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4. US Approach to Four-Party Talks Preliminary Meeting

The Washington Post (R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. WILL PROPOSE NEW WAYS TO EASE MILITARY TENSIONS BETWEEN THE KOREAS," Washington, 8/01/97, A25) reported that, according to US officials, once the proposed four-party Korean peace talks commence, the US will propose that the DPRK and the ROK work out new ways of reducing military tensions and avoiding inadvertent war, possibly by establishing a "hot line" for communicating directly in a crisis, exchanging military visits, and providing advance notification of military maneuvers. The US also intends to signal its willingness to help the DPRK fend off a worsening famine and rebuild its shattered agricultural system by arranging for badly needed fertilizers and pesticides that will increase the country's crop yields, and by assisting with reforestation of landscape that recently has been stripped bare. One senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the four-party negotiations, once they finally get under way, may last a year or more and are likely to be difficult, noting that the four participating countries have agreed on the need to replace the Korean armistice with a permanent peace accord, but have not begun to address whether it should be a formal treaty and how any military disputes should be settled in the meantime. Former US senator Sam Nunn, who visited the DPRK last week to discuss the forthcoming negotiations but who has no formal role, said, "I think it's going to be a long hard process," adding that DPRK officials "feel cornered and desperate" and do not believe the talks offer "a level playing field" because the ROK now has warm relations with both the PRC and the US. On Tuesday at Columbia University's campus in New York, senior officials of the four countries will meet for the first time to discuss the precise timing, agenda and location for the four-party negotiations themselves. At that meeting, according the US officials, the US will push for negotiations to begin as soon as September in Geneva -- the site of the 1994 US-DPRK Agreement that suspended the DPRK nuclear weapons program -- and will seek to keep the agenda "very generalized" but focused on the mutual desire for reduction of tensions on the Korean peninsula.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-PRC Fishery Talks

The ROK has expressed its intention of examining a PRC proposal for a temporary fishery agreement

between the two countries at the latest round of bilateral fishing talks, a ROK Foreign Ministry official said yesterday. During the three-day talks which ended Wednesday in Shanghai, the PRC delegation hoped the two sides could seek a temporary solution, noting it will take time to draw up the boundary between their 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The ROK side will examine the PRC proposal, while continuing negotiations on the EEZ boundaries, the ministry official said. The PRC's proposal for a temporary agreement marked a departure from its reluctance to establish a new fishing deal with the ROK, which has complained PRC fishing boats are depleting maritime resources off its shores. The change in the PRC's attitude followed its recent agreement with Japan on a temporary fishery accord. The acceleration of fishery talks with the PRC could affect the pace of similar talks between the ROK and Japan, which have stalled over the drawing of their EEZ border line. In a meeting with his ROK counterpart Yoo Chong-ha, Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda said Tokyo will scrap its fishery accord with the ROK, if the two sides fail to work out a revision by September, when Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto visits Beijing to sign a temporary agreement with the PRC. The ROK, which insists that the two sides simultaneously handle the drawing of the EEZ boundaries and revision to a bilateral fishery agreement, does not accept the time limit set by Japan. Japan has called for a temporary fishery agreement with the ROK, which would set up joint management waters around the Tokto islets occupied by the ROK maritime police guards but also claimed by Tokyo. During the ROK-PRC fishery talks, the third round this year, the ROK demanded the PRC strengthen measures to prevent illegal operations by the PRC fishing vessels in its waters. (Korea Herald, "KOREA TO CONSIDER TEMPORARY FISHERY DEAL WITH PRC," 07/08/01)

2. ROK-US Arms Deal

A ROK Defense Ministry plan to purchase a US$1 billion US-made early warning aircraft by the year 2000 may be postponed due to budget limitations, a ministry official said yesterday. The official said that negotiations are under way among relevant government agencies on the projected purchase of an AWACS, or Airborne Warning and Control System, but added it was unclear whether the ROK Defense Ministry will get the necessary funding. "I am not sure whether the government will decide that buying an AWACS is not urgent," said the official demanding anonymity. Some government agencies, such as the ROK Ministry of Finance and Economy, opposed the early purchase of the AWACS, citing the high purchase price and operation cost of the aircraft, the official added. If the ROK Defense Ministry fails to secure government approval for the purchase of the aircraft within a month or two, the plan may be delayed indefinitely, the official said. In that case, the related contract signing with the AWACS manufacturer, Boeing, will have to be postponed, he said. "We previously planned to purchase AWACS before the year 2000, but at this moment it is uncertain whether we could push the plan," the official added. He continued, "We know we need an AWACS for an early warning of DPRK provocations, but I am not sure we can get the money for the fiscal 1998," he said. He explained that AWACS is useful for early defection of the DPRK's fighter jets and missiles in case of a surprise attack from the DPRK. Some budget officials have insisted that the priority go to import of portable shoulder-fired missiles, Army tactical missiles and anti-artillery AN-TPQ systems. Those weapons are aimed at countering DPRK's artillery attacks or infiltration of DPRK's low-altitude aircraft such as AN-2, the official explained. The ROK Defense Ministry has confirmed a news report that the ROK will purchase US-made Army Tactical Missile System (ATMS) and multiple launch rocket system worth US$336 million by next year. The ministry will also decide on the selection of portable anti-aircraft missiles between French Mistral and US-made Stinger by late this month. (Korea Herald, "PURCHASE OF US AWACS MAY BE DELAYED BY BUDGET LIMITATIONS," 07/08/01)

3. DPRK Approach to Four-Party Talks Preliminary Meeting

The DPRK would like peace talks to lead to the Korean peninsula becoming a neutral "Switzerland in the east," a leading expert in the US said Wednesday. Tony Namkung, conflict resolution program director at the US Atlantic Council in Washington, told journalists that the DPRK wanted "a Switzerland in the east, some sort of neutral, loose confederation." But asked whether Seoul agreed with such a vision for a reunified Korea, Namkung replied "of course not." The DPRK, the ROK, the PRC and the US are to meet in New York next week for preliminary peace talks aimed at fixing an agenda for formal negotiations. Namkung, who has been a key player behind the scenes in the negotiations ahead of the talks, cautioned that the process which is to lead to a formal peace treaty between the two Koreas could last "at least five years." Former US ambassador to the ROK Donald Gregg also cautioned at the same roundtable discussions here that given the military and political issues involved, the talks were unlikely to proceed smoothly. Namkung said that the DPRK would be counting on the PRC at the talks "to address the issue of political imbalance, to ensure a level playing field," which would include the issue of diplomatic recognition. The DPRK and the US, which do not have diplomatic ties, are involved in bilateral discussions on upgrading their relations. The ROK meanwhile hopes that Washington and Beijing will take a back seat at the talks, enabling the two Koreas to talk bilaterally, according to Namkung. But "not everyone agrees with that," he said. He added however that the four-way formula, first proposed by the ROK and the US in April 1996, was flexible enough to allow official and unofficial bilateral and trilateral consultations. According to Namkung, "the DPRK has a firm understanding of where it wants to go. But I'm not so sure that the other three are just as well prepared." He said that the DPRK had a long-standing strategy dating back a decade, and "this is not a last gasp of a regime trying to save itself." As a result, DPRK diplomats had ensured that "accidents do not interfere in the process leading to full-fledged peace talks." Namkung said that the issue of food aid, which the DPRK made a precondition for joining the four-way talks, was unlikely to have a prominent place during the forthcoming negotiations. "It will remain an issue on the table, but with not so much visibility," he said. But he added that the PRC's bilateral economic assistance to famine-threatened DPRK, which has never been officially quantified, could be an issue at the talks. Gregg noted that recent developments, including the apology for the submarine incident and Pyongyang's attitude over the Hwang defection, showed that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il was "in control." He played down the fact that Kim Jong-il had still not taken on the formal trappings of power held by his late father Kim Il-sung. (Korea Times, "PYONGYANG WANTS KOREA TO BECOME `SWITZERLAND IN EAST' AT PEACE TALKS," 08/01/97)

4. PRC Nuclear Development

The PRC and a group of foreign companies have finished the early design stages of the first nuclear reactor developed in the country, the official Xinhua News Agency said Wednesday. The 1,000-megawatt reactor is intended to be used widely in the PRC for commercial nuclear power plants, Xinhua said, citing officials of the Shanghai Nuclear Power Joint Office. The foreign contractors include Westinghouse Electric Corp. of the US, Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., and Netec of Spain. The companies are to supply a nuclear steam supply system and steam engine units for the reactor. (Korea Times, "PRC CO-DESIGNS FIRST BIG NUCLEAR REACTOR," 08/01/97)

III. Japan

1. Japan-ROK Fishery Dispute

The Nikkei Shimbun ("ROK SOFTENS ITS STANCE TO JAPAN IN JAPAN-ROK FISHERY DISPUTE," Seoul, 3, 7/28/97) reported that the gap between the views of Japan and the ROK on borderline demarcation of fishing jurisdictions kindled the ROK's nationalism, but that the agreement on continuation of negotiations reached at the Japan-ROK foreign ministerial meeting July 28 indicates the ROK's softening stance. The report also said that, although both the Japanese government and the ruling parties will seek to draw compromises from the ROK, they are not so optimistic because

the ROK people are becoming inward-looking because of the coming presidential election.

2. Japan-PRC Fishery Relations

The Nikkei Shimbun ("JAPAN-PRC FISHERY AGREEMENT ENTERS FINAL STAGE," Kuala Lumpur, 1, 7/28/97) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda and PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen agreed in Kuala Lumpur that Japan and the PRC will conclude their fishery negotiations, which began upon Japan's ratification of the UN Convention on Law of the Sea, by the time of Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto's visit to the PRC in September.

3. Japan-Russia Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("RUSSIA'S FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HAILS HASHIMOTO'S NEW DOCTRINE FOR RUSSIA," 2, 7/27/97) reported that Russia's first deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov hailed Japan's new foreign policy toward Russia, which is characterized by the three principles of trust, mutual benefits and a view of the long-term. (Writer's note: See the Japan section of the July 25 Daily Report.) Nemtsov told the Yomiuri Shimbun, "We hail it as an tangible result of our efforts to invigorate relations between Russia and Japan." He also said, "I think the new policies are an answer to what was discussed during my visit to Japan, but I had not expected such an early response. I hear that it takes a long time for the Japanese to build a national consensus on any issue, but once consensus is achieved, the nation is so quick to move. As long as the new policies are set, I think we will quickly realize them." With regard to a Hashimoto-Yeltsin meeting that was discussed at the Denver Summit, Nemtsov said, "I think the meeting will be held at the end of this year."

The Nikkei Shimbun ("RUSSIA HAILS JAPAN'S NEW POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR RUSSIA," Evening Edition 1, 7/29/97) reported that during his meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda in Kuala Lumpur, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov said, "Prime Minister Hashimoto's new policy toward Russia is quite positive." They also agreed that at the future meeting between Yeltsin and Hashimoto that was discussed at the Denver Summit, both leaders should not wear neckties and that the meeting will take place within this year. They also agreed to conclude the ongoing Japan-Russia fishing negotiations at the next round slated for late September. With regard to economic relations, they agreed to establish a inter-governmental committee to deal with co-development of energy in far-eastern Russia.

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("YELTSIN HAILS HASHIMOTO'S THREE PRINCIPLES IN HIS NEW POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA," Evening Edition 1, 7/29/97) and The Nikkei Shimbun ("RUSSIAN PRESIDENT HAILS HASHIMOTO'S NEW POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA," Evening Edition 1, 7/29/97) reported that according to Russia's InterFax News Agency, the Russian Presidential spokesman announced July 28 that Russian President Boris Yeltsin hailed Hashimoto's new doctrine for Russia.

4. Japan's Domestic Debates Over Defense Area Policy

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("KATO DENIES HIS REMARK ON EXCLUSION OF TAIWAN STRAIT FROM "SURROUNDING AREAS"," 5, 7/28/97) reported that Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Koichi Kato said during a TV program July 27, "Although PRC counterparts asked me many questions about emergencies in 'areas surrounding Japan,' I never directly answered them. I didn't even say whether or not Taiwan Strait is included in the areas." This statement contradicted earlier reports that he had said that Japan-US guidelines do not include the PRC.

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("DEPUTY DEFENSE DIRECTOR GENERAL CONSIDERS PRC-TAIWAN CRISIS OF 1996 AS AN EMERGENCY IN "SURROUNDING AREAS"," 5, 7/29/97) reported that Japanese Deputy Defense Director General Masahiro Akiyama told reporters July 28 that, according

to the 1995 revised defense outlines, a PRC-Taiwan crisis would be considered "an emergency in areas surrounding Japan," as defined in the new Japan-US defense guidelines. Akiyama also revealed that the Defense Agency has been preparing for such an emergency, suggesting that both the Defense Agency and the Self-Defense Forces assumed measures for Japan-US cooperation in the Taiwan crisis last year. In relation to Akiyama's remark, Cabinet Chief Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama suggested to reporters that he also assumed a possibility of US-PRC military confrontation in the crisis. The report also quoted former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who belongs to the conservative wing in the LDP, as saying, "Mr. Kato made a wrong statement."

The Nikkei Shimbun ("JAPAN-US WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS AGREED THAT "SURROUNDING AREAS" SHOULD BE CLEARLY DEFINED," San Francisco, 2, 7/30/97) reported that despite a split in the LDP over the concept of "areas surrounding Japan" stated in the recent interim report on the review of Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines, Japanese and US working-level defense officials agreed at a San Francisco hotel July 29 to clearly define the concept. The report added that the split was caused by LDP Secretary General Koichi Kato's remark that Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines do not cover the Taiwan Strait, which drew criticism from the LDP.

The Yomiuri Shimbun (""SURROUNDING AREAS" MAY CAUSE DISPUTE," 5, 8/1/97) reported that LDP Secretary General Koichi Kato's remark that "areas surrounding Japan" mainly cover the DPRK is causing a sharp split among two factions in the LDP and the Social Democratic Party. With regard to the debate whether or not "surrounding areas" should be clearly defined, the report quoted former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone as saying, "the items necessary for Japan's independence and stability should be situationally defined." To alleviate the split between Kato and his critics, LDP Policy Council Chairman Taku Yamazaki stated at a inter-ruling party meeting on Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines July 30, "the guidelines do not assume an emergency in the Taiwan Strait that fits emergencies in areas surrounding Japan." However, Yamazaki was in turn criticized by a former Defense Agency director general, who said, "Yamazaki's view only reflects an expectation that such a conflict will never take place." The SDP also criticized Yamazaki, saying, "The PRC-Taiwan confrontation should clearly excluded from the guidelines." The report pointed out that the SDP's criticism came from its concern that the US may ask Japan to cooperate in such an event based on a US law requiring the US to support Taiwan in a PRC-Taiwan confrontation. In addition, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported that with regard to the guidelines, Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda said to reporters July 31, "Whether Japan is influenced by emergencies or not depends on what kind of emergency and how serious they are," emphasizing that "areas surrounding Japan" should not be limited.

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