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- 5. US View of Four-Party Talks, Military Exercises

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I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks Preliminary Meeting

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The New York Times (Steven Lee Myers, "KOREAN PEACE TALKS FALTER BEFORE THEY BEGIN," Washington, 8/8/97) reported that the failure of negotiators at the four-party peace talks preliminary meeting to resolve sharp differences over the agenda for future formal peace talks was a setback to US efforts to draw the DPRK into negotiations to replace the fragile armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. The report noted that even the agreement at the meeting to hold future negotiations in Geneva six weeks after the current preliminary meetings end remained tentative, and indicated that US officials are showing signs of frustration. "You don't come here to agree to have more preparatory talks," one senior administration official was quoted as saying even before th

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2. Three-Party Food Aid Meeting

The Associated Press ("KOREA TALKS ADJOURN UNTIL SEPTEMBER," New York, 8/8/97) and Reuters ("KOREA TALKS ADJOURN AFTER FALTERING ON AGENDA," New York, 8/7/97) also reported that on Thursday morning, US, ROK and DPRK officials met separately from the four-party talks preliminary meeting in a New York hotel to discuss the DPRK's need for additional food aid. The anonymous senior US official [cited in the previous item] said the DPRK did not also raise the food aid issue in the four-party talks, except to express gratitude for the help it has been receiving. ROK sources, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said that at the three-party meeting DPRK officials also criticized the upcoming US-ROK military exercises as unnecessarily raising tensions on the Korean peninsula. [Ed. note: See also the following item]

3. DPRK Protests US-ROK Military Exercises

The Associated Press ("KOREA TALKS ADJOURN UNTIL SEPTEMBER," Beijing, 8/7/97) reported that on Thursday the DPRK demanded that the US and the ROK cancel joint military exercises set to take place August 18 to 29, calling them "war exercises" that were ruining the atmosphere of the four-party preliminary meeting in New York. "We are suspicious of their two-sided acts: whether they are prepared for peace, or preparing for the northward invasion behind the screen of the four-party talks," DPRK diplomat Choe Han Chun told reporters. "If the United States and South Korean authorities truly want to establish a permanent peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula, they should immediately stop their war exercises against us," Choe said. Choe described the exercises as "an extension of the Team Spirit exercises," the much larger annual springtime joint operations that the DPRK has long condemned and which the US and ROK canceled this year as a goodwill gesture.

4. DPRK Protests US Economic Sanctions

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA DENOUNCES U.S. FOR CONTINUING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS," Seoul, 8/8/97) reported that the DPRK's official newspaper Rodong Sinmun, in a

commentary also carried by its official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Friday accused the US of trying to use economic sanctions as a political tool to get concessions in the four-party Korean peace talks. "The U.S. intends to secure concessions from the DPRK (North Korea) by means of sanction and turn the 'quad talks' favorable to it," the paper said. The commentary called the US refusal to lift sanctions banning US trade with and investment in the DPRK "a wanton violation" of the 1994 Agreed Framework. "We are not frightened by the sanctions the U.S. refuses to lift. What matters, however, is that the escalating sanctions may hamper the implementation of the framework agreement," it said. However, the commentary also added, "While the agreement would be favorable, it would do no harm if it were not implemented."

5. US View of Four-Party Talks, Military Exercises

US Assistant Secretary of State James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT, THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 1997 ," USIA Transcript, 8/8/97) stated on Thursday, prior to the adjournment of the four-party preliminary meeting, that the talks were "progressing quite smartly," but that hurdles remained. Rubin also made clear, however, that the joint military exercises the US and the ROK are planning for later this month are not an obstacle to making progress at the talks. "We do not regard actions we take with regard to South Korea as threatening. On the contrary, we have a defense alliance, not an offense alliance with South Korea," Rubin said. "We are comfortable that we have done all we can, in preparing for these talks, to create a climate in which success can occur. If people want to find excuses for not making progress, they can, but the climate is fine," Rubin said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks Preliminary Meeting

The ROK, the DPRK, the US and the PRC agreed to hold formal peace negotiations in Geneva during their second day of preparatory talks in New York Wednesday, a ROK Foreign Ministry official said yesterday. Delegates from the four countries also agreed on the format for the full-scale talks, which envisages a general conference and subpanel meetings on separate agenda items, he said. But the four countries failed to reach agreement on the list of agenda items to be discussed in the formal talks, the official said. The ROK and the US proposed two topics for discussion -- the establishment of a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and measures to ease tension and build confidence on the peninsula. The DPRK, however, insisted the issues of the US troops in the ROK and a US-DPRK peace treaty should be included in discussion of the peace regime settlement. The DPRK also insisted that tension-easing and confidence building measures are not appropriate for the four-way discussions as they should be discussed between the two Koreas, the ministry official said. The PRC delegation sided with the ROK and the US in opposing DPRK's demands. But the PRC appeared somewhat supportive of the DPRK's proposal to discuss improvement of bilateral relations among themselves rather than confidence-building and tension-easing steps. The ministry official said the ROK and the US see the PRC proposal as "too concrete to accept" as it refers to improvement of relations not only between the two Koreas but also between Washington and Pyongyang. (Korea Herald, "FORMAL 4-WAY TALKS SET TO BE HELD IN GENEVA; DPRK SAYS ROK-US `WAR EXERCISES' RUINING PEACE TALKS," 08/08/97)

Negotiators at the preliminary four-party Korean peace talks tentatively agreed to convene the four-party talks six weeks after the four countries involved wrap up preparatory talks, officials in New York said yesterday. However, the prospects for an early realization of the four-party talks were not bright because the DPRK reiterated its demand for the withdrawal of US forces and the establishment of a peace treaty only with the US. "The participants agreed on the timing and level of representation for the four-way talks. But it is only a tentative agreement until they reach an agreement on all issues involved," a ROK Foreign Ministry official said. Earlier, ROK delegates

proposed that the four-party talks should be held in four weeks after the end of preparatory talks, but later accepted the DPRK's position. With regard to the level of representation, the participants reached a tentative agreement that foreign ministers from the four countries will represent respective states at the talks. In case it is impossible for foreign ministers to attend the meeting, they will nominate other high-level officials to replace them. "It is likely that foreign ministers are expected to take part in key four-party sessions, particularly at the opening ceremony or the signing ceremony," the official said. Meanwhile, chief DPRK delegate Kim Gye-gwan made a key-note speech, noting that the withdrawal of 37,000 US forces stationed in the ROK is a "key issue" and that establishment of a peace system on the Korean peninsula is possible only through the withdrawal of US forces and the signing of a peace treaty between DPRK and the US. PRC delegates stressed the importance of a negotiated settlement of all issues involved. (Korea Times, "NK REITERATES DEMAND FOR US TROOP WITHDRAWAL," 08/07/97)

2. US POWs in DPRK and PRC

The US Air Force had indications that dozens of missing US airmen were alive in PRC or DPRK prisons two years after the Korean War, according to a newly declassified report. (Korea Times, "US AIR FORCE REPORT SUGGESTS MANY US POWS KEPT BY PRC, NK," 08/07/97) [Ed. note: For more details see "US POWs in DPRK" in the US section of the August 6 Daily Report.]

3. DPRK to Open Consulate in Hong Kong

DPRK officials expect to open a consulate in Hong Kong in the near future, emergency aid workers from Hong Kong said Tuesday. "During our visit to the DPRK, officials said they were going to open a consulate in Hong Kong soon," said Tricia Parker, program director of Oxfam Hong Kong. She said the issue had come up during a conversation on how to arrange better emergency coordination between the DPRK and Oxfam Hong Kong. Hong Kong returned to PRC sovereignty on July 1, thus opening the possibility for the DPRK to open a consulate there. The PRC's foreign ministry said it had already received applications from "some" countries to open consulates in Hong Kong, but had yet to start the process. "Since the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, some countries have requested permission from the PRC government to establish consulates in Hong Kong," a PRC spokeswoman said. "As Hong Kong's Special Administrative Region has just been set up, the PRC government has, up to this time, not accepted the request of any foreign country to establish a consulate there," she added. The PRC is one of the few remaining friends of the DPRK, but ties between the two neighbors have weakened in recent years as Beijing has moved into mainstream international politics and economics, leaving Pyongyang in virtual isolation. The DPRK already has a large embassy in Beijing and a de facto consulate in the Portuguese colony of Macao, close to Hong Kong. (Korea Times, "N.KOREAN OFFICIALS EXPECT TO OPEN HONG KONG CONSULATE 'SOON'," 08/07/97)

4. ROK Calls for Stronger Navy

The ROK should invest in a stronger navy to protect the sea lanes that are vital to the nation's economy, said a maritime expert at an international maritime symposium yesterday. The ROK is the world's 10th largest trading state and 99 percent of that trade is transported via waters, but its navy does not have the capability to ensure safety in the sea lanes, said Dr. Lee Choon-kun of the Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy at the 5th International Sea Power Symposium. Lee said that the ROK should not depend on the US navy for continued protection of its sea lanes, which he said are the longest in the world, stretching from the Persian Gulf through the East China Sea to the Korean Strait. Calling such lanes the nation's "life line," Lee said the ROK's naval capacity doesn't measure up to its economic power. About 300,000 ships a year come and go through ROK's 25 major ports, and Lee said the navy doesn't even have the capability to defend its ports. While the ROK is the

world's 12th wealthiest country, its navy, with only 17 combat ships, is one fifth the size of the PRC and Japanese navies, in terms of number of warships. With Japan, the PRC and other countries in East Asia expanding their naval power, Lee said "the real size of ROK's navy should be determined by considering the naval strength of neighboring states." The nation should have a strong naval power "that can decisively alter the military balance between the PRC and Japan," Lee said. (Korea Herald, "MARITIME EXPERT CALLS FOR A STRONGER NAVY," 08/08/97)

5. DPRK Requests ROK Help for Highway

Amid rising expectations for improved inter-Korean relationship with the four-party talks now under way in New York, the DPRK has recently requested a ROK quasi-governmental agency for cooperation in building an expressway. Sources at the Korea Highway Corporation said yesterday that the DPRK's External Economy Cooperation Promotion Committee sent a letter through its office in Beijing July 10, asking for cooperation in building the 59km-long highway within the Rajin-Sunbong free economic zone. It is quite an unexpected case that Pyongyang asked for business cooperation with a semi-official organization of the ROK, adding that the company would positively consider the request as the project's symbolic significance in inter-Korean cooperation. According to the officials, the DPRK reportedly proposed to supply land, manpower and construction materials, while calling for the ROK agency to take up design, equipment and construction. The ROK company estimated the total construction cost at US$15 million. Park Jung-tae, president of the corporation, and 11 other company officials had already applied for permission to "contact with the DPRK" to the National Unification Board July 18 with respect to the project. An official at the corporation, however, denied the report as groundless. (Korea Herald, "DPRK REQUESTS KHC TO BUILD HIGHWAYS AT RAJIN-SONBONG," 08/07/97)

III. Japan

1. Anniversary of Atomic Attack on Hiroshima

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("TOWARD ABOLITION OF NUKES, Evening Edition 1-2, 8/6/97) and The Sankei Shimbun ("HIROSHIMA STRENGTHEN ITS DETERMINATION FOR PEACE," Evening Edition 1-2, 8/6/97) reported that Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka announced in Hiroshima July 6 the Hiroshima Peace Declaration at the 52 anniversary of the A-bomb attack on Hiroshima which gathered 45,000 people. Hiraoka said in the declaration, "The international community agreed on signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which bans any nuclear test with explosion, but a road to making the treaty effective is a rough one. The US conducted subcritical nuclear tests that allegedly do not violate the treaty, but the US attitude to stick to nuclear tests lacks the wisdom necessary for human coexistence. We reemphasize that nuclear weapons place in the top of any forms of violence that are representative of war." He also demanded that the Japanese government devise security arrangements that do not rely on the US nuclear umbrella. The reports added that the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima have increased to 202,118, including the 5,076 who died or whose deaths were confirmed in the past year.

2. Japanese Prime Minister's View on Japan's Defense Area

The Sankei Shimbun ("PRIME MINISTER HASHIMOTO SAYS THAT GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATION ON 'SURROUNDING AREA' IS UNDESIRABLE'," Evening Edition, 1, 8/6/97) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told reporters at a Hiroshima hotel that with respect to the review of Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines, it is undesirable to geographically limit the scope of Japan's defense area. Hashimoto said, "'Surrounding area' is not the kind of matter that is defined on a map." In addition, with regard to Hiraoka's demand that the Japanese government should devise security arrangements that do not rely on the US nuclear umbrella, Hashimoto

emphasized, "The US presence and the Japan-US Security Treaty are important for stability in the Asia-Pacific region."

The Nikkei Shimbun ("HASHIMOTO SAYS THAT JAPAN-US COMMON RECOGNITION OF 'EMERGENCIES IN SURROUNDING AREAS'," 2, 8/7/97) reported that with regard to recognition of 'surrounding areas' stated in the interim report on the review of Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines, Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto told reporters at his official residence July 6, "It would be strange if one of the two countries recognizes an emergency while the other denies it. It is natural that the two countries discuss common recognition of emergencies."

3. Japan's Review of Japan-US Defense Guidelines

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN TO INTRODUCE GRADUAL 'DEFENSE READINESS CONDITION (DEFCON)'," 1, 8/6/97) reported that the Japanese government decided July 5 to introduce DEFCON of the US style to strengthen Japan-US defense cooperation and specific measures that the Japanese Self-Defense Forces take in times of Japan being attacked. According to the report, while US DEFCON has five stages from 'peacetime' to 'pre-wartime' and deals with details of military deployment and weapon readiness, Japan 's Self-Defense Forces Law lacks details of specific actions. Japan will begin inter-governmental discussions to deal with both 'emergencies in the Japanese territories' and 'emergencies in areas surrounding Japan.' With regard to regulations on use of weapons, 'rules of engagement (ROE)' will be introduced, and movement of SDF members and operational mission will also be regulated to achieve civilian control. The report added that Japan will consider how to make both DEFCON and ROE interoperable with those of the US.

4. Japan-DPRK Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN-DPRK TALKS TO BE POSTPONED, 5, 8/7/97) and the Sankei Shimbun ("JAPANESE GOVERNMENT SEES NO NEED FOR EARLY START OF JAPAN-DPRK TALKS," 2, 8/7/97) reported that the Japan-DPRK talks, which was slated for this week, is likely to be postponed to the next week because the DPRK has not yet responded to Japan's suggestions about the date of the talks and about raising the status of the governmental negotiators. The reports said that although Cabinet Chief Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama says that the Japanese government will continue the present status of the negotiators while trying to solve the problem of the visits by the Japanese women married to North Korean to Japan, Foreign Ministry sources say, "We see no need to urge the talks," expressing its caution about the DPRK's strategy to postpone the talks. The reports pointed out that the reasons for the DPRK's slow response include the remark by Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Koichi Kato that "surrounding areas" stated in the interim report on the review of Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines mainly refer to the DPRK, the status of the on-going four-party peace talks, and a possible conflict between the DPRK government and the Workers' Party's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, which directly contacted LDP leaders for Japan's food aid to the DPRK. In addition, according to Japan's Foreign Ministry sources, Japan-DPRK talks may be postponed even after the DPRK has finished its assessment of the outcomes of the four-party peace talks.

5. Japan-PRC Fishery Talks

The Sankei Shimbun ("NEW NEGOTIATIONS FOR JAPAN-PRC FISHERY AGREEMENT START," Evening Edition 4, 8/6/97) reported that the 5th round of Japan-PRC Fishery Agreement talks began at the Japanese Foreign Ministry July 6. The talks had been deadlocked until the PRC agreed to Japan's proposals of shelving the final demarcation of exclusive economic zones, setting Japan-PRC temporal common waters and solving the problem of illegal fishing, according to the report. The 5th round will deal with the scope of the common waters and specific fishing quotas. The Japanese

government hopes for early settlement with the PRC, which could pose a positive influence on the Japan-ROK fishery dispute.

6. Japan-Russia Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN HOPES FOR JAPAN-RUSSIA PEACE TREATY DURING HIS TERM," 2, 8/8/97) reported that Russian Ambassador to Japan Alexander Panov told the Yomiuri Shimbun that he hopes to see a Japan-Russia peace treaty signed during his term, which is supposed to end in five years. Panov said, "The Hashimoto-Yeltsin talks helped construct 'prime-ministerial relations' that are essential to solving 'difficult problems' between Japan and Russia including the Northern Territorial issue." Panov also proposed that Japan and Russia develop rich and various relations such as co-development of energy and military personnel exchange. The Yomiuri Shimbun pointed out that Panov's statement is noteworthy because it indicates that Russia is open-minded toward peace treaty with Japan which precedes solving the Northern Territorial issue.

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Produced by the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development.

Wade Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Shin Dong-bom: dongbom.shin@anu.edu.au
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

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Wade Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Shin Dong-bom: dongbom.shin@anu.edu.au
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

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