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In today's Report:

[I. United States](#)

- [1. US Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [3. Media Attention to DPRK Famine](#)
- [4. KEDO News Release](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. Russian View of Korean Peace Process](#)
- [2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [3. US Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [4. US-PRC Relations](#)

I. United States

1. US Food Aid to DPRK

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING, AUGUST 14," USIA Transcript, 8/14/97) on Thursday responded to assertions by members of the US congressional delegation recently returned from the DPRK that food aid intended for the country's starving population has been diverted to its military and political elite. [Ed. note: See "US Congressional Representatives Visit to DPRK" in the August 13 Daily Report.] Rubin stated: "We have no indication that there has been any significant diversion of the assistance we have provided. As far as we are able to judge, nearly all our assistance thus far has been directed at helping young children -- particularly children under six. We believe the World Food Program, with experienced in-country staff, has been carefully monitoring the distribution of assistance. We believe that that assistance has gone to the right places. We of course are watching this very carefully and monitoring it very carefully." Rubin added that he could not "get into, in this forum, exactly how we know what we know -- especially in a place like North Korea. But I can say that our experts are confident that there is no significant diversion of the assistance we have provided." Asked if the US delegation's assertions would affect future US food aid to the DPRK, Rubin replied, "We'll obviously talk to them

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[I. United States](#)

- [1. US Food Aid to DPRK](#)
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- [3. Media Attention to DPRK Famine](#)
- [4. KEDO News Release](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. Russian View of Korean Peace Process](#)
- [2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [3. US Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [4. US-PRC Relations](#)

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- [2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [3. Media Attention to DPRK Famine](#)
- [4. KEDO News Release](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. Russian View of Korean Peace Process](#)
- [2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [3. US Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [4. US-PRC Relations](#)

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spokesman of the National Unification Ministry, said in a statement issued Thursday, "The government cannot help but be worried about the transparency in North Korea's food distribution." The statement added, "The government will step up efforts, in cooperation with the World Food Program, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent and other international organizations, to secure transparency regarding food provided to the North." Meanwhile, a World Food Program spokesman said there was "no shred of evidence" that any of the UN body's aid had been diverted. "All the food that has been sent through WFP has gone to the beneficiaries," he said.

3. Media Attention to DPRK Famine

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA GIVES CNN ACCESS," New York, 8/14/97) reported that Eason Jordan, president of CNN International, invited to the DPRK to discuss expanding the cable news network's presence, has also sent back pictures of dried reservoirs and withered crops and narrated a story about continued tension along the heavily fortified border with the ROK. However, CNN spokesman Steve Haworth on Thursday noted the restrictions Jordan has faced, saying, "He's not allowed to travel anywhere except where they want him to go and he's monitored closely." Jordan, on his fifth visit to the DPRK, is trying to persuade the government to allow the network to station a permanent reporter in Pyongyang, and to allow CNN International to be shown more widely in the country. Donald Gregg, former US ambassador to the ROK and chairman of the Korea Society in New York, was quoted as saying that allowing Jordan into the country was likely part of a DPRK effort to gain sympathy and outside aid for its hungry citizens, and also noted that no DPRK citizens were shown in Jordan's report on the drought. "I would guess the reason they didn't allow people to be talked to is because they may say things (the authorities) wouldn't like -- like 'Why can't our government feed us?'" he said.

4. KEDO News Release

The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) on Thursday issued a news release ("KEDO 8/14 RELEASE ON GROUNDBREAKING FOR N. KOREAN REACTORS," USIA Transcript, 8/14/97) announcing that on August 19 it will officially begin construction of the two light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK called for in the 1994 agreement that also suspended the DPRK nuclear program. Following is the text of the release:

KEDO TO BREAK GROUND ON NUCLEAR PROJECT IN NORTH KOREA

The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) will officially break ground on August 19, 1997, on the light-water reactor project through which it will supply two nuclear reactors to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The groundbreaking ceremony for site preparation will occur at the project site in Kumho, South Hamgyong Province, on the east coast of the DPRK.

The groundbreaking ceremony marks a major milestone in the LWR project and follows agreement between KEDO and the DPRK on a Supply Agreement (December, 1996), six related protocols and 18 additional documents related to the implementation of the project. KEDO has also conducted seven extensive site surveys of the project site.

The Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) of the Republic of Korea was selected KEDO's prime contractor for the project in March, 1996. At the height of the LWR project, more than 7,000 people will work at the project site, including several thousand DPRK experts and laborers. In preparation for work which will continue immediately following the groundbreaking ceremony, KEDO has already transported almost 100 experts and workers and 9,000 tons of equipment to the site.

The groundbreaking event underscores KEDO's commitment to fulfill its obligations under the KEDO-DPRK Supply Agreement. The event will be attended by representatives from KEDO's founding members (Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States), the DPRK, most of KEDO's general members (Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Finland, Indonesia, and New Zealand) and the Commission of the European Communities.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Russian View of Korean Peace Process

Russia yesterday reiterated its desire to participate in talks aimed at achieving a permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, noting that the recent four-party preparatory meeting in New York resulted in no significant progress nor rapprochement of the parties' positions. "Russia, as before, proceeds from the assumption that Russia's proposal to hold a more representative meeting with participation of other neighboring countries, in particular, Russia and Japan, could also further a better understanding between the parties," the Russian Embassy in the ROK quoted its Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying in a press release. The statement added that Moscow hopes that "the rates of rapprochement and achieving of mutually acceptable solutions will increase." (Korea Herald, "MOSCOW STILL WANTS TO JOIN TALKS," 08/14/97) [Ed. note: See also "A Russian Perspective on Korean Peace and Security," NAPSNet Policy Forum Online #8, at "http://www.nautilus.org/napsnet/fora/8a_Bajanov.html"]

2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK

Shipment of 50 thousand tons of grain by the ROK Korean National Red Cross (KNRC) to the DPRK was set to begin Thursday, a day later than originally planned. The delay in this second round of aid, KNRC officials explained, was due to both the loading process at the ROK port of Incheon and demands for higher prices by PRC corn sellers. The KNRC will send an initial shipment of 12 thousand tons of aid, about half of which was donated to the KNRC by numerous ROK civic groups. The other half is PRC maize purchased with cash donations, which will be transported by rail to the DPRK cities of Sinuiju, Manpo and Namyang via the PRC cities of Dandong, Tumen and Jian. The first round of the KNRC aid, also 50 thousand tons and mostly PRC maize, was acquired and delivered in the same pattern. KNRC officials said that the second shipment of the second round of aid, about 9,400 tons, will be delivered between August 20-26. Under the agreement reached by the two Korean Red Cross societies, delivery of the remainder is to be completed by September. (Korea Herald, "AID SHIPMENT GETS UNDERWAY," 08/14/97) [Ed. note: See the related item in the US section, above.]

3. US Food Aid to DPRK

James Rubin, spokesman for the US State Department, indicated Tuesday that food assistance to the DPRK can be extended to the end of next year. "The US government maintains the humanitarian position that it has a duty to help whenever there are people in hunger, especially children, and has always responded to appeals from international organizations like the UN. If there is an additional request for aid it will thoroughly look into the matter," Rubin said. The US State Department said on Monday that it would review positively any new request by the World Food Program for additional assistance to the DPRK. The US has donated a total of US\$60.4 million worth of food aid, including US\$52 million in three shipments this year. (Chosun Ilbo, "US INDICATES LONGER TERM FOOD AID TO DPRK," 08/14/97) [Ed. note: See the related item in the US section, above.]

4. US-PRC Relations

Setting the stage for his first state visit to the US, PRC President Jiang Zemin said he wants to "join hands" with President Clinton in building ties between the two nations into the next century. The official China Daily said Wednesday that in a meeting Tuesday with Clinton's national security adviser, Samuel Berger, Jiang said relations have made "positive progress, with common ground in many fields" since he and Clinton met last November in the Philippines. That meeting marked a warming in relations following a period of high tension over Taiwan. Jiang said the improvement in ties since the Manila meeting "has been painstakingly achieved and should be treasured," the newspaper said. Jiang's autumn visit to Washington and a major Communist Party congress also due in the fall will both be important in helping Jiang secure his grip on power following the February 19 death of his mentor, paramount leader Deng Xiaoping. Both sides have hailed the visit as a chance to build on ties that are still frequently strained by arguments over Taiwan, trade, human rights, weapons sales and other issues. In another meeting Tuesday, PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen told Berger that Taiwan is still "the most important and most sensitive issue." "History has shown repeatedly that Sino-US relations can stop or even suffer great setbacks when troubles over the Taiwan issue arise," Qian said. Berger, due to leave Beijing on Wednesday, did not hold a news conference or issue a statement during his three-day visit. However, China Daily reported that Berger said Clinton is looking forward to the PRC president's visit and "hopes it will be a new starting point for relations." Xinhua, the state-run news agency, quoted Berger as telling Premier Li Peng that the US does not regard the PRC as a threat. "A strong, not a weak PRC will be more beneficial to the world," it paraphrased Berger as saying. (Korea Times, "JIANG WANTS TO 'JOIN HANDS' WITH CLINTON," 08/14/97) [Ed. note: See also "US-PRC Relations" in the US section of the August 12 Daily Report.]

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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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[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](#)

[Go to the Daily Report Archive](#)

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