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I. United States

1. DPRK Famine

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, JANUARY 6," USIA Transcript, 01/06/98) stated that the US will carefully examine the latest World Food Program appeal for food aid for the DPRK. Rubin pointed out that this appeal "differs from earlier ones in its size, the number of beneficiaries and the length of time covered." He said that the US has "always responded positively to previous appeals for the needy children of North Korea." He added that the World Food Program would "double the number of international staff and open two more sub-offices in the region, which gets at some of the questions that have come up before here about monitoring of the food aid as it is distributed."

Reuters ("N. KOREA FOOD AID APPEAL INADEQUATE - US LAWMAKER," Washington, 01/06/98) reported that US Representative Tony Hall, D-Ohio, said on Tuesday that the new UN World Food Program (WFP) appeal for donor nations to provide 657,972 tons of additional food aid for the DPRK "falls miserably short" of what is needed. Hall urged UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to intercede with the WFP and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, "to straighten this matter out." In a letter to Annan, Hall said, "Donor nations struggle with the impulses to use food as a political

weapon. No United Nations agency should succumb to such short-sighted policy." He suggested that the WFP's goal in asking for just over half of the anticipated need was to ensure that the DPRK allows adequate monitoring of food aid distribution, but he argued that "a strategy that collects donations and then - aid in hand - raises legitimate monitoring requirements, stands a better chance of success."

2. US Journalist Jailed in ROK

The Los Angeles Times ("CANDLELIGHT VIGIL HELD FOR IMPRISONED JOURNALIST," 01/07/98) reported that a candlelight vigil was held Tuesday night in Los Angeles to pressure the ROK government to release imprisoned US journalist Richard Choi. Rumors which circulated Monday that Choi was about to be set free proved false. According to unnamed sources, Choi's corporate lawyer dropped the "application for a bail." Los Angeles Korean community observers speculated that Choi's employer, Radio Korea, fearing a civil lawsuit by the Korea Times, wants Choi to be acquitted in a criminal trial, as such a victory would reduce the chances of Radio Korea losing a civil case.

3. ROK Financial Crisis

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "S. KOREA WORKERS FACE LAYOFF BATTLE," Seoul, 01/07/98) reported that the ROK government hopes to pass a bill through the National Assembly next week to allow mass layoffs for the first time. Outgoing President Kim Young-sam and President-elect Kim Dae-jung met Tuesday to discuss the issue. In a joint statement, they said, "Without layoffs, foreigners will not invest in South Korea. Without foreign investment, our economy will face a full-scale crisis." Lee Ji-soon, an economist at Seoul National University, agreed, saying, "Layoffs are inevitable. What we see right now is rather a power game between labor unions and chaebol." However, Yoon Young-mo, a spokesman for the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, rejected the new bill, saying, "We cannot accept the argument that layoffs are the only way to save the economy." He added, "Above all, we want to know how much money chaebol own. They must first donate their fortunes to save their troubled companies. They just want to take easy measures and fire workers." Yoon's group is threatening to organize nationwide strikes next week, when a special session of the Assembly will convene to consider the bill.

4. US Defense Secretary to Visit Asia

Reuters (Charles Aldinger, "U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY SETS 11-DAY ASIA VISIT," Washington, 01/07/98) reported that US Defense Department spokesman Ken Bacon said Tuesday that US Defense Secretary William Cohen will visit seven Asian nations, including the PRC, Japan, and the ROK, on January 12-22. During his January 17-20 visit to Beijing, Cohen and PRC defense officials will sign a maritime consultation agreement aimed at reducing the risk of naval incidents at sea. US officials said a major reason for Cohen's visit to Asia was to assure US allies that the US military presence in the Asia-Pacific would remain for the foreseeable future. Bacon said that Cohen planned chiefly to discuss military and strategic issues with leaders of all of the countries, but that economic problems were likely to come up. He added that Cohen was not going to the region to sell arms, but that the US would continue to emphasize the importance of weapons "inter-operability" with allies.

5. Nuclear Disarmament

The Associated Press (Barry Schweid, "CLINTON APPROVES STRATEGY CHANGE," Washington, 01/07/98) reported that US President Bill Clinton, in anticipation of the Russian Duma's ratification of the START-II treaty on nuclear reduction, has approved a new strategy directive designed to allow the US to maintain a nuclear defense with far fewer long-range missiles. The new US strategy will also allow the US and Russia to prepare for a START III treaty, which would cut nuclear arsenals to

2,000 to 2,500 strategic warheads on each side. START II would reduce each country's current arsenals from about 8000 nuclear warheads to about 3,000. Robert G. Bell, the National Security Council's senior director for defense policy, said that the new policy is "a hedge against an uncertain future, with sufficient nuclear weapons to deter any hostile foreign leadership with access to nuclear forces." He added that neither Russia nor the PRC are seen as potential aggressors "so far as we can see into the future. But given the uncertainties, they are a hedge against a leadership turning hostile." He stated that Clinton's directive does not change the three basic situations in which the US might use nuclear weapons: if the attacking country had nuclear weapons; if the aggressor violated the international treaty to curb the spread of nuclear technology; or if it were allied to a nuclear power in its attack on the US. "In those instances, we reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first, and it is reaffirmed in this directive. It has not changed," Bell said. He stated that the administration had talked to Russia on "concepts" for a START III treaty while "being very clear that we will not begin formal negotiations until START II has been ratified."

II. Republic of Korea

1. US Defense Secretary to Visit Asia

The ROK Ministry of National Defense said Tuesday that US Defense Secretary William Cohen will visit Seoul January 20 for talks with top ROK officials on security issues. Cohen will meet Defense Minister Kim Dong-jin and Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha to discuss the security situation on the Korean Peninsula, a ministry official said. Cohen's Seoul stop is part of his Asian tour during which he will pursue closer military ties with Asian countries and reassure them of the US long-term commitment, a ministry source said. (Korea Herald, "US DEFENSE SECRETARY COHEN TO VISIT SEOUL FOR SECURITY TALKS," 01/07/98)

2. PRC Leaders Visit Hong Kong

Former PRC President Yang Shangkun was welcome with protests upon his arrival to Hong Kong January 4. Some 50 activists from the radical April Fifth movement led by Leung Kwok-hung and the Alliance in Support of the Patriotic Democratic Movement in the PRC, staged a sit-in outside Government House where Yang was hosted by Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa. The groups, set up to support the 1989 student-led protests in the PRC, also demanded the release of political prisoners in the PRC and legal action against those responsible for the Tiananmen Square massacre. They blame Yang for the June 4, 1989 massacre. The Hong Kong government considers Yang's visit as "private" and no details of his activities have been released. (Korea Times, "FORMER CHINESE PRESIDENT FACES PROTESTS ON FIRST HONG KONG VISIT," 01/07/98)

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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