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I. United States

1. DPRK Food Production Crisis

Reuters ("UN "SERIOUSLY ALARMED" ABOUT N.KOREA CROP," Rome, 9/12/97) reported that the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Program (WFP) said Friday in a joint statement that drought and a tidal wave have eliminated the faint hope that the DPRK might be able to increase food production this year. The agencies said that the latest natural disasters, which followed two years of devastating floods, would almost certainly reduce the 1998 harvest, and FAO economist Ajay Markanday told a news conference that early estimates suggested next year's food output would be even lower than in the flood years. "Guarded optimism expressed earlier for some recovery in food production this year is now replaced by very serious alarm at food security prospects for the coming months and year ahead," the statement said. "As the general health of the population has now already been highly weakened by the shortage of adequate food ... the anticipated shortfall this year is likely to have far-reaching implications that go beyond the devastation of 1995 and 1996," it said. FAO and WFP representatives plan to visit the DPRK next month to conduct a full assessment of this year's harvest.

2. PRC Nuclear Exports

The Associated Press ("CHINA ISSUES NEW NUKE EXPORT RULES," Beijing, 9/11/97) and Reuters ("CHINA INSISTS NUCLEAR EXPORTS PEACEFUL," Beijing, 9/11/97) reported that the PRC's official Xinhua news agency said Thursday that the PRC has issued new rules to restrict exports of nuclear weapons and technology, pledging not to transfer the dangerous materials to countries opposing international safeguards. The regulations, if deemed strict enough, would counter US criticism of suspected PRC nuclear exports to Pakistan and Iran and improve the atmosphere for President Jiang Zemin's Washington summit next month with President Bill Clinton, and would also meet a key US condition for ending a ban on US companies building nuclear power plants in the PRC. Premier Li Peng approved the regulations Thursday on behalf of the State Council, Xinhua said. "The government prohibits providing help to nuclear facilities not subject to the supervision of international atomic agencies and will not provide exports, personnel, technical exchange or cooperation to those facilities," Xinhua reported the rules to read. The rules were issued "to strengthen controls on nuclear exports and to safeguard the security of the nation and public interests and to promote international cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy," Xinhua said. US Embassy officials could not immediately be reached for comment. Diplomats and academics in recent weeks had expressed belief that the PRC was unlikely to have regulations ready by the late October summit, and the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency told the US Congress last month it was uncertain whether the PRC was abiding by a pledge not to provide technology to su

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3. US Congressional Support of Landmine Ban

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("BILL TO BAN LAND MINES INTRODUCED IN U.S. HOUSE," Washington, 9/11/97) reported that on Thursday members of the US House of Representatives introduced a bill that would ban US use of anti-personnel land mines, including so-called smart mines, and set a time limit on deployment of landmines on the Korean peninsula. The bill has over 130 co-sponsors and bipartisan support. "It is essential that the US send a clear message that land mines have lost their military necessity and extract a horrible toll on humanity," said Rep. Jack Quinn (R-N.Y.), who introduced the measure along with Rep. Lane Evans (D-Ill). In June, Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) introduced a virtually identical version of the bill in the Senate, co-sponsored by 58 colleagues. The legislation conflicts with the position of the Clinton administration, which supports a landmine ban in principle but is seeking exemptions for smart mines, which eventually self-destruct, and for minefields along the Demilitarized Zone dividing the Korean peninsula. The international conference under way in Oslo, Norway, is expected to end September 19 with a treaty banning all anti-personnel mines.

4. Analysis of US-Japan Defense Alliance

The Los Angeles Times carried an opinion essay by Chalmers Johnson ("WHO IS THE U.S.-JAPAN DEFENSE PACT AIMED AT?," 9/8/97) discussing the new US-Japan defense guidelines due to be announced September 24. Johnson argued that the enhancement of the military alliance manifested by the new guidelines is likely only to increase regional tensions. Johnson dismissed US Defense Department suggestions that the enhancement is necessary to meet threats posed by the DPRK, charging instead, "The obvious target of the new U.S.-Japan military alliance is China, a fact not lost on the Chinese leadership." Johnson focused on how the geographic scope of the new guidelines has become a major issue, noting that Japanese officials have had to juggle relations with both the US and the PRC in clarifying Japan's position on whether the Taiwan Strait would be included in the definition of "the areas near Japan" mentioned in the review of defense guidelines and thereby covered by the US-Japan Security Treaty. On August 17, Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama stated, "In case of a Taiwan-China military conflict, how could we flatly refuse a request from US forces for support, even a supply of water?" Following PRC objections to this view, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has tried to convince the PRC that discussions of the guidelines with the US did not touch on any specific area such as the Taiwan Strait. Johnson asserted that US citizens "would be outraged" at the minimal Japanese participation in future regional conflicts that the new guidelines stipulate, while in Japan the concern is that even this participation would exceed the limits of the "peace constitution" as well as public opinion. Johnson concluded: "The real problem is that Japan, the U.S., China and the other Asian nations do not see eye to eye on whom this defense treaty is supposed to defend and under what circumstances. This is why it cannot work in practice and only will increase tensions in the region." [Ed. note: Chalmers Johnson Is President of the Japan Policy Research Institute in San Diego.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

The preliminary four-party peace talks will be held as planned in New York September 18-19, a ROK Foreign Ministry official said Thursday. During their meeting in Beijing earlier in the day, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman and DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan agreed to resume the preparatory peace talks as planned, the official said. He said the ROK and the US have yet to gain PRC's confirmation, although Beijing raised no objection when Seoul and Washington earlier suggested the date for resuming the talks. Even after Pyongyang had cast doubt on its participation in the peace talks following its diplomats' defections to the US, Seoul and Washington

expressed confidence that famine-stricken DPRK could not afford to abort the peace talks. Also, despite the DPRK's adamant demand for immediate repatriation of the two diplomats seeking asylum in the US, Kartman made it clear that this issue cannot be subject to negotiations. (Korea Herald, Kim Kyung-ho, "4-WAY TALKS SET FOR SEPTEMBER 18; MEETING TO PROCEED DESPITE DEFECTION ROW," 09/12/97)

Some analysts predicted that in the upcoming peace talks, the DPRK will stop insisting on inclusion of the presence of US armed forces in the ROK as an agenda as a prerequisite for further progress in the talks. (Korea Broadcasting System, Morning News, 09/12/97)

2. DPRK Defector

A DPRK civilian swam across an estuary of the Yesong River, about 65 km North of Seoul, and defected to the ROK on Thursday, the ROK Defense Ministry said. The man, identified as Cha Song-ju, 35, was found on the Northern shore of the small island of Kyodong-do, just a few kilometers off the ROK's west coast, at around 6:25 a.m. (Korea Herald, "NORTH KOREAN MAN SWIMS ACROSS RIVER TO DEFECT TO SOUTH," 09/12/97)

3. ROK Presidential Elections

The Democratic Party (DP), at a national convention attended by 1,500 people, on Thursday nominated former Seoul Mayor Cho Soon as its candidate for the December 18 presidential elections. Cho will be competing with the ruling New Korea Party (NKP) candidate Lee Hwe-chang, first opposition National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) candidate Kim Dae-jung, and United Liberal Democrats (ULD) candidate Kim Jong-pil. (Chosun Ilbo, "CHO SOON OFFICIALLY NOMINATED AS CANDIDATE FOR DP," 09/12/97)

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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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