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In today's Report:

I. United States

- 1. Four-Party Talks
- 2. DPRK Food Aid
- 3. DMZ Shooting Incident
- 4. US Secretary of State Visits DMZ, Comments on DPRK
- 5. Comment on Prospects for Korean Unification
- 6. Chemical Weapons Convention Vote Near
- 7. US Removes Cuban Land Mines

II. Republic of Korea

- 1. Four-Party Peace Talks
- 2. US Aid to DPRK
- 3. Taiwan Aid To DPRK
- 4. DPRK Opinion on War

III. Japan Report

- 1. US Assessment of PRC Military Build-Up
- 2. Japan's Stance on Food Aid to the DPRK
- 3. DPRK to Import Vietnamese Rice
- 4. Japan-ROK Defense Relations
- 5. Suspected DPRK Abduction

I. United States

1. Four-Party Talks

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we anticipate that they will provide a response to our proposal for a four-party peace conference. We, of course, hope that this response will be positive," Burns said. The same individuals who met on March 5 in New York for the initial US-ROK briefing for DPRK officials on the four-party proposal are expected to lead the delegations for next week's meeting. Leading the respective delegations at the prior briefing were Acting Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman, DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan, and ROK Assistant Foreign Minister Song Young-shik. Burns added that the US will have a bilateral meeting with DPRK officials after the April 16 trilateral meeting to discuss issues such as missile proliferation, missing-in-action military service personnel, and technical issues relating to the establishment of liaison offices. Regarding the World Food Program's appeal for more food contributions for the DPRK, Burns said that the US expects to have a response by next week.

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The Associated Press ("U.S. AWAITS REPLY FROM NORTH KOREA," Washington, 4/10/97) reported US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns' comments that the US expects the DPRK to disclose next Wednesday in a meeting with the US and the ROK whether it will agree to the proposal for four-party talks aimed at achieving a permanent peace on the Korean peninsula. The report noted that the talks, which would also include the PRC, were first proposed in April 1996 by US President Bill Clinton and ROK President Kim Young-sam.

The Associated Press ("S.KOREA URGES N.KOREA TO JOIN TALKS," Seoul, 4/10/97) reported that ROK President Kim Young-sam said Thursday that the DPRK can avert famine and political unrest by agreeing to the joint US-ROK proposal for four-party talks to negotiate a formal peace agreement that would replace the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. "Through the proposed (formal peace talks), North Korea will be able to gain political stability and promote its economic interests," Kim said at today's opening of the 97th conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). "I urge North Korea to respond in a sincere manner as soon as possible." The IPU is a meeting of legislators from 115 countries gathering to discuss global peace and economic development. Meanwhile, the ROK also said it was pushing for an IPU resolution denouncing Taiwan's plan to ship 60,000 barrels of radioactive waste to the DPRK in the next two years.

2. DPRK Food Aid

The Associated Press ("REPORT: TAIWAN OFFERS N. KOREA AID," Seoul, 4/10/97) reported that Taiwan has offered US$2 million in food aid to the DPRK, and the first batch of 2,000 tons of rice was shipped there last week, the United Daily News quoted unidentified officials as saying Wednesday. Chang Yung-lang, a ROK Foreign Ministry official in charge of Asian affairs, refused to comment. [Ed. note: Please see the related item in the ROK section, below.]

The Dow Jones Business News ("WORLD VISION TO SHIP 35 TONS OF CORN SEED TO NORTH KOREA," Federal Way, Wash., 4/10/97) and Reuters ("MYCOGEN CORP TO SEND CORN SEED TO N KOREA," Chicago, 4/10/97) reported that on April 11, World Vision, an international relief organization, is shipping to the DPRK 35 tons of hybrid corn seed donated by Mycogen Corporation's Mycogen Seeds unit. In a press release Thursday, World Vision said that once planted, the seeds are expected to yield between 7,000 and 14,000 tons of grain. A spokeswoman said that shipment, distribution and planting of the corn seed will be monitored by a team of relief workers and an agronomist provided by World Vision. The move follows the announcement earlier this week by Cargill Inc. that it had reached a deal with the DPRK under which Cargill reportedly would ship 20,000 tons of wheat to the DPRK in exchange for 4,000 tons of zinc.

3. DMZ Shooting Incident

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA TROOPS CROSS S.KOREA BORDER," Seoul, 4/10/97) and Reuters ("BULLETS FLY ON KOREA BORDER BEFORE COHEN VISIT," Panmunjom, 4/10/97) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry said that DPRK soldiers briefly crossed the border into the ROK early Thursday, but retreated after ROK guards fired warning shots. The DPRK soldiers fired about 10 rounds as they retreated, but there were no casualties on either side, the ministry said. Five or six DPRK soldiers armed with automatic rifles, when first spotted near the central border, prompted ROK guards to go on alert. When the DPRK soldiers subsequently stepped across the border, ROK soldiers broadcast warnings through loudspeakers, ordering them to go back. However, the DPRK soldiers retreated only after ROK guards fired warning shots into the air, the ministry said. "The North Korean soldiers fired back warning shots and withdrew," a Seoul military spokesman said. The shooting in the eastern sector of the heavily-fortified DMZ took place at 9:30 AM local time. This was the second such incident along the border this year, following an incident in which the defection of a ROK soldier across the border touched off a brief exchange of fire between the two sides.

4. US Secretary of State Visits DMZ, Comments on DPRK

Reuters ("BULLETS FLY ON KOREA BORDER BEFORE COHEN VISIT," Panmunjom, 4/10/97) and the Associated Press ("COHEN PREDICTS DEMISE OF N. KOREA," Panmunjom, 4/10/97) reported that about one hour after ROK and DPRK troops briefly exchanged gunfire along the DMZ, US Secretary of Defense William Cohen flew to the DMZ himself, using the opportunity of the visit to denounce the DPRK's "decaying and dying" communist system and calling on Pyongyang to make peace with the ROK. Cohen, winding up his first visit to the western Pacific and Asia, said after visiting the border, "I think it's inevitable that the North cannot sustain itself, that the regime will collapse in one form or another, hopefully peacefully, perhaps violently." Cohen later said of the shooting incident: "It confirms that it is still a very tense, dangerous, unstable situation as far as the North Koreans are concerned. We have to be vigilant." Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Gradeck, a US Navy spokesman, said that the incident was about 65 miles east of where Cohen and his entourage were. Cohen later also suggested that the long and costly struggle between the two Koreas soon will be over. "We're very close to the finishing line, seeing a united and free Korea," Cohen told soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division, among 37,000 US troops in Korea. Meanwhile, the DPRK state radio attacked earlier comments by Cohen that virtually all of the US troops in the ROK would remain there for the foreseeable future, even if the Koreas made peace and became united. "This outrageous comment puts military pressure on us and reveals the US military forces' dangerous ambition for domination of the entire Korean peninsula," the radio said.

5. Comment on Prospects for Korean Unification

Jim Hoagland wrote in an opinion essay in the Washington Post ("RUSH TOWARD REUNIFICATION," 4/10/97, A25) that classified estimates assembled by the Pentagon's Defense

Intelligence Agency anticipate that as many as 100,000 North Koreans may die from starvation and related diseases in the next four months. Hoagland wrote that such rapidly deteriorating conditions could undermine years of "carefully calibrated diplomatic strategies for containing and bringing change to North Korea" gradually over a period of years, and are provoking a heated debate inside the Clinton administration over future strategy. Although the US is still committed to supporting a "soft landing" policy aimed at promulgating peaceful, gradual change in the DPRK, doubts about the ability of the isolated communist regime to survive this crisis have risen in recent days in Washington, fueled by surprisingly open hinting by officials in the DPRK to recently visiting US senators that there are growing conflicts within Kim Jong-il's regime. Hoagland wrote that the US, the ROK, and Japan are "trapped in the unenviable position of hoping for the disappearance of the world's most belligerent, irrational dictatorship -- but wanting their wish not to be granted just yet." Hoagland quoted a recent article in Foreign Affairs by Nicholas Eberstadt, a researcher connected with the American Enterprise Institute, who argued that the "soft landing" vision of a gradual reintegration of the North into the South "is today nothing more than a fantasy," and that "the faster reunification takes place, the better." Hoagland followed Eberstadt in concluding that the time has come for the ROK and the US to begin active preparations for a potentially sudden and swift Korean reunification.

6. Chemical Weapons Convention Vote Near

The USIA reported (David Pitts, "BIDEN: MORE THAN ENOUGH VOTES TO PASS CHEMICAL WEAPONS PACT," Washington, 4/10/97) that US Senator Joseph Biden (Democrat-Delaware) said April 10 that there are "more than enough votes" in the US Senate to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) if Republican leaders will allow it to go to the floor for debate. Speaking at a Capitol Hill news conference at which leaders of veterans' groups urged Senate ratification of the CWC, Biden said that it would pass even without the support of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (Republican-Mississippi). He said, however, that he hopes Lott will support the treaty and urged him to do what he can to get the CWC out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. To date, Committee Chairman Senator Jesse Helms (Republican-North Carolina) has blocked sending the CWC to the Senate floor. Biden said that it is possible the send the CWC to the floor without Helms' agreement, but it would not be easy. Biden said there is a "significant constitutional issue" involved in the dispute. "No committee has the right to keep the Senate from voting," Biden said. "It is the US Senate that must ratify, or not ratify, a treaty. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is not even mentioned in the Constitution."

7. US Removes Cuban Land Mines

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S. QUIETLY DEACTIVATES LAND MINES AT NAVAL BASE IN CUBA," Washington, 4/10/97) reported that US officials say that the US has quietly deactivated thousands of land mines originally placed in a large area around the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as a deterrent against possible Cuban attack. The deactivation process began last year without announcement after President Clinton signaled support for the global elimination of land mines. The single exception to the policy is the Demilitarized Zone in Korea, according to the officials. Congressional sources said a Pentagon review of the situation disclosed that most of the casualties resulting from exploding land mines were American servicemen assigned to maintain them.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

Once international food aid arrives next month, the DPRK appears to be likely to accept the four-

party peace talks during a forthcoming three-way meeting in New York on April 16, ROK officials said yesterday. ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Song Young-shik, DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan and acting US Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman will head their delegations at the meeting where the DPRK is expected to give its official position on the four-party talks. The US and ROK will hold consultations on April 15 to work out strategies for the following day's meeting. During the three-way meeting, the DPRK will likely propose that rice aid be provided simultaneously with the four-party talks or demand that advance steps be taken by Seoul and Washington to create a favorable atmosphere for the four-party talks. Within two or three days after the three-way meeting, the DPRK delegation plans to hold an additional bilateral meeting with US officials to discuss issues such as missile non-proliferation, the repatriation of remains of US soldiers missing in action during the 1950-53 Korean War, and the establishment of liaison offices. (Korea Times, "N. KOREA TO ACCEPT PEACE TALKS APRIL 16," 04/10/97)

2. US Aid to DPRK

Following the latest appeal by the UN World Food Program, US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Tuesday that the US is considering sending additional emergency food beyond the two shipments already en route to the communist country. Officials said UN monitoring procedures are adequate to ensure that the food reaches needy DPRK citizens and is not diverted to the military or government officials. UN officials have said 20 million DPRK citizens go to bed hungry every night, disease is spreading and malnutrition threatens the entire nation. On Monday, the United Nations appealed for US$126 million in emergency aid for the DPRK for the next year, most of which would be used to feed its 2.4 million children under the age of six. DPRK authorities who briefed UN agencies on Tuesday released statistics that some 134 children had died of malnutrition in 1996. (Korea Times, "WASH. WEIGHS ADDITIONAL FOOD AID TO P'YANG," 04/10/97)

3. Taiwan Aid To DPRK

Taiwan has offered US$2 million in food aid to the DPRK, with the first batch of 2,000 tons of rice being shipped there last week, the United Daily News reported Wednesday. The food was offered in response to a request from the DPRK last year, the newspaper quoted unidentified officials as saying. Taiwan also has offered to export its farming techniques. Currently, its experts are raising poultry and planting rice, corn, tomatoes and vegetables in an experimental project on 300 hectares (740 acres) near Pyongyang airport. The DPRK and Taiwan have no diplomatic ties, but unofficial contacts have increased in recent years, much to the annoyance of both the ROK and the PRC. (Korea Times, "TAIWAN OFFERS $2 MIL. AID TO N. KOREA," 04/10/97)

4. DPRK Opinion on War

DPRK Vice Marshal Kim Yong-chun, chief of the DPRK People's Army General Staff, said that although his nation does not want war, it is never scared of it, Naewoe Press reported Thursday, citing a report of Radio Pyongyang. Kim was speaking at a ceremony marking the fourth anniversary of DPRK de facto leader Kim Jong-il's inauguration as chairman of the National Defense Committee in Pyongyang. Vice Marshall Kim stressed the resolve of the People's Army, the party, and citizens to prevail over the US and the ROK. He added that the military should further intensify political and ideological education programs in order to become an elite force ready to protect to the death supreme commander Kim Jong-il of the People's Army. Praising Kim Jong-il for his outstanding military leadership, the military commander called on all members of the People's Army to follow him unconditionally. (Korea Times, "NK ARMY LEADER SAYS P'YANG HAS NO FEAR OF WAR AT ALL," 04/10/97)

III. Japan Report

1. US Assessment of PRC Military Build-Up

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("PENTAGON SEES NO THREAT IN CHINA MILITARY BUILD-UP," Washington, 2, 4/10/97) reported that the US Defense Department said in an April 8 Congressional report that despite the expanding PRC Navy and missile programs, the PRC's military build-up does not pose an immediate threat to the US. The Pentagon report also sees the PRC's nuclear strategy as emphasizing its counterattack capability as a deterrent. The Yomiuri Shimbun pointed out that this implies that the PRC is not targeting nuclear missiles at Japan or other non-nuclear states.

2. Japan's Stance on Food Aid to the DPRK

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN TO CONSIDER FOOD AID TO DPRK," 2, 4/9/97) reported that in response to the urgent call from the United Nations (UN) as well as US and ROK decisions on expanding food aid to the DPRK, the Japanese government promised on April 8 also to consider possible food aid. Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said that serious issues remain between Japan and the DPRK, however, including the suspected abduction of a Japanese girl by the DPRK twenty years ago. The report suggested that the government's cautious stance on food aid to the DPRK is due to strong resistance within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

3. DPRK to Import Vietnamese Rice

The Nikkei Shimbun ("DPRK TO EXCHANGE WEAPONS FOR VIETNAMESE RICE," Hanoi, 9, 4/10/97) reported that sources from the Vietnamese government revealed April 9 that Vietnam will export rice to the DPRK in exchange for weapons. The amount of rice is estimated to be 20,000 tons, but the type and price of weapons and the transaction schedule is unknown. According to the same sources, the Vietnamese Vice Prime Minister proposed the deal in response to the demand from the visiting DPRK Vice Prime Minister that Vietnam sell 20,000 tons of rice annually to the DPRK at a considerably discounted price on a deferred payment basis over the next five years.

4. Japan-ROK Defense Relations

The Sankei Shimbun ("JAPANESE DEFENSE HEAD TO VISIT ROK," 1, 4/8/97) reported that Japanese Defense Agency Director General Fumio Kyuma will visit the ROK late this month to discuss the situation on the Korean Peninsula with his counterpart Kim Dong Jin. According to the report, Kyuma will seek increased ROK understanding of Japan's position in reviewing the Guideline for Japan-US Defense Cooperation, while Kim will argue that the US Marines in Okinawa are necessary for contingencies in the peninsula.

5. Suspected DPRK Abduction

The Asahi Shimbun ("SUSPECTED ABDUCTION CASES AFFECT JAPAN-DPRK RELATIONS," 3, 4/5/97) reported that the Japanese government has concluded that nine Japanese citizens reported missing are very likely to have been abducted by the DPRK between 1977 and 1980. The case of Megumi Yokota, which is the most widely publicized, is excluded from the list of those abducted because officials are less certain about her case, according to the report. The report added that Shinseito Diet member Shinji Nishimura has urged formation of a bipartisan group to pressure the DPRK to return abducted Japanese to Japan.

The Asahi Shimbun ("DPRK DENIES ABDUCTION," 3, 4/5/97) quoted an April 4 DPRK broadcast that suggested that some Japanese are unjustly using the suspected abduction of Japanese citizens to spark an anti-republic movement, and that "suspected abduction cases" discussed in Japan are

fabrications by ROK National Security Planning agents.

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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Return to the top of this Daily Report

Go to the Daily Report Archive

Return to the Nautilus Institute Home Page

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Return to the top of this Daily Report

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