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I. United States

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1. DPRK Alleged Satellite Launch

Reuters ("N KOREA TRIED TO LAUNCH SATELLITE-S KOREAN MINISTER," Washington, 09/10/98) reported that ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Hong Soon-yung said on Thursday that last

week's rocket launch by the DPRK was probably a failed attempt to put a satellite into orbit. Hong stated, "It looks more like a satellite." Hong said he was basing his information on consultations between the ROK and the US, adding that a satellite that failed to reach orbit "seems to be the indication of the scientists of the United States." Hong said that whatever the DPRK launched, it was a threat to regional security and the ROK would discuss taking new "counter-measures" in talks later this month at the UN. He added that he would meet the foreign ministers of Japan and the US to discuss such measures, and there would also be discussion at the UN itself.

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2. US-DPRK Talks

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, SEPTEMBER 10," USIA Transcript, 09/10/98) announced that, during bilateral talks in New York, the US obtained "important commitments" from the DPRK on a range of issues. Rubin stated, "The North Koreans have agreed to continue the discussion which began in New York about our concerns with respect to the nature of certain suspicious underground construction in North Korea." He added, "We intend to press for access to clarify the nature of suspect construction; and we have made the North Koreans aware that access will be necessary if our concerns are to be clarified." Rubin also said that the DPRK has agreed to resume missile talks on October 1. He announced that the DPRK will resume the canning of the remaining spent nuclear fuel rods starting in mid-December, and has agreed to attend a third plenary session of the four-party peace talks in October. The DPRK has also agreed to restart talks on steps they need to take in order to be removed from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism. Rubin stated, "We have no illusions about the difficulty of dealing with the North Korean Government and we do not trust North Korea. But we have a system in place now ... in which our concerns on the nuclear side and the missile side can be addressed if the North Koreans so choose." Rubin said that the US reiterated its determination to complete the delivery of the remaining 284,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil planned for this year and to provide the DPRK with two light water nuclear reactors. Rubin said that, with the combination of consultation with Congress and executive authority, the US believes it will be able to provide the fuel oil.

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3. Light-Water Reactor Project

Dow Jones Newswires ("U.S., N. KOREA AGREE TO START BUILDING 2 REACTORS - KYODO," Tokyo, 09/10/98) reported that Kyodo News on Thursday cited an anonymous top Japanese Foreign Ministry official as saying that the US and the DPRK have agreed during talks in New York to start construction of two light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK in November. The official said that the accord constitutes part of the comprehensive agreement that the two sides tentatively reached in their recent high- level talks. The report speculated that Japan is expected to come under increasing pressure to sign a cost-sharing agreement with other members of the Korean Peninsula Nuclear Development Organization (KEDO). The official hinted that the Japanese government would take a flexible stance in lifting the self-imposed ban on the KEDO project, noting it would be "troublesome" if the DPRK resumed its nuclear weapons programs. He added, however, that Japan still thinks the DPRK should take measures to appease Japan on the missile issue as a precondition for going ahead with the KEDO project. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiromu Nonaka said Thursday that the Japanese government would carefully consider an earlier US request that Japan sign a cost-sharing agreement by November.

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING,

SEPTEMBER 10," USIA Transcript, 09/10/98) said that the US expects the light water reactor project for the DPRK to go forward as agreed by all the parties. He stated, "In the just-concluded talks with the North, we acknowledged that construction is behind schedule, and we reaffirmed that the project should be implemented according to the Agreed Framework. We will fully respect the position of the South Korean and Japanese Governments on this issue and consult closely with them regarding this implementation."

Nucleonics Week (Mark Hibbs, "DPRK THREAT TO SELL IRAN MISSILES SNARLS EU-KEDO FUNDING AGREEMENT," Bonn, 09/10/98) reported that European officials involved in decision making over funding for the DPRK reactor program said September 7-8 that preliminary internal reports indicated that there were Iranian experts present during last week's DPRK missile launch. The officials said that the reports indicated that the DPRK sought to stress that, unless the US agrees to pay US$500-million annually, the DPRK "cannot give up its missile development program and will have to sell missiles to Iran." One unnamed European official said that the European Council of Ministers had been originally expected to approve plans this fall to increase funding of KEDO, but in the aftermath of the DPRK missile test the Clinton Administration "has a lot of explaining to do first." Another European diplomat said that "it's pretty clear right now that the US is being blackmailed" by the DPRK and that, since Clinton is committed to the KEDO project, the DPRK is "getting away with it." He added that the missile test "is not going to make it any easier" for the European Council to approve more funding for KEDO, but he was not willing to predict that the missile test would lead the EU to decide not to fund reactor construction.

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4. US Aid to DPRK

The New York Times (David E. Sanger, "U.S. TO SEND NORTH KOREA FOOD DESPITE MISSILE LAUNCHING," Washington, 09/10/98) and the Associated Press (George Gedda, "U.S. WEIGHS MORE N. KOREA AID," Washington, 09/10/98) reported that an anonymous US administration official said Thursday that the US is considering providing an additional 300,000 tons of food relief to the DPRK. He said that the food issue came up in recent US-DPRK discussions in New York. He added that a final decision on providing additional food relief would be made after an assessment of the DPRK's food situation. ROK Foreign Minister Hong Soon-young said Thursday in Washington that he supports additional US food shipments, but that the aid needs to be "carefully and cautiously" separated from overall policy toward the DPRK. Japanese officials, meanwhile, have reportedly reacted negatively to the decision to go ahead with aid, arguing that it rewards the DPRK for bad behavior.

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, SEPTEMBER 10," USIA Transcript, 09/10/98) said that the US believes that it should continue to pursue humanitarian food aid to the people of the DPRK regardless of differences between the US and the DPRK in other areas. He stated, "We have important humanitarian objectives in assisting the international community and preventing a famine in North Korea. We provide food solely on humanitarian grounds." He added that the US is currently working with the World Food Program on the possible provision of additional food aid to the DPRK.

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5. ROK Missile Development

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "S. KOREA TO SPUR ROCKET DEVELOPMENT," Seoul, 09/10/98) reported that Yoon Hun-joo, an official at the ROK Science and Technology Ministry, said

Thursday that the ROK plans to speed up work on its own rocket technology. Yoon said that the government had planned to launch a domestically developed rocket by 2010, but was pushing up the schedule by five years. He stated, "After the North Korean launch, we feel a public opinion growing that we should put a spur on our space projects." Meanwhile, ROK officials on Thursday reiterated their demand that the US allow the ROK to develop longer-range missiles.

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6. ROK Human Rights

The Associated Press (Pauline Jelinek, "S. KOREA RIGHTS ABUSES CITED," Seoul, 09/10/98) reported that Pierre Sane, secretary-general of Amnesty International, on Thursday accused the ROK government of continuing to commit human rights abuses despite the inauguration of a former dissident as president. Sane said that ROK President Kim Dae-jung "says that the National Security Law is not being abused ... (but) every week, new prisoners of conscience are sent to jail. The president has lost touch with the reality on the ground." He noted that, since Kim came to office, there have been more than 240 arrests under the law's section which makes it illegal to "praise or encourage" the DPRK. Kim's spokesman said that the president, in a meeting with Sane on Wednesday, repeated the assertion that the law is needed to protect the country against continuing hostile DPRK tactics. Sane said he welcomed two amnesties issued by Kim that freed about 150 political prisoners, but noted that they did not include some of the longest-held prisoners.

II. Republic of Korea

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1. DPRK Missile

A high-ranking ROK official announced Wednesday that the ROK government plans to approach the US with a view to expanding the range of ROK missiles to at least 300km. Under the current agreement, the ROK limited the range of its missiles to 180km, but in light of the DPRK missile test of a two-stage launch vehicle, the ROK wants an expansion. It is still uncertain whether the rocket fired was a missile or a satellite launch as claimed by the DPRK, but ROK officials said that it poses a clear and present danger to the security of the ROK. The US Space Command said that to date it had been unable to find any object on the trajectory claimed, but that it would continue to search for it. ROK Presidential spokesman Park Ji-won commented that there was no official position on the test yet from the US, the ROK, or Japan. (Chosun Ilbo, "GOVERNMENT TO SEEK EXPANDED MISSILE RANGE," 09/10/98)

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2. DPRK Political Changes

ROK analysts said that the DPRK constitutional revision has created an omnipotent National Defense Commission but, at the same time, it has set the stage for an increased role for technocrats in economic policymaking processes, with the return of a reform-minded former prime minister. The rise of former prime minister Yon Hyong-muk is one of the most notable developments in the recent reshuffle of key DPRK officials and Workers' Party postholders, because he joined the defense commission, headed by Kim Jong-il, general secretary of the Communist Party. "By joining the commission, we believe Yon might exercise great influence over the DPRK Cabinet's policymaking processes," an ROK Unification Ministry analyst said. The Defense Commission, formerly an

exclusive club of military officers, accepted Yon, timed with its emergence as the nation's most powerful organ. DPRK broadcasts defined the role of the Defense Commission chief as the supreme leader, who spearheads the nation's political, military, and economic organizations, safeguards the entire state system of the socialist fatherland and the fate of its people, and maintains the nation's defense capabilities. The 10-member commission is composed of first vice chairman Cho Myong-rok, two vice chairmen, Kim Il- chol and Lee Yong-mu and six members, Kim Yong-chun, Lee Ul-sol, Paek Hak-lim, Chon Byong-ho, Kim Chol-man and Yon. According to ROK ministry analysts, first vice chairman Cho is regarded as the DPRK's second most powerful person, behind only Kim Jong-il. (Korea Times, "KIM JONG-IL ERA (2) TECHNOCRATS' ROLE RISING IN NK," 09/10/98)

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3. Japanese Aid to DPRK

Alarmed by the DPRK's missile launch last week, Japan's ruling party has decided to study ways of stopping a regular flow of cash from reaching the coffers of its reclusive communist neighbor, a party official said Tuesday. In a meeting Monday, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party discussed the DPRK missile threat and decided to start mulling legal changes to halt cash transfers from Japan to the DPRK, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Japan has no diplomatic ties with the DPRK, but some ethnic Koreans living in Japan are believed to regularly send money to the DPRK. About 640,000 ethnic Koreans live in Japan, many of whom were born there. There is no official tally, but about 180,000 are estimated to be loyal to the DPRK. The private flow of funds to the DPRK has come under increased scrutiny since Japanese officials announced the DPRK's ballistic missile test over Japan. On Tuesday, Kyodo news reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said Japan would not lift sanctions imposed on the DPRK even if the firing did launch a satellite into orbit as the DPRK claims. Japan has stopped food aid, frozen its pledge to contribute US$1 billion to the nuclear power plant project in the DPRK, and halted all charter flights between the two nations in retaliation for the missile firing. Quoting unidentified diplomatic sources, the ITAR-Tass news agency of Russia reported Monday that the DPRK would test another missile on Wednesday. (Korea Times, "JAPAN'S RULING PARTY WANTS TO STOP CASH FLOW TO NK," 09/10/98)

III. People's Republic of China

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1. 50th Anniversary of DPRK's Founding

Wen Hui Daily ("DPRK CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING," Pyongyang, 09/10/98, A3) reported that the DPRK held a mammoth military parade on September 9 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the country.

People's Daily ("CONGRATULATIONS TO DPRK," Beijing, 09/09/98, A1) reported that PRC President Jiang Zemin sent a telegram to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il on September 8, congratulating him on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK. "The foundation of the DPRK opened a new era in Korean history. The Korean people have since embarked on the road to building a socialist country by maintaining their independence and keeping the initiative in their own hand," Jiang said in his message to Kim.

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2. DPRK Political Changes

People's Daily ("KIM IL-CHOL APPOINTED AS MINISTER OF ARMED FORCES," Pyongyang, 09/09/98, A6) reported that Kim Jong-il named Vice Marshal Kim Il-chol as minister of the People's Armed Forces on September 7. The post had been vacant since the death of Marshal Choe Kwang in February 1997. Kim Il-chol, 68, was a navy commander and the first deputy minister of the People's Armed Forces. He was elected as one of the Vice Chairmen of the National Defense Commission at the first session of the Supreme People's Assembly on September 5.

People's Liberation Army Daily ("CHAIRMAN JIANG SENT GREETINGS TO KIM," Beijing, 09/07/98, A1) reported that PRC President Jiang Zemin sent a congratulatory telegram to Kim Jong-il, general secretary of the Labor Party of the DPRK, on his re-election as the chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC) of the DPRK. In the telegram, Jiang said that he is happy to learn that Kim has been re-elected as the NDC chairman of the DPRK at the first session of the 10th Supreme People's Assembly. According to Jiang, it is a consistent policy of the Communist Party of China and the PRC Government to strengthen and further the traditional friendship with the DPRK. The PRC Government will as always make unremitting efforts to work for that goal in the future, Jiang said. He believes that through the joint efforts of the two parties and governments, the Sino-DPRK friendly and cooperative relations will be further consolidated and developed.

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3. ROK-DPRK Relations

People's Daily ("SOUTH-NORTH RELATIONSHIP ENTERS INTO NEW ERA, ROK HOPES," Seoul, 09/10/98, A6) reported that when commenting on the political changes in the DPRK, a spokesman for the ROK Unification Ministry said that he hopes that the ROK-DPRK relationship will enter into an era of peace, reconciliation and cooperation. The spokesman expressed the hope that dialogue between the ROK and the DPRK will be resumed as soon as possible. The spokesman called on the DPRK to make earnest and sincere efforts to relax the tension on Korean Peninsula, and maintain the peace on the peninsula, and even in Northeast Asia and in the world.

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4. DPRK Tourism Project

Jie Fang Daily ("DPRK, ROK JOINTLY DEVELOP TOURISM," Seoul, 09/08/98, A3) reported that the ROK approved the Hyundai Group's tour project to the DPRK's Kumkang (Diamond) Mountain, opening the way for ROK citizens to visit the DPRK in the near future. It is expected that the first group of ROK tourists can leave for the DPRK on September 25. According to the report, the DPRK side will be responsible for all the reception work after the tourists go ashore and will charge every tourist US$300.

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5. PRC-DPRK Technology Protocol

People's Daily ("CHINA, DPRK SIGN PROTOCOL ON TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION," Pyongyang, 09/04/98, A6) reported that the PRC and DPRK governments signed in Pyongyang on September 3 a protocol of the 36th meeting of Sino-DPRK science and technology cooperation and exchanges. PRC Vice Science and Technology Minister Li Xueyong signed the protocol on behalf of the PRC Government.

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6. Tumen River Program

China Daily ("JOINT MEETING," 09/08/98, A5) reported that five vice- ministerial level officials--from the PRC, the DPRK, Mongolia, the ROK, and Russia--will attend the fourth Intergovernmental Meeting of the Tumen River Area Development Program, which will be held next month in Ulan Bator, Mongolia. The five member countries of the Tumen Program, which is one of the largest projects that the UN Development Program has ever sponsored, will seek to coordinate their policies concerning issues of trade, investment, and transportation in the Tumen River area.

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.

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