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I. United States

1. Briefing Session on Four-Party Talks

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "US HOPES KOREA TALKS PROGRESS," Washington, 3/4/97) reported that all arrangements are in place for the upcoming US-ROK briefing of the DPRK on the proposed four-party Korean peace talks. Although the modest agenda calls only for the US, the ROK, and the DPRK to talk about the proposed talks, officials see the meeting as something of a breakthrough, considering the impasse between Pyongyang and Seoul less than 10 weeks ago. In addition, the DPRK's agreement to engage in talks in the presence of the ROK represents another breakthrough, given the past DPRK insistence on dealing exclusively with the US. The main message the US will be taking to the Wednesday meeting is that it is attaching no conditions on the part of the DPRK to attend the formal negotiations, a senior official said. Leading the respective delegations will be US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman, DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan and ROK Assistant Foreign Minister Song Young-shik. The report noted that the briefing will be held around three tables joined together as a triangle. The DPRK twice canceled the briefing

session earlier this year, and agreed to the current date only after the US and the ROK pledged US\$16 million in food relief.

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US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. BRIEFING, MARCH 3," USIA Transcript, 3/4/97) said that the US "is looking forward to" Wednesday's joint US-ROK briefing of the DPRK on the four-party peace talks proposal. "The United States hopes very much that as a result of the Four-Party Talks briefing to be held this week in New York, North Korea will agree to attend Four-Party Talks, and, of course, the fourth party there would be the Government of China," Burns said. Burns also said that on March 7 in New York, the US "will have a bilateral meeting with the North Koreans to discuss a variety of issues, mainly the issues that we've been working on with them, and I think you know what they are." Burns added that there would also be a US-ROK bilateral meeting, leading to a US-ROK briefing of the Japanese government on the results of all the week's meetings. Discussing the origins of the DPRK briefing session, Burns said: "North Korea requested the Joint Briefing so that it could learn more about the proposal for the Four-Party Talks. We intend to explain our ideas concerning the goals of the Four-Party Talks, and we want to propose arrangements for the negotiating process options for the negotiating process itself. We will invite suggestions and comments from the North Koreans about the best way to implement this negotiating proposal, and I want to stress, this is a briefing; it will not be a negotiating session, but we hope it does provide the North Koreans with sufficient information that they'll want to accept this proposal..." In response to a question concerning the links between the briefing session and the US-DPRK bilateral meeting, Burns said: "The United States has made it clear to the North Koreans that progress in our bilateral relations can only come in parallel or consistent with progress in relations between South Korea and North Korea, and the North Koreans ought to understand that. We have an alliance relationship with South Korea. We are committed to the defense of South Korea, and we want to make sure that any kind of progress in our own relationship parallels progress in the inter-Korean relationships."

2. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA CAN TAKE TAIWAN NUCLEAR WASTE BEGINNING JUNE," Taipei, 3/4/97), citing a report in Taiwan's United Evening News, reported that three officials of the DPRK's nuclear safety commission arrived Tuesday to present the timetable for delivery of 60,000 barrels of Taiwan's nuclear waste to the DPRK. The shipments are set to begin in June. Officials of the state-run Taiwan Power Co. and the Atomic Energy Commission declined to comment on the reported visit, and said the DPRK had not yet sent them a plan for the shipments. The DPRK agreed in January to receive the Taiwanese waste over a two-year period, with an option to take another 140,000 barrels afterward. The agreement has been strongly protested by the ROK on grounds that the waste threatens to harm the environment on the Korean Peninsula because the DPRK can't be trusted to uphold nuclear safety standards. Taiwan claims the waste is low-level, consisting mostly of clothing and other materials exposed to radiation at the island's three nuclear power plants.

3. Asian Regional Security Meeting

AP-Dow Jones News Service ("CHINA OTHER ASIAN NATIONS, US TO DISCUSS REGIONAL SECURITY," Beijing, 3/4/97) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Tang Guoqiang announced that defense and foreign affairs officials from 21 countries and regions, including the US, will meet in Beijing from Thursday to Saturday to discuss regional security. The meeting comes amid concerns about the rapid increases in defense spending and conflicting territorial claims in Asia. The meeting will be chaired by the PRC and the Philippines, and will be attended by Japan, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Russia, Canada, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, India, Papua New Guinea, the US and the European Union. Delegates will discuss regional security and measures to build confidence.

4. New ROK Prime Minister

Reuters ("S. KOREA SELECTS NEW PREMIER AFTER SCANDAL," Seoul, 3/4/97) reported that ROK President Kim Young-sam on Tuesday chose Koh Kun to be the new prime minister. Koh, 59, was mayor of Seoul from 1988-90 under former president Roh Tae-woo, but quit in a dispute with the administration over a corrupt land deal, earning him a reputation for integrity. Koh succeeds Lee Soo-sung, a legal scholar who was premier for 15 months before being sacrificed to take responsibility for the scandal involving loans to failed Hanbo Steel Co. Blue House spokesman Yoon Yeo-joon told reporters, "President Kim believes Koh Kun is best suited for the job as he has a lot of administrative experience, integrity, a good personality and an ability to make friends." Moon Chung-in, a political science professor at Yonsei University, said of Koh, "He is the best choice Kim ever made... He is seen as a politically neutral person with managerial expertise who is respected by many." Kim apologized on February 25 for the scandal and has replaced his chief secretary and three top Blue House aides.

5. PRC Opens Nuclear Base to Public

The Associated Press ("CHINA OFFERS TOURS OF A BASE," Beijing, 3/3/97) reported that the PRC's official Xinhua news agency announced that the PRC is now offering tours of "Nuclear City" in Qinghai province, a former top-secret base where atomic and hydrogen bombs were developed in the 1960s. The report did not say what remained of the base, located on the Tibetan plateau, or what tourists would be allowed to see. The PRC, one of five acknowledged nuclear powers, exploded its first atomic bomb in 1964.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Outgoing ROK Prime Minister Comments on DPRK

Outgoing ROK Prime Minister Lee Soo-sung said Monday there is little possibility that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il will be ousted since he is still in control of the government, the party and the military. Lee also said the North, though suffering from severe economic hardships, is not likely to collapse in a short period of time as it is maintaining the control of the society. (Korea Herald, "LITTLE POSSIBILITY KIM JONG-IL WILL BE OUSTED; P.M. LEE SAYS KIM JONG IL STILL CONTROLLING GOVERNMENT, PARTY, MILITARY," 03/04/97)

2. KEDO Starts Talks With DPRK

The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the DPRK will start talks on protocols for repayment provisions in the agreement to supply two 1,000-megawatt nuclear reactors. "KEDO and North Korean officials will meet March 10 in New York to discuss terms of repayment,"

an official at the ROK Office of Planning of the Light-Water Nuclear Reactor (LWR) Project said. The official said that the draft protocol containing the cost of the reactors was delivered to the DPRK last month during a KEDO working level-meeting in Tokyo. ROK officials declined to disclose the cost of the reactors as negotiations on cost-sharing are pending among the ROK, Japan and the US. After a three-year grace period following the completion of the first nuclear reactor, the DPRK is to pay back over 17 years, without interest, the cost of the two 1,000-megawatt nuclear reactors. Payment would start around 2003, but officials are pessimistic that the first of the two reactors can be completed as scheduled. The cash-strapped DPRK will be required to pay in cash, cash equivalent or transferable goods, under the protocol. If the DPRK should fail to fulfill its part of the agreement, it will be subject to a relatively high interest rate, according to the protocol. (Korea Herald, "KEDO, NORTH KOREA TO START TALKS ON REPAYMENT," 03/04/97)

3. DPRK Calls For Representative Office in Taiwan

The DPRK has expressed its wish to establish a representative office in Taiwan within this year, and is presently negotiating with Taiwan on this issue. The DPRK's Chosun International Travel Agency representative in Taiwan, Yang Ji Bang, has said that since last August, the DPRK has been trying to open a direct flight route between Taiwan and the DPRK. Since the normalization of diplomatic relations between the ROK and the PRC, the DPRK has made efforts to strengthen its relationship with Taiwan. (Chosun Ilbo, "NORTH KOREA AND TAIWAN UNDER NEGOTIATION," 03/04/97)

III. Announcement

Bernard Krisher has requested distribution of the following notice: "Ex-Newsweek Tokyo Bureau Chief Bernard Krisher, who runs the Home Page: "Internet Appeal for North Korean Flood Victims" (<http://shrine.cyber.ad.jp/mrosin/flood>) will visit North Korea again for the third time at the end of March where he will directly donate rice and infant formula powdered milk to civilians in the flood affected areas. Videos and photographs documenting previous direct distribution are shown on his Home Page. Krisher reports he spoke at length last week by phone with the World Food Program Country Director, Mrs. Birgitta Kalgren, in Pyongyang, who confirmed rations were recently cut from 450 to below subsistence 100 grams a day, foreshadowing a severe famine if massive food donations do not reach there shortly. Aid officials have started to notice early stages of famine that can lead to pneumonia and TB epidemics. One ton of rice which Krisher is purchasing at \$272 will feed 75 people a month at 450 grams a day. Anyone desiring to contribute to Krisher's distribution mission are welcome to donate any amount, large or small, by check issued to "North Korea Flood Relief" and air-mailed to: Bernard Krisher, 4-1-7-605 Hiroo, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, 150, Japan) or by wire transfer to the Sumitomo Bank, Hiroo Garden Hills Branch, Tokyo. Account Name: North Korea Flood Relief. Account Number: (Futsu Yokin) # 748849. Donors' names will appear on the Home Page, unless such listing is not desired."

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](#).

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