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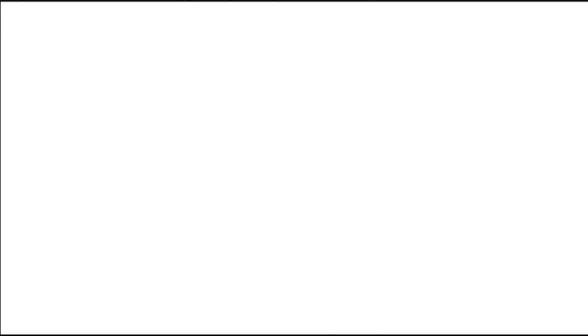
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Senior Executive Intelligence Brief

The SEIB must be returned to DIA within 5 working days



Thursday, 27 July 2000



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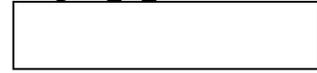
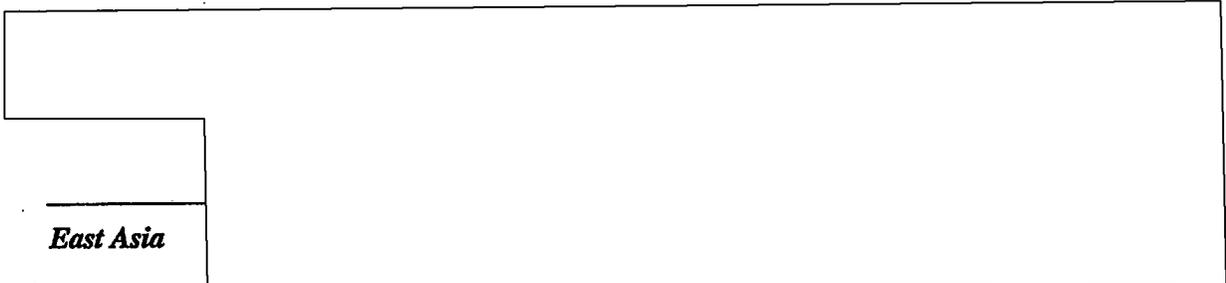
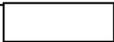


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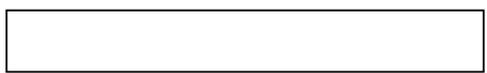
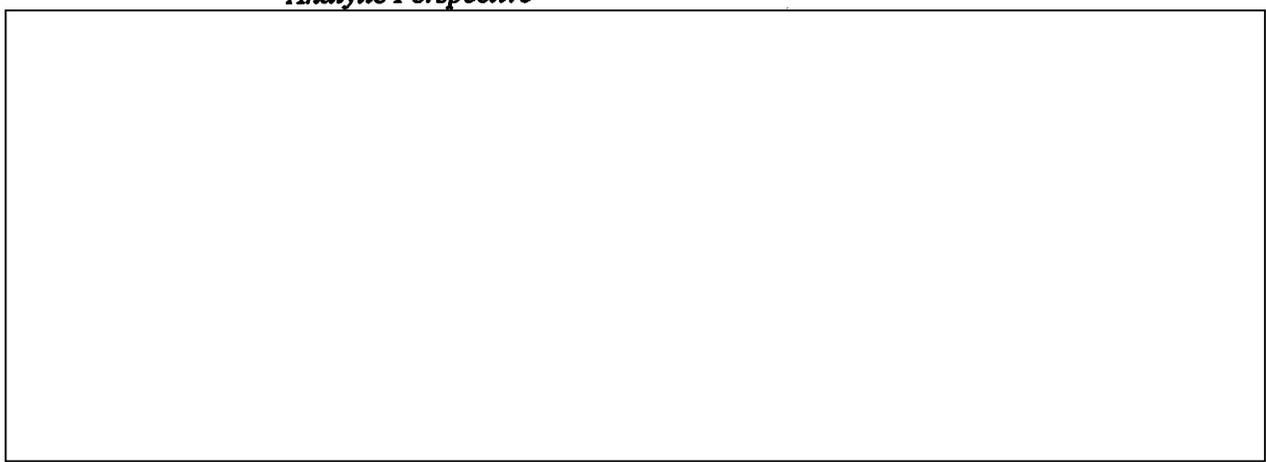


East Asia

South Korea: Fading Summit Euphoria Hurts Kim
Analytic Perspective



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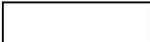
South Korea:
Analytic Perspective

Fading Summit Euphoria Hurts Kim



A month after the summit, President Kim is facing criticism at home, largely from conservatives, that he has been dithering on economic reform, mishandling the thaw with the North, and pursuing policies that have weakened ties to Washington. A media poll conducted early this month showed that Kim's personal popularity fell from a postsummit high of 71 percent to 42 percent, slightly below its presummit level.

- Kim has repeatedly delayed initiatives to reform conglomerates and banks, and recent hotel and medical strikes are feeding perceptions he cannot put an end to persistent labor unrest.
- Seoul has not explained the delays, which may be because of officials' fears that layoffs from restructuring could inflame labor groups.

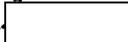


Handling of North Controversial

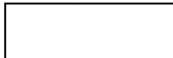


Press statements by Kim's Blue House aides suggest they are judging domestic policy options by how they think P'yongyang would react. This leaves Kim open to charges he is protecting the North's interests at the expense of those of the South.

- After National Assembly members floated a proposal to adopt a vice-presidential system, Blue House officials, referencing the summit, cautioned that the debate should take into account "related factors"—presumably meaning P'yongyang.
- The Blue House publicly has warned the opposition to use prudence on inter-Korean issues to avoid antagonizing the North.



Keeping US Card Out of Play



The summit enabled Kim to deflect domestic concerns that Seoul lagged Washington in driving developments on the peninsula. Now his dilemma is how to show some distance from Washington while avoiding opposition criticism he is coddling P'yongyang or fanning concerns that Seoul's and Washington's interests on the peninsula are diverging.



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— At the same time, the ongoing surge in anti-US sentiment after the summit indicates Kim must consider public demands that he assert Korean interests over those of the US, views strongest among younger Koreans. 

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The National Assembly temporarily suspended its session last week after legislators sparred over North Korean media attacks on the opposition and on a conservative daily. The opposition claims Kim is complacent and that P'yongyang is trying to influence domestic debate and press freedom.



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