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I. United States

1. US Optimism on Peace Talks

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two years of flooding that has devastated farmlands.

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The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S., N. KOREA ARE ON TRACK TO REACH MIA AGREEMENT BY FRIDAY," Tokyo, 5/7/97) reported that Larry Greer, spokesman for the US Defense Department's office for prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action, said Wednesday that the US and the DPRK are on track to reach an agreement on accounting for US soldiers captured or killed during the 1950-53 Korean War. Delegates from the two countries are aiming to reach agreements on tracing individuals who went missing during the war, the return of remains of US soldiers who died there, and access for US researchers to DPRK military archives. "We'

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3. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Talks

Reuters ("TALKS EXPECTED TO RESUME ON NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 5/8/97) reported that ROK officials said on Thursday that Red Cross talks between the ROK and the DPRK are expected to resume this month. The officials said they were not discouraged by DPRK accusations that the ROK was insincere after the past week's meeting in Beijing -- the first contact between Red Cross representatives of the two countries in nearly five years -- ended in deadlock on Monday. "We are optimistic the two sides will resume contacts this month," said one senior ROK government official, who asked not to be identified. On Tuesday, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) criticized the ROK for the deadlock at the Beijing talks, blaming the ROK's "eccentric and incomprehensible attitude." An official with the ROK Red Cross replied, "The Beijing talks were held in a friendly atmosphere despite what the North says publicly." "In fact, a breakdown is not a proper description of the Beijing talks. The two sides agreed to meet again and I'm pretty confident we will be successful," the official added. The ROK Red Cross wanted to set up channels for direct delivery of relief supplies between the two Korean Red Cross organizations, rather than using the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as an intermediary, as in past shipments of aid. The DPRK wanted a promise of an exact aid amount before discussing procedures, Red Cross officials said.

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA SEEN PROPOSING RENEWED RED CROSS FOOD AID TALKS," Seoul, 5/8/97) reported that ROK government officials said Thursday that the ROK Red Cross will call a meeting of 38 charity and business organizations next week to appeal for more food aid for the DPRK. The meeting, tentatively scheduled for Monday, is aimed at answering a DPRK demand that the ROK specify the amount and timing of aid before discussing transportation and other procedural matters. The ROK said it could not specify the amount because it depends on civilian donations. Seoul officials now say that, after meeting with the charity and business groups, they will be able to estimate donations sufficiently to answer the DPRK questions. The ROK Red Cross then will propose a resumption of talks with the DPRK later next week, according to an official at the ROK Ministry of National Unification, speaking on condition of anonymity.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Calls Off Missile Talks

Citing "technical reasons," the DPRK has called off a second round of talks with the US, scheduled for next week, that were to deal with US concerns that the DPRK is providing missile technology to Iran and Syria. Also on the agenda were reports that the DPRK is preparing to deploy long-range Rodong I missiles that may be capable of hitting the ROK and much of Japan. The talks were due to be held in New York May 12-13. On Monday, however, the DPRK requested a postponement, but also indicated it was still interested and requested alternative dates. In the first round of talks, held last April in Berlin, the US sought a freeze on DPRK missile exports and production. The US wants the DPRK to join an international agreement to restrict exports of such weapons. A Japanese newspaper has reported recently that the DPRK has prepared three Rodong I missiles for immediate test firing along the DPRK's northeastern coast, with seven more test firings being planned. In 1993, the DPRK conducted a test firing of a Rodong missile toward the Sea of Japan, which separates the peninsula from Japan. The missile has a range of 620 miles (1,000 kilometers). (Korea Times, "NK CALLS OFF MISSILE TALKS SET FOR NEXT WEEK," 05/08/97) [Ed. note: Please see the related item in the US section of the May 7 Daily Report.]

2. DPRK Famine Situation

The situation in the DPRK has worsened to the point that provincial governments have ordered citizens "to collect scrap metal, to dig for rocks which they are using to trade," Catherine Bertini, the head of the UN World Food Program, said Tuesday. Tun Myat, the WFP's director for transport and logistics, saw ships in harbor that were loaded with scrap metal to export for cash to buy food. Tun Myat observed DPRK citizens grinding rice and corn stalks, corn cobs and empty pea pods to a powder, with a small amount of flavor added along with ground up leaves and tree bark. After two years of devastating floods, the DPRK's food shortage is so severe that the reclusive communist government has been forced to appeal for help from foreign countries. But discussions between Red Cross officials from the DPRK and the ROK, the first talks in nearly five years, ended Monday without agreement on food aid. (Korea Times, "WFP APPEALS FOR NEW AID PACKAGE TO NORTH," 05/08/97) [Ed. note: Please see the related item in the US section of the May 7 Daily Report.]

3. ROK Food Aid to DPRK

Citing the variability of citizens' donations, the ROK said it cannot in advance make a numerical commitment to the amount of Red Cross aid it will provide the DPRK. Instead, the ROK government will try to convince the DPRK that an inter-Korean agreement on direct delivery channels would lead to a larger amount of humanitarian relief, a senior National Unification Ministry official said yesterday. Inter-Korean Red Cross talks in Beijing broke down over the issue of advanced aid

shipments, with the DPRK delegation walking out of the talks, saying that they should first get a numerical pledge from the ROK before discussing details of aid deliveries. Originally, the ROK National Red Cross proposed to its northern counterpart that Red Cross talks be held to discuss procedural matters on inter-Korean aid deliveries, including the establishment of a direct ground route via the truce village of Panmunjom. According to ministry officials, prospects for resuming the talks are not bright because Seoul is not ready to make the advance numerical pledge. In contrast, a spokesman for the DPRK Red Cross society said Tuesday that the ROK will have to specify the "sorts, size and delivery timetable" in advance and hand over the aid without any preconditions. Although the ROK government is determined not to make an advance pledge under any circumstances, it apparently wishes to make use of the Red Cross contacts to create momentum for inter-Korean rapprochement, including the reunion of separated family members. The two Koreas are expected to have phone contacts through a hot line to discuss how to resume the Red Cross talks. (Korea Times, "SEOUL WILL NOT MAKE NUMERICAL COMMITMENT TO NK AID IN ADVANCE," 05/08/97)

4. US-ROK-Japan Meeting on DPRK Issues

Delegates from the ROK, Japan, and the US yesterday reaffirmed that they will not send large-scale grain aid to the DPRK until the reclusive state accepts the proposed four-party peace talks, officials here said. However, the delegates reached an understanding that they should join international humanitarian aid to the DPRK via UN agencies because the food situation there is worsening day by day. The delegates, which included Yu Myung-hwan of the ROK Foreign Ministry, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman, and Ryozo Kato of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, held a working-level meeting in Tokyo to assess the DPRK's current situation and discuss ways to induce it to come to the negotiating table for the four-party talks, proposed by Seoul and Washington in April last year. Responding to a UN appeal, the United States announced its plan to offer 50,000 tons of corn worth US$15 million last month and the ROK will soon follow suit. Japan, meanwhile, has shown a lukewarm posture on humanitarian aid to the DPRK, citing cases of the DPRK's alleged abduction of Japanese nationals in the past and "human rights issues." The three countries also exchanged views on how to start preliminary work for the construction of two light-water reactors in the DPRK by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) under a 1994 deal in Geneva between the US and the DPRK. (Korea Times, "NO LARGE SCALE AID TO NK BEFORE 4-WAY TALKS," 05/08/97)

III. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK View of DPRK-US Relations

The DPRK's Rodong Sinmun published a commentary on May 3 saying that the so-called "DPRK threat" perceived by the US was a "clumsy provocation" to the DPRK, People's Daily ("DPRK CRITICIZES US FOR `DPRK THREAT'," Pyongyang, A6, 5/4/97) reported. The commentary pointed out that it is the strengthening of the US-Japan military alliance and the increase of US troops in the ROK that threatens peace on the Korean Peninsula. If the US really wants to relax its relations with DPRK, realize peace on Korean Peninsula and normalize the DPRK-US relationship, the US should take measures which could be accepted by each side to create an atmosphere conducive to such developments, the article suggested.

2. PRC-US Relations

US President Bill Clinton and visiting PRC Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen pledged to make joint efforts to improve Sino-US relations, China Daily ("CLINTON, QIAN PROMISE TO BUILD FRIENDSHIP," Washington, A1, 5/2/97) reported. Qian told Clinton the main purpose of his visit to Washington is to prepare for President Jiang Zemin's state visit to the US. Clinton said he is

looking forward to Jiang's visit, which will be followed by his own state visit to the PRC. He said the mutual state visits are of great importance and both the PRC and the US should from now on make full preparations and solve some specific problems in Sino-US relations before there can be any positive results from Jiang's visit. During the meeting, Qian his hope of establishing a long-term, stable relationship between the two countries through joint efforts. Qian also exchanged views with Clinton on such issues as the PRC's entry into the World Trade Organization, Most Favored Nation status, peaceful use of nuclear energy, non- proliferation and Taiwan.

3. PRC-Japan Relations

Sino-Japanese relations are in an important period of inheriting the past and ushering in the future, Jiang Zemin, general-secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the PRC said in Beijing on April 30. During a meeting with a delegation of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, which was led by Yamazaki Taku, chairman of the party's Political Affairs Investigation Committee, Jiang said that to adhere to the PRC-Japan Joint Declaration and the PRC-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship is an important guarantee to advance bilateral relations in a sound and steady way. As the twenty-first century draws near, the PRC president said the leaders from both countries should take a comprehensive and far-sighted view of the entire bilateral relationship. He said they should deal with emerging problems in a sober and proper way so as to make future relations progress more smoothly. Yamazaki Taku said his delegation hopes its visit to the PRC will promote bilateral friendly relations. People's Liberation Army Daily ("JIANG FOCUSES ON SINO- JAPANESE TIES," Beijing, A1, 5/1/97)

Diplomats from the PRC and Japan should constructively deal with problems concerning Sino-Japanese ties to ensure the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations, a top legislator from the PRC said on May 5. Qiao Shi, chairman of the Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee, made the comments during a meeting in Beijing with a delegation from the Japanese "dietmen's league" for Japan-PRC Friendship, headed by its President Hayashi Yoshiro. China Daily ("SINO-JAPANESE TIES," A2, 5/6/97)

4. Japan-Australian Partnership

People's Daily on May 2 published a commentary, titled "Japan And Australia Establish Partnership," saying that it is not a surprise to find a partnership established between Japan and Australia. It said, the essence of the Japan-Australian cooperative relationship is a US-Japanese-Australian partnership. However, the article said, establishing a Japan-Australian partnership also indicates that regional countries have realized that they can resolve regional security issues through their own negotiations and dialogues. People's Daily ("JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIP," A3, 5/2/97)

5. US-Japan Military Cooperation

A Commentary in the May 1 Jie Fang Daily ("JAPAN, US STRENGTHEN MILITARY ALLIANCE," A4) said that the US-Japan summit on April 25 obviously quickened Japan-US cooperation on military issues. It said that the revision of the Japan-US defense cooperation guideline was a dangerous signal to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific area. It warned people to maintain vigilance on Japan's militarism.

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

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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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