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I. United States

1. DPRK Famine

The Washington Post (Keith B. Richburg, "GLIMPSES OF REALITY IN N. KOREA'S CAPITAL," Pyongyang, 11/02/97, A27) reported that the foreign population in the DPRK is steadily increasing due to international relief agencies arriving to provide food aid, bringing DPRK citizens unprecedented exposure to outsiders. There are now a half-dozen nongovernmental organizations in the DPRK, plus the Red Cross Federation, the article said. The article quoted a European relief worker as saying, "There are foreigners and organizations and four-wheel-drive cars running around." However, contact between DPRK citizens and foreigners remains rare except in controlled settings, the article said.

2. DPRK Human Rights

The Washington Post carried an opinion article by William J. Taylor and Glenn Baek of the Center for Strategic and International Studies ("WORSE THAN CHINA," Washington, 11/02/97, C07) which argued that "even more grave and horrific" than the famine in the DPRK "are the appalling human rights violations of its own people committed by the Stalinist dictatorship in Pyongyang. The article said that "Studies by human rights groups and the U.S. State Department all report that North Korea has one of the worst human rights records in the world." The article stated, "Limited individual rights apply only to the privileged members of the Korea Workers' Party and those who subordinate themselves unconditionally to the regime." The article quoted a former DPRK diplomat who defected to the West as saying that the DPRK leaders "treat the people in North Korea like machines, not humans." The article criticized the US government for lacking a clear policy toward the DPRK, and said that due to international food aid, "the dictatorship in Pyongyang survives longer to inflict human rights horrors on its own people." The authors argued, "There is leverage in 'doing nothing' either to help or harm North Korea.... We prefer to see the U.S. government do nothing and let the current dictatorship in Pyongyang go down sooner rather than later." The article called on the US to "take action by promoting a concerted international effort to show the world what the DPRK truly is -- a total communist dictatorship that does horrible things to its own people."

3. DPRK Defector

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA HIRES N. KOREAN SAILOR," Seoul, 11/01/97) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry said Saturday that Li Gwang-su, the only sailor captured alive from the DPRK submarine that ran aground off the ROK's east coast in September of last year, will work as a civilian instructor in the ROK navy, sharing his knowledge of the DPRK's military and society. Li said that the submarine was on a spy mission when it became stranded. The DPRK insists the submarine was on a routine training mission when it developed engine trouble. One crew member is still missing.

4. ROK Presidential Election

Reuters ("S. KOREA OPPOSITION UNITES BEHIND KIM DAE-JUN [sic]," Seoul, 10/03/97) reported that the ROK's two main opposition parties, the National Congress for New Politics and the United Liberal Democrats, on Monday signed an agreement to field a single candidate, Kim Dae-jung, in the December 18 presidential elections. "The joint candidacy is the start of changes in South Korean political power," Kim Dae-jung said in a statement. Kim Jong-pil, presidential nominee of the United Liberal Democrats, withdrew from the presidential race last week and threw his support behind Kim Dae-jung. In exchange, Kim Dae-jung promised to name a representative of the United Liberal Democrats to the post of premier if he is elected. The two parties also agreed to cooperate in revising the nation's constitution by 1999 to establish a cabinet system of government, they said in joint statement. However, Lee Sa-chul, spokesman for the ruling New Korea Party, denounced the move, saying, "The two parties' move was a coup d'etat in South Korean politics."

5. ROK President's Son Released

United Press International ("S.KOREA LEADER'S SON FREED ON BAIL," Seoul, 10/03/97) reported that Kim Hyun-chul, son of President Kim Young-sam, has been released on bail pending an appeal hearing. A citizens' group called the National Alliance for Democracy and Unification of Korea condemned the release, claiming Kim Hyun-chul, who was sentenced to three years in prison three weeks ago, benefited from his father's position as president.

6. Japan-Russia Summit

The Boston Globe (David Filipov, "RUSSIA, JAPAN LEADERS ANNOUNCE COOPERATION PACT," Krasnoyarsk, Russia, 11/01/97), the Washington Times, (Willis Witter, "JAPAN AND RUSSIA AGREE

TO PURSUE WWII PEACE PACT," Tokyo, 11/03/97), the Washington Post (David Hoffman, "YELTSIN, HASHIMOTO HOLD INFORMAL SIBERIAN SUMMIT," Moscow, 11/01/97, A32) and the Los Angeles Times (Carol J. Williams, "YELTSIN, HASHIMOTO END THEIR COUNTRIES' 50-YEAR FEUD," Rasnoyarsk, 11/03/97) reported that Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin and Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on Saturday announced a broad new economic cooperation agreement in the first day of informal talks. Hashimoto said Saturday, "This is the biggest chance to normalize ties with Russia and to start a process of resolving all issues of the 20th century within the century." On Sunday he announced, "The president and I have agreed to make our best efforts to sign a peace treaty by the year 2000." In addition, the two leaders discussed increased security dialogue and possibly holding joint naval exercises to practice for natural-disaster relief and other humanitarian missions. Hashimoto said that Japan would support Russia's attempt to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, and Yeltsin said that Russia backed Japan's bid to win a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. The two leaders also said that they will discuss joint development of a new generation nuclear reactor and possible cooperation in future offshore oil exploration near Russia's Sakhalin Island. They also agreed to seek an accord on fishing around the disputed Kuril Islands. Among the proposals being considered, Japan would invest to improve the Kurils' tourist infrastructure in return for a say in how the islands would be administered and developed. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny M. Primakov is expected to visit Tokyo this month to press on with the progress achieved at the Siberian summit. Yeltsin has agreed to visit Japan for another informal summit with Hashimoto in April. During the summit several thousand demonstrators marched in the Krasnoyarsk city center to protest the region's severe economic hardship and to insist that Russia not back down on the Kurils territorial issue.

7. PRC Missile Sales

The Associated Press (Barry Schweid, "U.S. EYES CHINESE MISSILE SALES," 10/31/97) reported that the US is investigating the PRC's recent delivery of non-nuclear cruise missiles to Iran. A senior US official said Friday that the question confronting US investigators is whether enough missiles were delivered by the PRC to create a destabilizing situation in the Persian Gulf region. If so, PRC firms could be blacklisted under US law. The anonymous official said that "we've heard some encouraging remarking from Chinese officials but need to pursue this further." Last year, he said, the Clinton administration concluded that the PRC's shipment of cruise missiles to Iran did not add up to a danger or compel US sanctions under the law. However, he said, since then there have been additional deliveries.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-Japan Fisheries Talks

Ryu Kwang-sok, director general of the ROK Foreign Ministry's Asian-Pacific Affairs Bureau, said that the ROK yesterday decided to boycott fisheries talks with Japan, scheduled for November 5 in Tokyo, as a gesture of strong protest against Japan's seizure of an ROK fishing boat. Ryu expressed "regrets" over Japan's decision to start legal action against Lee Mong-gu, skipper of the 9.8-ton Kaerim. According to ROK officials, Japan's decision, which is likely to bring Lee to a summary court, has shattered the foundation for dialogue. ROK officials notified Nobutake Otano, minister at the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, of the decision, which was reached in an inter-ministerial meeting. However, Ryu said that Seoul will be taking part in another meeting designed to settle the maritime boundaries of the two countries. The meeting on exclusive economic zones (EEZ) is scheduled for November 3. As the ROK has unilaterally canceled the fishing talks, it is uncertain whether Japan would attend the EEZ talks. Japan, which sought to wrap up fishing talks as soon as possible, has been reluctant to attend EEZ talks because controversy over the disputed islets of Tokdo will prolong the talks. (Korea Times, Son Key-young, "ROK CANCELS FISHING TALKS WITH JAPAN,"

11/03/97)

2. Alleged DPRK Defection

ROK officials have dismissed speculation that a top DPRK military general sought political asylum in the ROK while visiting Beijing. Senior officials in Seoul said yesterday that Vice Marshal Ri Du-ik, a four-star general, did not contact ROK authorities regarding a possible defection. ROK diplomats in Beijing also stated that Ri did not contact the ROK embassy in the Chinese capital. "Ri Du-ik has not asked for political asylum at our embassy," said ROK Ambassador to the PRC Chung Jong-wook. There have been news reports in Seoul over the weekend that the 76-year-old Ri has not returned home after visiting Beijing as a member of a DPRK goodwill mission, leading to speculation that Ri might have sought asylum in the ROK. DPRK embassy officials in Beijing immediately denied the rumors of defection. ROK officials said there is the possibility that Ri may be receiving medical treatment in the Chinese capital. (Korea Herald, Nam In-soo, "AUTHORITIES DENY RUMORS OF DPRK GENERAL'S DEFECTION," 11/03/97)

3. DPRK Export Zones

According to the ROK Ministry of Finance and Economy, officials from the DPRK's overseas economic cooperation committee revealed their long-term visions for the three port cities of Wonsan, Nampo and Rajin-Sonbong during an international forum on investment in Rajin-Sonbong held in Tokyo last month. "The Rajin-Sonbong area, as a free trade zone equipped with financial service functions, will specialize in intermediary trade," a DPRK official was quoted as saying during the forum. On the future of Wonsan and Nampo, the DPRK official said, "On the basis of their existing infrastructures, the two ports will serve as bonded-processing export zones focusing on consumer products." During the recent World Economic Forum meeting in Hong Kong, other DPRK officials confirmed the plans to turn Wonsan and Nampo into bonded-processing export zones instead of a free trade zone like Rajin-Sonbong. In a bonded-processing zone, enterprises are allowed to freely import raw materials from abroad before processing them for re-export, without paying customs duties and local taxes. In a free trade zone, financial services are offered to enterprises operating there, allowing them to engage in intermediary trade. (Korea Herald, "WONSAN, NAMPO TO BE BONDED-PROCESSING EXPORT ZONES," 11/03/97)

4. ROK Presidential Elections

After months of negotiations, ruling and opposition lawmakers last Friday revised laws governing elections and political fund-raising. The revised law bars candidates from holding massive outdoor rallies. In the past, candidates have mobilized huge audiences, many of the members being paid to attend. Instead, the candidates are now allowed to hold a limited number of indoor campaign rallies and appear on television at least three times during the official campaign period. Official campaigning for the December 18 presidential election begins late this month. The Central Election Management Commission, the nation's top election watchdog, estimates that the abolition of outdoor rallies alone will help candidates cut down on their official campaign expenses by more than 20 billion won. Voters, meanwhile, will have to pay more taxes because, under the new election law, the government has to pay a larger share of the campaign expenses of candidates. (Korea Herald, Nam In-soo, "NEW LAWS TO CHANGE FACE OF ELECTIONS," 11/03/97)

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. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of [other NAPSNet resources](#).

We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

Produced by [the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development](#).

Wade L. Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org

Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org

Berkeley, California, United States

Shin Dong-bom: dongbom.shin@anu.edu.au

Seoul, Republic of Korea

Choi Chung-moon: cily@star.elim.co.kr

Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp

Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org

Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn

Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn

Shanghai, People's Republic of China

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Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org