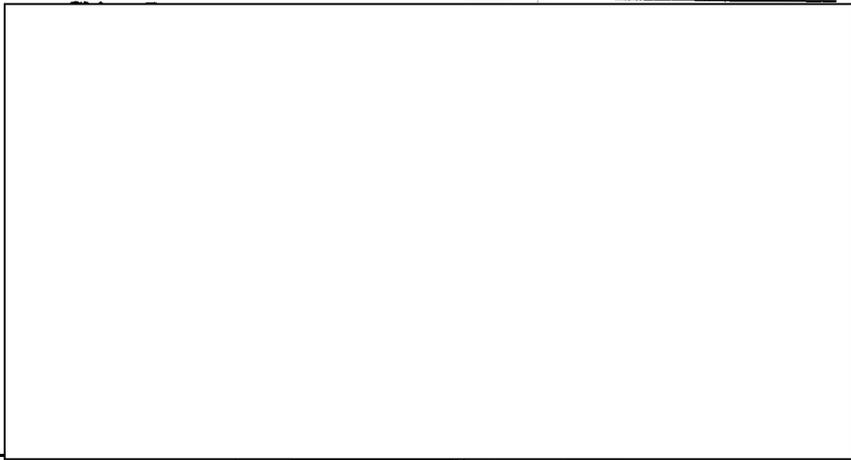
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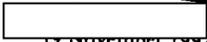
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Special Analyses



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12 NOVEMBER 1992

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NORTH KOREA: Nuclear Inspection Showdown

P'yongyang may be preparing to suspend International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access to its Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center and may also break off negotiations for a bilateral inspection regime with the South

[redacted] North Korea became increasingly recalcitrant during the recently concluded fourth IAEA ad hoc inspection at Yongbyon, a routine verification inspection. North Korean officials told [redacted] that the US-South Korean Team Spirit military exercise next spring posed a threat to continued cooperation with the IAEA [redacted]

[redacted] The IAEA plans an informal visit to Yongbyon next week to visit what are probably concealed nuclear waste storage sites that could hold evidence of more plutonium production than the North has admitted. The inspectors [redacted] queried North Korean officials on the nuclear waste issue and received no satisfactory response. [redacted]

The North [redacted] is concerned about the IAEA's informal visit to Yongbyon, which was leaked in the South Korean press last week. [redacted]

[redacted] hinted at a complete breakdown in the inspections if the Team Spirit exercise is not canceled. At a meeting of the Joint Nuclear Control Commission yesterday, the North lashed out at the South over the Team Spirit issue and refused to discuss bilateral inspections. Another session is set for next week, but South Korean officials [redacted] believe it will be the last this year because P'yongyang probably will break off all dialogue with Seoul next month after the exercise is announced. [redacted]

Comment: Although P'yongyang has a history of holding out to the eleventh hour, it may well follow through on its threat to stop inspections and halt bilateral talks. It almost certainly is hiding incriminating evidence at the waste storage sites; it presumably was working under the assumption that the IAEA would not challenge it there. The influence of moderates in P'yongyang probably has been reduced because they no longer can convincingly point to the prospect of an IAEA clean bill of health that could open the way to improved economic and political ties to the West and Japan. [redacted]

The IAEA is aware of its precarious position. It probably believes a deferral of the proposed visit to Yongbyon could undercut its efforts for a more aggressive inspection regime. The visit was scheduled to take place immediately before a meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors so the inspectors could tell the board and the UN Security Council as soon as possible if the North had kept them from executing their safeguards responsibilities. [redacted]

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