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I. United States

1. Kim Jong-il's Ascension

Reuters ("A MERRY DAY IN NORTH KOREA," Moscow, 10/9/97) said that Russia's Itar-Tass news agency correspondent Alexander Valiyev reported that "North Korean people continue merrymaking" to celebrate the appointment of Kim Jong-il as head of the Workers' Party. "Dancing people are seen everywhere in Pyongyang," he said. Valiyev said the main DPRK daily newspaper, Rodong Shinbun, filled most of its front page with a color photograph of Kim, and that television and radio stations were dominated by repeated broadcasts of the news. Tass also reported that the PRC's ambassador to Pyongyang had presented "an appropriate official" with a basket of flowers and told a diplomatic gathering that Kim's election had been a great inspiration to the PRC. Meanwhile Itar-Tass quoted a Russian Foreign Ministry official as saying, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia respects the choice of the North Korean people and considers the election of Kim Jong-il a purely internal matter for that country."

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DPRK residents' association in Japan, as saying in a statement: "We have been waiting for a long time for this historic event. . . . We are full of enthusiasm and joy." Meanwhile in Washington, an unnamed State Department spokesman noted that Kim was effectively in control of the country before receiving his new title but expressed hope that it will lead to a renewed commitment by the DPRK to the four-nation peace talks and to improved relations with the ROK, the US and others. "It is important . . . [because of] the opportunities it creates for him to put his mark on the new age," an unnamed US government analyst said. "These are now his policies . . . to succeed or fail. We will now see if he has the leadership skills" to solve some of the country's many problems. US officials said, however, that they do not expect any sharp departures from the DPRK's current domestic or foreign policies, which they said have been inflexible. They also said it remains unclear why Kim was not formally named the country's president. A US official in Seoul said Kim may now "get out and about more." There is talk of a meeting with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, and Kim Dae-jung, the South Korean opposition leader who is the front-runner in opinion polls in advance of December's presidential election, has said he would be willing to meet with him, the Post reported. Still, the fact that Kim Jong-il made no official statement after tonight's announcement was seen as evidence that his lifetime of reclusive and enigmatic behavior will not change overnight, the Post said.

The Wall Street Journal (Michael Schuman, "KIM JONG IL TO LEAD PARTY, CONSOLIDATING HIS CONTROL, Seoul, 10/9/97) quoted Daryl Plunk, a Korean expert at Washington's Heritage Foundation, as arguing that the ROK and the US should offer Kim Jong-il a US\$1 billion package of aid, investment and technical assistance in return for progress on peace talks. "We need something new and expensive, and hard for North Korea to turn down," Plunk said.

The Washington Times (Willis Witter, "KIM TAKES TOP POST IN NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 10/9/97) quoted a former ROK diplomat as saying, "I don't expect any major change in North Korea's attitude or policy" following the appointment of Kim Jong-il as Secretary- General of the Workers' Party. "If he had waited any longer people would have begun to think something was seriously wrong, that he was losing control or support or both." Pointing out that Kim has yet to assume the position of President of the DPRK, the Times quoted one Western diplomat as saying, "I'm not sure he wants to be president."

2. US Reaction to Kim Jong-il's Ascension

State Department Spokesman James P. Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 08," USIA Transcript, 10/8/97), responding to question about Kim Jong-il's appointment as General Secretary of the Workers' Party, stated, "Kim Jung Il has been in effective control of North Korea since his father's death. His father began a process of change in the DPRK's relations with the United States, which Kim Jung Il has pursued. We hope that his election as General Secretary will lead to renewed engagement in the four-party process, as well as further improvements in relations with the United States, South Korea and other countries. But the bottom line in this case, as many others, is, we will be looking most closely at actions in making a determination whether this has any positive result." He also said that the US did not send a congratulatory telegram to Kim. [Ed. note: See related item in ROK section below.]

3. Japan-DPRK Relations

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("JAPAN APPROVES Y3.4 BLN IN FOOD AID TO NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 10/8/97) and United Press International ("JAPAN TO RESUME FOOD AID TO NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 10/9/97) said that Japan's cabinet Thursday approved Y3.4 billion worth of food assistance to the DPRK. Japan will provide US\$27 million to the UN's World Food Plan (WFP) and 1.1 million Swiss francs to such organizations as the International Committee of the Red Cross. The WFP will use that cash to buy 67,000 tons of rice from Japanese government stockpiles and send it

to the DPRK. Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaneko Muraoka said Japan's assistance is not related to Wednesday's announcement of Kim Jong-il's assumption of the top party post. Muraoka said the food aid was at the behest of international bodies and the government decided to provide the aid after consultations with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its two parliamentary allies.

4. Environmental Situation in DMZ

The Washington Post (Mary Jordan, "WILDLIFE FLOURISHES IN NO MAN'S LAND: AT WORLD'S TENSEST BORDER, KOREAN DMZ IS A REFUGE FOR RARE FLORA, FAUNA," Taesongdong, ROK, A01, 10/8/97) carried an article discussing how the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that separates the ROK and DPRK has become a wildlife preserve for more than 140 other kinds of wildlife found almost nowhere else on the Korean Peninsula. "It's ironic it's so beautiful," said US Army Lieutenant Colonel James Laufenburg, who heads the UN Command's security battalion at the DMZ. The article said that many environmentalists fear that Korean reunification could lead to development on the DMZ. ROK biologist and bird specialist Yoon Moo Boo wants the area kept as a sanctuary, pointing out that because the DMZ has been left to nature for almost half a century, it has become an important stop on what is known as the East Asia Migratory Flyway, a place for rare Manchurian cranes, Siberian herons, ducks and geese to stop off and rest. "Of course it should be preserved," Yoon said. In May, a Presidential Commission for Promoting Globalization, headed by the ROK's prime minister, recommended "selectively" preserving the "ecological integrity" of the DMZ. Na Jung Kyun, an ROK environmental official, said his agency is looking at the commission's report and conferring with government construction and transportation officials on a coordinated plan about how to preserve the DMZ. In the event of peace, one immediate problem officials see is that there will be an urgent demand for roads and for water, sewer and phone lines.

5. PRC President's US Visit

The Associated Press ("DEMONSTRATORS TO SHADOW CHINESE CHIEF IN U.S.," Washington, 10/9/97) and the Washington Post (Thomas W. Lippman and John F. Harris, "CHINESE WANT TO SHOW LEADER TO U.S. PUBLIC: AGAINST MEMORIES OF TIANANMEN SQUARE CRACKDOWN, JIANG ZEMIN STARTS STATE VISIT THIS MONTH," Washington, A3, 10/9/97) carried articles on PRC President Jiang Zemin's upcoming US visit, pointing out that he is likely to encounter a number of demonstrations over human rights, Tibet, and Taiwan. In Beijing on Thursday, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang urged the US government to keep protesters in line. "The Chinese side will not interfere in any way. But we hope that the U.S. side will take a few steps to ensure that President Jiang Zemin's state visit goes smoothly," he said. Christina Martin, a spokeswoman for House Speaker Newt Gingrich, said that members of Congress will talk frankly when they meet Jiang on October 30. The White House and the PRC Embassy are expected to announce details of Jiang's visit as early as Thursday. The ceremonial and other public components of Jiang's trip are likely to overshadow the diplomatic substance, Clinton administration officials said. While the administration is hoping for some agreements, major disagreements over trade and weapons proliferation are unlikely to be resolved, officials said. "There's this debate raging around . . . that we shouldn't have this summit," one White House official said. "Our policy is one of clear, unambiguous, forward-leaning articulation that this is very much in our interest." White House officials insisted that Jiang's highly visible presence will serve the interests of both countries. "He needs to talk to the American people about what China is and isn't," a senior administration official said. "If the Chinese are going to sell their story, they've got to take that story not only to the president and the Congress, but also the public."

II. Republic of Korea

1. US Reaction to Kim Jong-il's Ascension

A US State Department official said that the US will not be sending a congratulatory message to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il for his assumption of the office of General Secretary of the DPRK Worker's Party. The official added that the US position has already been announced by State Department spokesman James Rubin and that there is no further information. (Dong-ah Ilbo, "US NOT TO CONGRATULATE KIM," 10/09/97)

2. ROK Presidential Elections

The ruling New Korea Party (NKP) decided Wednesday to release the source of National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) leader Kim Dae-jung's slush fund. The NKP had accused the opposition leader of having kept such a fund, amounting to 67 billion won. As a countermeasure, the NCNP decided to investigate NKP President Lee Hoi-chang and Secretary General Kang Sam-jae and organize a committee to counteract the NKP's slander. The NKP is promising additional scandalous disclosures. (Chosun Ilbo, "DISPUTE OVER ALLEGED SLUSH FUND ESCALATES," 10/09/97)

3. ROK Early-warning System

The ROK Air Force Chief of Staff General Lee Kwang-hak at the parliamentary inspection held at ROK Air force headquarters on Wednesday said that the air force will establish comprehensive warning terminals at Tactical Air Control Centers by the end of the year. The installation of such systems is expected to aid the early detection of the DPRK's Scud missiles. General Lee also said that to counter the DPRK's long range artillery, the air force had carried out joint ROK-US exercises in July and is planning to introduce air to surface missiles. Meanwhile, ROK naval chief of operations General Yew Sam-nam said at a separate parliamentary inspection that the Navy plans for the construction of mid-size submarines and the procurement of a large size freighter ship, landing ship, and high speed landing crafts in order to augment landing operations capabilities. (Chosun Ilbo, "SCUD WARNING SYSTEM TO BE CONSTRUCTED," 10/09/97)

4. PRC-Taiwan Relations

The South China Morning Post of Hong Kong reported on October 8 that PRC leader Jiang Zemin wishes to accelerate the progress in the Chinese unification process. Inspired by the recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong, the PRC government will open a nation wide convention lead by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in order to establish a new policy regarding Taiwan, the journal reported. The convention is expected to open soon after Jiang's visit to the US this coming November, allowing the PRC leader to discuss this issue with the US. Taiwanese experts expect the forthcoming PRC policy to be much more compromising than previous ones. Some forecast a guarantee of greater autonomy than HK, including limited diplomatic rights. (Munwha Ilbo, "PRC GEARS UP FOR UNIFICATION," 10/09/97)

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](#).

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