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I. United States

1. DPRK Food Crisis

Reuters ("N.KOREA SAYS GRAIN STOCKS FALL SHORT," Tokyo, 2/3/97) and the Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA APPEALS FOR AID," Seoul, 2/3/97) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Monday it had only half the grain needed to feed its people, and appealed for international food donations. "As is known to all, North Korea has in recent years been repeatedly hit by unprecedented natural disasters, which greatly damaged agriculture and other sectors of the national economy and caused temporary food problems," KCNA said. "The nation's annual demand for grain is about 7.84 million tons, of which 4.82 million tons is needed as food," it said, adding that last year's flood-damaged grain output was only 2.5 million tons, "the amount being far less than expected." The shortfall of 2.3 million tons is the same amount estimated by the UN

World Food Program, which is preparing to issue another appeal -- the third since last year -- for large-scale food aid to the DPRK. The KCNA plea followed a statement last week by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies that food rations in the DPRK had dropped to a level four times lower than normally considered essential for a healthy population. The KCNA report thanked the international community, including the US, for past food assistance. "We are really grateful for this," KCNA said. However, the announcement, an unusually frank and detailed description of

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The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA MAY RUN OUT OF RICE, CORN IN APRIL OR MAY - REPORT," Washington, 2/3/97) reported that a recent report from the US agricultural attache at the US Embassy in the ROK says that the food situation in the DPRK continues to deteriorate and the country could run out of rice and corn supplies by April or May. The report, dated January 28, says that for the DPRK to maintain its current minimum daily ration of 500 grams of grain per citizen for the rest of this year, the country will have to import 2 million metric tons of grain. "Without increasing imports, the level of food availability will be down significantly from last year's very low level," the report said.

2. Four-Party Talks Briefing Postponement

Reuters ("US SAYS N. KOREA WILL NOT MAKE MEETING," Washington, 2/1/97) reported that US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said in a written statement issued late Friday that the DPRK has said it will not attend the four-party peace talks briefing scheduled for February 5. "We were informed late this afternoon by the [DPRK] U.N. Mission in New York that the North Korean side would not depart Pyongyang in time to attend the joint briefing scheduled for February 5 in New York," the statement said. The statement added, however, that DPRK officials "have not informed us that they are unwilling to attend such a meeting" and the US "will be in touch with the North Koreans seeking further clarification." The briefing by the US and the ROK is intended to discuss the US/ROK proposal for peace talks concerning the Korean peninsula that would also include the PRC. "We are disappointed at this latest turn of events but the U.S. and ROK briefing to the DPRK on the proposal remains valid. We hope to move ahead with the joint briefing at the earliest opportunity," the statement said. However, the latest postponement raised grave doubts about the future of proposed peace talks. "Latest reports are that unless North Korea receives more grain or gets grain for the Cargill deal ... they have no intention of going to the briefing," U.S. ambassador to the ROK James Laney told a news conference earlier in Seoul. "That puts a great deal

of doubt on the four-party talks." [Ed. note: Please also note related items in the ROK section, below, and in the January 31 Daily Report]

3. US-DPRK Relations

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, JAN. 31," USIA Transcript, 2/3/79) denied media reports that the US and the DPRK have agreed to establish liaison offices by July 1997. "While we have long had the objective of establishing liaison offices in each other's capitals -- in Pyongyang and Washington -- the United States has not agreed to the establishment of those liaison offices; we have not agreed to any specific date for it. There are still some logistical issues that need to be worked out," Burns said. "We have identified some staff -- in fact, a Foreign Service Officer who's studying Korean -- as you would expect us to, to assume the head of the liaison office, if a decision is made to establish one," Burns added. Responding to other questions, Burns also said that the US understands the DPRK to be negotiating grain purchases from a number of companies, and that "we hope very much of that can take place." Burns added that "although we are responsible for issuing export licenses for commercial sales of humanitarian goods, but we're not interfering in those commercial discussions." Burns said the US has no "firsthand" knowledge of the DPRK food situation, and relies on the UN World Food Program and the other agencies for information.

4. US-ROK Relations

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, JAN. 31," USIA Transcript, 2/3/79) would not confirm reports that new US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would visit the ROK next month. "I'm not able to confirm her trip [or] any of the specific stops in Asia," Burns said. "I know from the discussions in which I was involved this morning at Secretary Albright's senior staff meeting at 8:30 a.m., that she has not yet finalized and her assistants have not yet finalized the sequencing and dates for these trips," Burns said.

5. US Nuclear Posture Debated

Stephen S. Rosenfeld wrote in the Washington Post ("WAKE UP -- THE NIGHTMARE'S NOT OVER," 1/31/97, A21) that an exchange between US Senator Jeff Bingaman and new US Secretary of Defense William Cohen at the latter's confirmation hearing usefully raised the issue of the need to change US strategic nuclear policies to reflect the new realities of the post-Cold War world. "The fact is that although the Cold War is over, the nuclear posture it spawned is not," Rosenfeld wrote. The article noted that the US and Russia both still maintain powerful strategic forces and that their agreement to retarget missiles away from cities "is almost instantly reversible." Rosenfeld then observed that with the addition of a new peril -- the risk of an accidental or unauthorized launch or theft of a weapon in Russia -- "you have plenty for prudent people to be anxious about." Rosenfeld argued that while concern for the proliferation of missile technology to rogue regimes such as Iraq, Iran or the DPRK has encouraged a new US interest in missile defense systems, the absence of a matching concern for remaining US and Russian forces has left Cold War strategic policies in place. The article quotes Reagan defense aide Fred Ikle as saying that the first-term Clinton review of US nuclear posture "did not go far enough in moving away from mutual assured destruction principles." The article then cites a Stimson Center report asserting that, given this posture, an accidental Russian launch would trigger a full scale US response that would produce "an overwhelming and unnecessary disaster for both countries." Rosenfeld concluded that, while the US does "need a missile defense of reasonable effectiveness and cost," the time also has come "to take crisis decisions off automatic" and "to reduce the numbers of weapons in arsenals on both sides," as well as consider Fried Ikle's recommendation that NATO adopt a "no first use" nuclear policy.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Talks Briefing Postponement

The US State Department reported on Friday that the DPRK again postponed a key briefing from the ROK and the US on the four-party peace talks that had been scheduled for February 5. "We were informed late this afternoon (Friday, January 31) by the DPRK UN mission in New York that the North Korean delegation would not depart Pyongyang in time to attend the joint briefing," US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns stated. However, Burns added that "they have not informed us that they are unwilling to attend such a meeting" and that "we (the US) will be in touch with the North Koreans seeking further clarifications." DPRK diplomats who were to participate in the New York meeting had been expected to arrive at the US Embassy in Beijing last Friday in order to obtain their visas at the US Embassy. "We hope to move ahead with the joint briefing at the earliest opportunity." Burns stated, adding the US was "disappointed at this latest turn of events" but that the talks "remain valid." The DPRK had asked for a postponement of the preparatory meeting on a previous occasion in order to conclude negotiations on grain purchases that they considered to be their top priority. According to Burns, US officials "are prepared to do anything to facilitate" the DPRK's grain-import deal with Minnesota-based Cargill grain company. Last month the Clinton administration announced it had licensed the American food conglomerate to sell up to 500,000 tons of grain to the DPRK. The license is an exception to the 47-year-old US embargo on the DPRK. (The Korea Times, "NK AGAIN POSTPONES BRIEFING ON FOUR-PARTY PEACE TALKS," Seoul, 02/02/97)

2. ROK Arms Procurement

The ROK has launched a US$600 million weapons procurement project to enhance its anti-missile and aircraft attack capabilities. A source at the ROK Defense Ministry stated Sunday that the ministry had decided on the Patriot air defense system from the US and Russia's S-300 as the final candidates for its low-tier, long-range anti-missile and anti-aircraft missile system to protect population centers from aerial attacks. "With the candidates finalized, procurement officials and scientists will shortly start comparing the two systems in terms of price and performance for months or perhaps years to come before deciding which of the two to buy," stated a defense ministry official. Because the US and Russia are vying fiercely to increase their share of the international arms market, the two nations are expected to lobby hard to get the ROK deal. The ROK requires a long-range air defense system to replace its aged Nikes and to supplement its existing short and medium-range air defense system. Perhaps more importantly, the ROK needs Patriots or S-300s to protect population centers from possible Scud attacks by the DPRK. ROK ministry officials are wary about revealing their preferences for either of the two systems. However, they have pointed out that the weakness of the PACs were their expense, while the S-300's weaknesses lie in its reliability. "Initially, we only had PACs on board but we postponed talks about their procurement because they are very expensive," stated one senior ministry official. "Then S-300 came along to make competition possible. We will decide to buy one of the two according to the outcome of our evaluation." One of the reasons ministry officials welcomed the late entry of S-300 is that the ROK can buy the Russian missiles to offset hundreds of millions of dollars of debts Russia still has to pay the ROK. (The Korea Times, "KOREA LAUNCHES $600 MIL. PROCUREMENT PROJECT AGAINST MISSILE, AIRCRAFT ATTACK," Seoul, 02/02/97)

3. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal

Taiwan responded Friday to ROK concerns over its plans to export nuclear waste to the DPRK by arguing the deal was strictly "business" and should be dealt with reasonably. Taiwanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Peter Cheng told a visiting delegation of ROK anti-nuclear activists that "there

is no need to make excuses and find fault with us" adding that "(the ROK) should send people there to inspect" the DPRK nuclear waste disposal facilities if they were concerned about the deal between the state-run Taiwan Power Co. (Taipower) and Pyongyang. Cheng also responded to another ROK anti-nuclear delegation which had asked Taipei to reconsider the deal by stating that "we welcome the delegates if they are here to discuss the issue with reason." ROK environmentalist Choi Yul, who was part of the 12-member delegation, stated that "the South Korean people were angered and saddened over the North Korea's decision to provide sites for nuclear waste disposal, risking contamination. ... The Taiwan Power Company has taken advantage of Pyongyang's financial difficulties and has threatened the peace of the Korean peninsula and even the whole of Asia," the group said in a statement signed by 156 ROK assemblymen. The group called for the immediate cancellation of the deal "or we would unite world's environmental groups to stop the delivery." Choi said the group would also advocate boycotts of Taiwanese goods if the deal went ahead. (The Korea Times, "TAIWAN SAYS NUCLEAR WASTE DEAL WITH NK STRICTLY BUSINESS," Seoul, 02/02/97)

III. Announcements

1. Korea Briefing From The Asia Society

The Asia Society has announced the publication of "Korea Briefing: Toward Reunification," edited by David R. McCann of Cornell University. This newest addition to the series analyzes the politics, economics, international relations, and language policies of the two Koreas in terms of the reunification process. In addition, the volume offers a review history of the Korean Teachers Union and a portrait of the human dimensions of the present situation in North Korea. The "Korea Briefing" includes a chronology of events from the summer of 1993 to the spring of 1996, a glossary of names and terms, and a list of suggested readings. Contributing authors include: Charles K. Armstrong, Kongdan Oh, Young Whan Kihl, Sang Duk Yu, Stephen W. Linton and Ross King. For order information, please contact laurens@asiasoc.org.

2. Nuclear Disarmament Debate Report from PRIF

The Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) has published a report on the nuclear disarmament debate: "Nuclear Disarmament: With What End in View? The International Discourse about Nuclear Arms Control and the Vision of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World," by Harald Muller, Alexander Kelle, Katja Frank, Sylvia Meier, and Annette Schaper (PRIF Reports No. 46, December, 1996, 49 pages). The report assesses how developments since the end of the Cold War "have cleared the view to a long-obscured goal of nuclear arms control: a nuclear-weapon-free world." The report also looks particularly at contemporary perspectives on German security, and the role of nuclear weapons, in light of the recent French offer to Germany of "extended deterrence." The report is a translation of a German version published in September, 1996. The report is part of the PRIF project, "A Realistic Path Towards Nuclear Disarmament," and is supported by funding from the Volkswagen Foundation. For more information, contact Dr. Annette Schaper Leimenrode, PRIF, 29 60322 Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Telephone: +49-69-959104-24; Fax: +49-69-558481; Email: Schaper@em.uni-frankfurt.de; WWW: http://www.rz.uni-frankfurt.de/hsfk.

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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