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I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

Reuters ("NEW ROUND SET FOR HISTORIC KOREA TALKS," Geneva, 12/10/97), United Press International (Jason Neely, "KOREA TALKS TO RESUME IN MARCH: REPORT," Seoul, 12/10/97), and the Associated Press (Geir Moulson, "KOREA TALKS TO RESUME IN MARCH," Geneva, 12/10/97), reported that US Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and Pacific Affairs Stanley Roth said that four-party peace talks for the Korean Peninsula ended Wednesday with an agreement to return to Geneva in March. Roth stated, "The next plenary session will convene on March 16 in Geneva. I'd expect the session to go for a matter of some days." He described the atmosphere of the talks as "productive." A joint statement by the participants said that an ad hoc sub-committee would meet in mid-February in Beijing to prepare for the March round and to come up with recommendations for the parties. The ROK participant, Ambassador to France Lee See-young, said that he considered the Geneva negotiations "a success because we agreed to meet again." Moon

Moo-hong, ROK deputy minister for national reconciliation, said that no agenda had been set for the next round of talks. PRC vice foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan stated, "This marks a very good beginning. We hope the establishment of a peace mechanism on the Korean Peninsula will not take another 43 years." ROK diplomats reportedly said that the DPRK delegation raised the question of US troops withdrawal from the Korean peninsula on Tuesday. The DPRK also pressed for US to end the economic blockade against the DPRK, and for direct talks between the US and the DPRK.

Reuters ("NORTH KOREANS REPORT PROGRESS IN PEACE TALKS," Geneva, 12/10/97) reported that Li Gun, the DPRK ambassador to the UN, said on Wednesday that the four-party peace talks had so far been positive and were continuing in a good spirit. He stated, "We have a long way to go. But the talks are proceeding in a good atmosphere." He added, "We have our concerns, the South Koreans have their own concerns." Regarding the ROK negotiating position, Li said, "Sometimes they're tough, sometimes they're soft. But the talks have been positive."

Reuters (Jane Lee, "KOREA PEACE TALKS FAIL TO QUICKEN PULSE IN SEOUL," Seoul, 12/10/97) reported that DPRK analysts in Seoul on Wednesday were skeptical that any progress would be made in the four-party peace talks. Lee Kyu-hyung, spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said, "The word from Geneva is that the talks are constructive and sincere." He added that it was unfortunate that the DPRK had brought up the issue of the withdrawal of US troops stationed in the ROK, but that it was not unexpected. On Tuesday, a commentary carried by the DPRK's official Korea Central News Agency said that peace could never be ensured while US troops remained in the ROK. Park Young-ho, director of policy studies at the Korea Institute for National Unification, a think-tank of the ROK Unification Ministry, stated, "As expected, North Korea is attending the talks to help secure further food aid and improve relations with the U.S." He added that he thought the US would try to keep up the pace of the talks, but "I have little expectation that the talks will advance." Rhee Sang-woo, a leading DPRK specialist at Sogang University, stated, "They are merely mimicking talks. South Korea has no unified policy towards North Korea and no one in charge of North-South relations. North Korea is tightening its relations with the U.S. through the talks and we have lost the political game."

2. US-ROK Security Consultation Meeting

United Press International ("COHEN: NO SEPARATE TALKS WITH N.KOREA," Washington, 12/09/97) and the Associated Press (Susanne M. Schafer, "COHEN MEETS SOUTH KOREAN MINISTER," Washington, 12/09/97) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen and ROK Defense Minister Kim Dong-jin, following the 29th US-ROK Security Consultation Meeting, issued a joint statement welcoming the beginning of peace talks for the Korean peninsula on Tuesday as the "most realistic means" of reducing tensions in the region. Cohen said that the US would not hold direct talks with the DPRK "unless it were in direct consultation" with the ROK. He added, "We are not going to have a policy of allowing North Korea to try to set up bilateral negotiations with the United States." Regarding the DPRK's military threat, Cohen stated, "We don't see at this point any act of aggression that would cause us to believe there is any imminent danger," but he added that the US is fully prepared to counter any military action by the DPRK. He also said, "I think the situation in the North remains unpredictable and unstable. Whether it is more unstable today than previously, I think is an open question." He said that the DPRK's food situation "has exacerbated their domestic problems, but that appears to have eased somewhat on a temporary basis. But the long-term outlook should not be improved based upon what we have seen to date." He added that despite these problems, the DPRK "still devotes considerable resources to their military and so it is, again, ironic and perhaps inconsistent that while people are starving, they're nonetheless devoting substantial resources to their military." [Ed. note: NAPSNet is distributing the text of the US-ROK joint statement today as a Special Report.]

Reuters (Charles Aldinger, "SOUTH KOREA MAY CUT ARMS PURCHASES," Washington, 12/09/97) reported that ROK Defense Minister Kim Dong-jin said Tuesday that the ROK may be forced to delay some foreign arms purchases because of its economic crisis, but will not cut financial support for US troops in the ROK. He stated, "Because of the forthcoming tight budget, I feel there will be some restrictions on the purchase of foreign weapons and exchange of personnel between our countries." Regarding the proposed purchase by the ROK of four US AWACS early-warning radar planes and other weaponry, Kim said no decision had been made on any arms purchases.

3. ROK Financial Crisis

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA ASST. MINISTER SAYS KOREA TO KEEP IMF AID TERMS," Seoul, 12/10/97) reported that ROK assistant minister of Finance and Economy Chung Duk-koo said Wednesday that the ROK government will abide by promises it made to receive a US\$57-billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Chung stated, "There is no doubt that the implementation of the terms with IMF is the only tool to mend the country's foreign currency crisis." Regarding remarks by leading presidential candidates Kim Dae-jung and Lee Hoi-chang that they would try to re-negotiate the terms of IMF aid, Chung said, "It is proper to view remarks by some presidential candidates for possible renegotiating with IMF as moves designed to soothe public sentiment, thus to win more votes."

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-ROK Relations

The DPRK on Tuesday said it will not allow ROK workers in the Shinpo-Kumho area to cast absentee votes for the 15th presidential election, terming it an intolerable infringement of the DPRK's sovereign rights and a political provocation. It said the ROK should not play the presidential election game in the DPRK's own territory. The DPRK warned that it would take concrete action against the ROK's move, which it termed a violation of the agreement between the DPRK and the Korea Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). (Korea Times, "NK WON'T ALLOW SOUTH KOREANS IN SINPO TO CAST ABSENTEE VOTES," 12/10/97)

2. Light-Water Reactor Project

Desaix Anderson, the new KEDO chief, said in New York that he believed that the light-water nuclear reactor project would go ahead despite the ROK's financial problems. Officials at the ROK Office of the Light-Water Nuclear Reactors Project also denied rumors that the IMF bailout will affect the project. Chang Sun-sop, chief of the office, said, "The cost of the reactors will peak after 2000, when crucial components for the reactors will start to be built. Till then, we will not need much money." (Korea Herald, "ECONOMIC CRISIS NOT TO AFFECT PROJECTS IN NORTH," 12/10/97)

3. Allegations of DPRK Abductions

ROK intelligence officials on Tuesday presented evidence on the case of two students missing for 20 years which pointed to their abduction by DPRK agents and showed that they are still alive in the DPRK. Officials identified the two as high school students Lee Min-gyo, then 17, and Choi Sung-min, then 18, who mysteriously disappeared while vacationing on an island in South Cholla Province in August 1977. The Agency for National Security Planning (NSP) said it has confirmed that the two students were abducted by DPRK agents and are now being forced to work for a spy organization. Agency officials said they substantiated the kidnapping by questioning detained DPRK agents and other defectors. The agency disclosed a similar case November 20, saying three high school students

reported missing in 1978 were confirmed to have been forcefully removed to the DPRK by agents. (Korea Herald, "STUDENTS ABDUCTED BY NORTH KOREAN AGENTS: NSP," 12/10/97)

4. ROK Aid to DPRK

Having already sent 100,000 tons of grain aid to the DPRK, the ROK Korean National Red Cross (KNRC) has proposed another round of talks with the DPRK Red Cross for December 22 in Beijing to discuss additional aid. Officials at KNRC said that they have already procured the money, mostly from donations from the civil sector. The KNRC recently said it will provide winter clothes and medicine, mostly for children, in addition to food. The leading civic organization for DPRK aid, the Korean Sharing Movement, has already stockpiled clothes to be sent to the DPRK. The government is also expected to positively respond to appeals by the World Food Program (WFP) for aid to the DPRK. The WFP is likely to ask for 800,000 tons of food aid to the DPRK. "We have given food through international relief organizations on a humanitarian basis. We will maintain that line of policy," said Kim Hyung-ki, ROK assistant minister for unification policy planning at the Ministry of National Unification. (Korea Herald, "KOREAN RED CROSS PROPOSES MEETING ON AID TO NORTH KOREA," 12/10/97; Korea Herald, "ECONOMIC CRISIS NOT TO AFFECT PROJECTS IN NORTH," 12/10/97)

III. Announcements

1. Appeal for DPRK Food Aid

The Internet Appeal for North Korean Flood Victims announced in a press release on December 9 that the US Treasury Department reversed an earlier decision to block an account in a Washington bank that had received donations to purchase food and drugs for DPRK flood victims. The Treasury Department ruled that a bank account may now be opened and transactions allowed if the activities utilizing such funds meet the US Commerce Department's definition of "goods to meet basic human needs" and are purchased in third countries. Bernard Krisher, chairman of the Appeal, stated, "As the Internet Appeal's donations are confined to the purchase of rice, corn, drugs, and medical supplies in third countries which are then shipped to North Korea and distributed by me or members of my family, these activities are in conformity with both the U.S. Treasury's and Commerce Department's regulations and should encourage more Americans to freely send their checks to the 'North Korean Flood Appeal' without any concern they may be violating U.S. regulations." Krisher is issuing a renewed appeal for donations this week on the organization's Home Page: <http://www.northkorea.org>

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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