

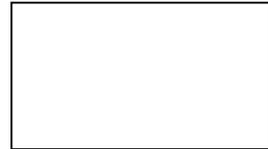
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Director of Central Intelligence



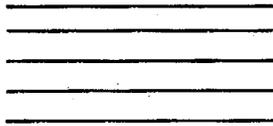
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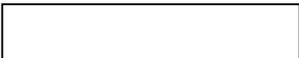
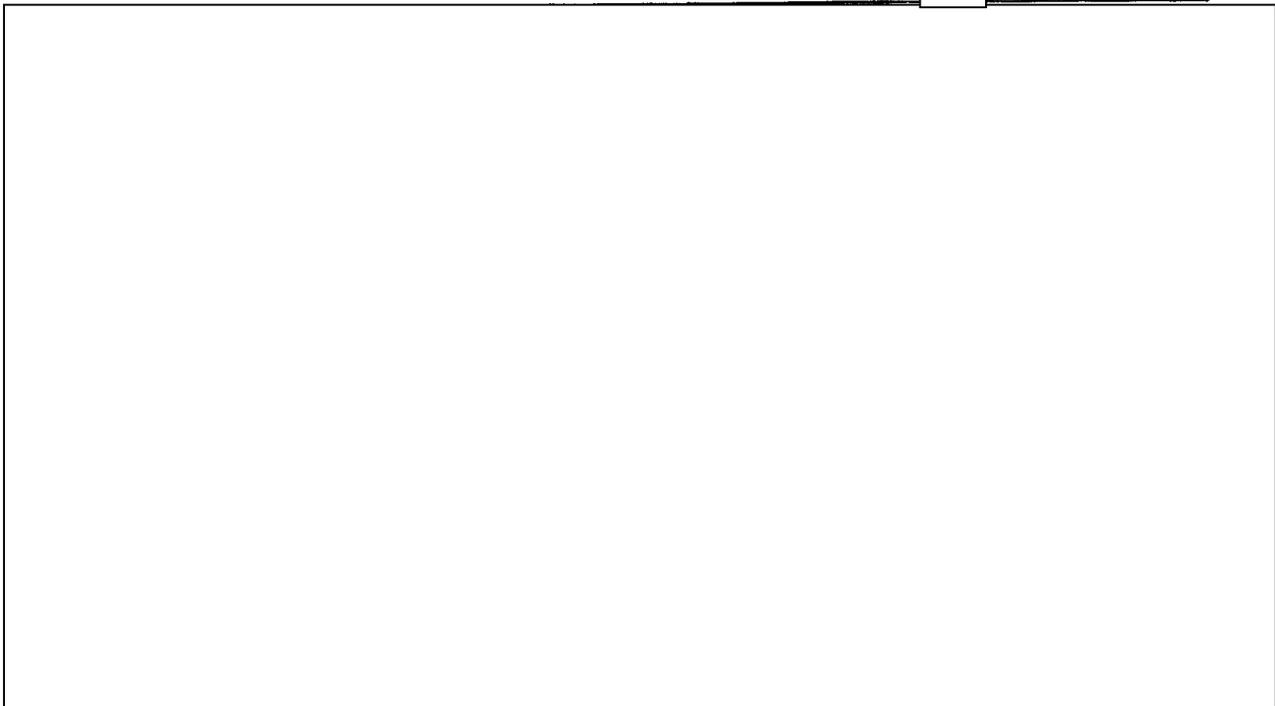
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KOREAS: Maneuvering Before Four-Party Talks



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KOREAS:

Maneuvering Before Four-Party Talks []

A North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman yesterday said P'yongyang has been "promised" that the four-party talks scheduled for 9 December in Geneva will focus on a US troop withdrawal and a peace treaty with Washington. *The misrepresentation may be P'yongyang's way of signaling it will press on these fundamental issues during the talks.*

— *The tactic will feed South Korea's mistrust of P'yongyang's intentions.* []

In addition, this tactic will complicate the Kim government's efforts to manage domestic perceptions in the runup to the presidential election next month. South Korean officials publicly are saying negotiations will be difficult but will improve conditions for bilateral dealings.

— The officials are emphasizing that Seoul did not promise food assistance in return for P'yongyang's agreement to participate in the plenary meeting.

— *The South's deepening financial problems and the recent, much-publicized arrest of two North Korean agents will erode support for more economic assistance to the North, which the conservative press contends must be directly linked to concessions.* []

The Seoul government-run paper predicts negotiations will begin in earnest only after a new South Korean administration takes office next spring. The three main presidential candidates are playing down dealings with the North as an election issue, but all three say they would seek bilateral talks. [] []