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In today's Report:

I. United States

1. US Announces US-DPRK Missile Talks
2. US Announces More Food Aid to DPRK
3. DPRK Threatens Agreed Framework Pullout
4. DPRK Celebrates Great Leader's Birthday
5. ROK, Japan Agree on DPRK Caution
6. Taiwan Receives US Warplanes
7. Assessment of Korean Peace Talks Progress

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-Japan Agree to Security Dialogue
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3. DPRK Leader Faces Opposition
4. Hwang Defection
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I. United States

1. US Announces US-DPRK Missile Talks

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 14," USIA Transcript, 4/15/97) announced that missile talks between US and DPRK officials will be held in New York City May 12-13. "The focus will be on concerns of the United States regarding North Korean missile-related activities," Burns said. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert Einhorn will lead the US delegation. Burns could not confirm Japanese media reports that say that the DPRK has already deployed its "Rodong" missiles. "We have concerns, not only about that missile but about various missile-related activity of the North Koreans," Burns said. "We're concerned about a variety of missile-related activities and various allegations that have been made. And that is why we have sought these talks with the North Koreans. I think we last spoke to them formally in April 1996, so it is high time for another meeting." The missiles are reported to have ranges of up to 800

miles and are capable of carrying chemical, biological and nuclear warheads as well as conventional warheads. Burns also noted that DPRK, ROK and US officials will meet in New York City April 16 to discuss the proposed four-party peace talks, adding that although the US hopes that the DPRK will use the meeting to agree to the four party talks, "It is not at all clear that we will have a final response from the North Koreans on Wednesda

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The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S. VOICES CONCERN OVER N. KOREA MISSILES," Washington, 4/15/97) reported that US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns announced on Monday that the US and the DPRK will meet May 12-13 in New York City to discuss DPRK missile development plans as well as US suspicions that the DPRK is exporting its missile technology. The report noted that Burns said the US is concerned about reports that the DPRK is preparing to deploy long-range Rodong I missiles that may be capable of hitting the ROK and much of Japan, but would neither confirm nor deny reports in Japanese media that the DPRK has already deployed new missiles. [Ed. note: Please see the related item in the April 14 Daily Report.] In 1993, Pyongyang conducted a test firing of a Rodong missile toward the Sea of Japan. According to US officials, the DPRK also has sold long-range Scud missiles to Iran and Syria.

2. US Announces More Food Aid to DPRK

AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S. APPROVES $15 MLN MORE FOOD AID FOR N. KOREA," Washington, 4/15/97) reported that an unnamed US official said Tuesday that the US State Department, in response to an emergency appeal from the UN World Food Program (WFP), has approved an additional US$15 million in food aid to the DPRK. A formal announcement was expected later in the day. According to the official, there is no linkage between the food aid decision and a pending announcement by the DPRK on whether it will agree to the proposed four-party peace talks at the scheduled meeting in New York Wednesday with US and ROK officials. In February, the US agreed to provide US$10 million in food aid to the DPRK in response to an appeal by the WFP. The WFP issued a subsequent appeal for an additional 203,000 metric tons of food.

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 14," USIA Transcript, 4/15/97) said of the prospects for new US food aid to the DPRK, "As you know, the United States is now finishing its international deliberations on the issue of whether or not to respond to the augmented appeal of the World Food Program for a greater level of food assistance for North Korea. I would expect that within the next 24 hours that I'll have an announcement to make on that issue, probably tomorrow and not today." Burns, asked whether the US was establishing a linkage between the food contribution and other issues, replied, "No, we have never had a linkage. We look at the food requests on a humanitarian basis. We do not link the food requests. We do not link the food requests to other issues in our relationship." Burns subsequently added, "In the case of North Korea, we've responded to every food request since 1995. We act out of humanitarian principles. But if you're looking for the cause, the underlying cause of these problems, it's the failure of these countries to meet their responsibilities to their own people." [Ed. note: Excerpts from Burns' extensive comments on DPRK-related issues at this briefing will be distributed

in a separate posting.]

Reuters ("U.S. FOOD AID FOR N.KOREA EXPECTED TUESDAY," Washington, 4/14/97) reported that, although the US is expected to respond to the most recent UN World Food Program appeal for additional food aid to the DPRK, private aid groups said that if Washington only gave another US$10 million in response, it would be a pittance compared to what is needed to stave off the famine threatening the country. The World Food Program has called for US$95.5 million for 200,000 tons of food. Washington has provided US$18.4 million since late 1995, including a US$10 million donation now being shipped to Pyongyang. The report also noted that, although US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns on Monday denied that food aid was being used to elicit a positive response from the DPRK on attending the four-party peace talks, US officials have acknowledged that food shortages have become such a problem that DPRK officials refused to consider the peace talk proposal without assurances at least some emergency food was forthcoming.

3. DPRK Threatens Agreed Framework Pullout

Reuters ("N. KOREA THREATENS TO GIVE UP U.S. CONTACTS," Tokyo, 4/15/97) reported that on Monday the DPRK accused the US of attempting to contain it militarily and threatened to stop dealing with Washington under the terms of the 1994 nuclear agreement. The statements were issued in commentary in the Rodong Sinmun newspaper, carried by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) monitored in Tokyo. The commentary came just as the DPRK is to attend a meeting with US and ROK officials on the four-party peace talks proposal, and as a second US-DPRK meeting on missiles was announced. The commentary said that the recent visits to Japan and the ROK by US Defense Secretary William Cohen and US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John Shalikashvili reveal a US "attempt to contain the DPRK militarily hand in glove with Japan and the South Korean puppets." "If the United States is really interested in the implementation of the agreed framework and the improvement of bilateral ties, it would be well advised to take practical steps favorable to removing distrust and building confidence between the two countries," the commentary said. "If the United States does not try to take such steps beyond words in relations with the DPRK, we would not feel it necessary to continue dealing with the United States any longer but be left with no other choice than taking countermeasures," it said. "In case the United States persistently resorts to adventurous military threat to the DPRK with double-dealing tactics, we will increase the military strength and power and take a strong countermeasure," it said.

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 14," USIA Transcript, 4/15/97), asked to respond to the DPRK commentary, said, "Didn't see that statement, don't believe it to be an accurate reflection of North Korean behavior because, as of today, North Korea is meeting all of its obligations to us and the Koreans and the Japanese in the agreed framework. We are monitoring their observance of that agreement, and it is satisfactory. So let's look at the performance and the ground. I don't think there's any reason to be concerned there." [Ed. note: Excerpts from Burns' extensive comments on DPRK-related issues at this briefing will be distributed in a separate posting.]

4. DPRK Celebrates Great Leader's Birthday

Reuters ("N.KOREA'S KIM IN POWER PLAY ON FATHER'S BIRTHDAY," Tokyo, 4/15/97) reported that the DPRK marked the anniversary of the birth of its late "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung Tuesday, as his son and de facto leader Kim Jong-il shored up his position by appointing more than 120 new generals. DPRK media, while lavishing praise on Kim Il-sung, the founder of the Stalinist state who died in July 1994 at age 82, also lauded his 55-year-old son. "The respected comrade Kim Jong-il is the great successor and distinguished leader who has led the Workers' Party of Korea and the revolution to a brilliant victory," the state-run Korean Central News Agency said Tuesday. Although

the junior Kim has yet to be formally confirmed in two key posts held by his late father -- general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party and state president -- DPRK watchers believe he will formally assume the posts after the third anniversary of his father's death in July. The earlier promotion of more than 120 army officers to generals, the largest round of promotions in the DPRK since the death of Kim Il-sung, appeared to be a fresh sign that Kim Jong-il was on course toward communism's first dynastic succession. "It is yet another sign that Kim Jong-il is consolidating his grip on power," said Park Sung-hoon, director-general at the ROK's National Unification Ministry.

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA CELEBRATES KIM IL SUNG," Tokyo, 4/15/97) reported that the DPRK's leaders and tens of thousands of youths commemorated the 85th anniversary of late leader Kim Il Sung's birth on Tuesday. About 50,000 youths took part in mass games at a stadium in Pyongyang, DPRK news media reported. However, Kim Jong-il, rarely seen in public, was absent from Tuesday's ceremonies, Radio Pyongyang said in a broadcast monitored in Tokyo by Radio Press.

5. ROK, Japan Agree on DPRK Caution

The Associated Press ("S.KOREA: N.KOREAN FOCUS ON MILITARY," Tokyo, 4/15/97) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha, on a visit to Japan, told Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto that the DPRK is placing more emphasis on its military, and that Japan and the ROK should keep a close watch on the country. "We must keep our eyes on the military's movement," Yoo told Hashimoto. According to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, Hashimoto agreed. Yoo also told Hashimoto that unified action by three nations -- the US, Japan and the ROK -- would be important in making talks with the DPRK a success. Yoo also told Hashimoto that Hwang Jang-yop, the senior DPRK official who defected in Beijing and is now in the Philippines, will come to Seoul in the not-to--distant future.

6. Taiwan Receives US Warplanes

The Associated Press ("U.S. WARPLANES ARRIVE IN TAIWAN," Taipei, 4/15/97) reported that two US-made fighters have arrived to join the Taiwanese Air Force, the first of a batch of 150. US and Taiwanese pilots flew the F-16s to Chiayi Air Base in southern Taiwan on Monday. The delivery marks the first such shipment since the US stopped selling sophisticated arms to Taiwan after it established diplomatic ties with the PRC and withdrew recognition from Taiwan 15 years ago. The PRC protested the Bush administration's agreement in 1992 to sell Taiwan the F-16s for US$6 billion, saying that the sale violated its 1982 agreement with the US to limit and eventually phase out arms sales to Taiwan. The F-16s will replace the air force's aging US-made F-104s and F-5 as part of a buildup Taiwan says is needed to counter the growth of the PRC military. Taiwan says it also expects the arrival this month of the first of the 60 French Mirage 2000-5 warplanes it has ordered. The Mirage deal also drew strong protests from the PRC, forcing the French government to suspend further arms sales to Taiwan.

7. Assessment of Korean Peace Talks Progress

Tom Plate wrote in an opinion article in the Los Angeles Times ("TYRANNY SLOWLY COAXED TO DEMISE," Seoul, 4/15/97) that, despite the many obstacles ahead, the fact that the DPRK and the ROK appear to be on the verge of formal peace talks is a cause for optimism. Plate also commented on how, given the decrepit condition of the DPRK, the peace talks could lead eventually to Korean unification under ROK political and economic terms. Plate quoted ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha as saying, "Famine is a phenomenon that other governments have overcome through history. But to be broke as a state, I just don't think they can go on for a long time." Plate also quoted Yoo's comments on the US role in the upcoming talks: "The most important role for America is for you to

be there. North Korea has a psychological need for you to be present, because while they do distrust you, they distrust us more. And the appearance of dealing with you quiets their internal critics. They can say, 'We talked to America.' You satisfy their vanity." Plate concluded that despite the lingering animosities and difficult issues, "gloom may be just the wrong outlook on these talks." Plate added, "Suddenly President Clinton's daring, three-year diplomatic effort to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, bring North Korea into the real world and edge the two Koreas closer is starting to come together. ... Call us Uncle Gullible, if you will; but at least we set the table and it looks like the warring brothers will sit down together."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-Japan Agree to Security Dialogue

The ROK and Japan yesterday agreed to launch a bilateral security dialogue within the year to coordinate their efforts for regional security. During their meeting in Tokyo, ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha and his Japanese counterpart Yukihiko Ikeda agreed on the need to establish a channel for security consultations between the two countries to cope with the changing situation in Northeast Asia, especially in the DPRK. At its initial stage, the dialogue will be attended by officials from the foreign ministries of the two countries and led by director general-level officials. Defense officials will later join the dialogue and the level of representation will be increased, said a ROK Foreign Ministry official in Seoul, giving a briefing on the outcome of the Yoo-Ikeda talks. The ROK's decision was prompted by last year's US-Japan joint security declaration which envisaged Japan's expanded role in case of an emergency in Northeast Asia, particularly on the Korean Peninsula. "It's not appropriate for us to shun security talks with Japan, when Tokyo is talking with Washington on security cooperation on the Korean Peninsula," said a foreign ministry official. During their talks, Yoo and Ikeda confirmed the need for their countries to maintain close cooperation with the US in order to get the DPRK into proposed four-way talks on a permanent Korean peace. Ikeda reiterated that Japan will be cautious in improving ties with the DPRK unless it changes its attitude toward the South. In addition to security issues, Yoo and Ikeda discussed revising a bilateral fishery accord, a program on joint study of the history between the two countries, resolution of the "comfort women" issue, and the ROK's trade deficit with Japan. (Korea Herald, "KOREA, JAPAN AGREE TO LAUNCH SECURITY DIALOGUE THIS YEAR," 04/15/97)

2. DPRK Promotes Military Officials

The DPRK's Kim Jong-il promoted 123 generals on the occasion of the deceased Kim Il-sung's 85th birthday today and the anniversary of the founding of the DPRK's Armed Forces (April 25), the Naewoe Press said yesterday, quoting the DPRK Central Broadcasting Station. It marks the second round of promotions or reshuffling in the army so far this year by the de facto leader of the Stalinist state. It is also the fifth military reshuffle executed by Kim Jong-il since assuming the office of supreme commander in December 1991. Since taking leadership of the Armed Forces, he has boosted its top brass with roughly 797 promotions, excluding the latest ones. DPRK analysts say the latest reshuffle brings the total tally of generals in the DPRK to 1,220. The number of general-level officers in the ROK Armed Forces hovers at slightly more than 500. DPRK watchers at the ROK Ministry of National Unification believe that expansion of the ranks of its generals attests to the fact that the DPRK is a garrison state with Kim Jong-il firmly in grip of personnel decision-making. They predicted additional officer-level promotions on the anniversary of the DPRK's Armed Forces. (Korea Herald, "NORTH KOREA PROMOTES 123 GENERALS," 04/15/97)

3. DPRK Leader Faces Opposition

ROK National Unification Minister Kwon O-kie said yesterday that opposition to DPRK's de factor

leader Kim Jong-il is spreading to the middle rungs on the Workers' Party hierarchy. Speaking at a meeting of the Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation Committee of the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI), Kwon said that it appears almost certain that the DPRK's ruling party is "like a body with the waist cut off," a participant in the meeting said. However, Kwon downplayed the possibility of an early collapse of the DPRK government, saying that the DPRK manufactured 130 special warfare boats last year apparently for use in a surprise attack on the ROK. Kwon called on corporations to be more positive in providing food aid to the DPRK through economic organizations, such as the FKI, instead of passively following government mandates. Kang Young-hoon, president of the Korean National Red Cross, said the DPRK's policy to drive a wedge between the government and private industry in the ROK has not changed at all, so it is unrealistic for corporations to make business deals with the DPRK individually. Kang added on the other hand, the government should lift restrictions on inter-Korean economic cooperation so that corporations do not face difficulties in dealing with the DPRK. (Korea Times, "KIM JONG-IL FACING INCREASING OPPOSITION IN WORKERS' PARTY:KWON," 04/15/97)

4. Hwang Defection

Vice President Al Gore, Defense Secretary William Cohen and House Speaker Newt Gingrich of the US, who all recently visited Seoul, called on ROK officials to share any information DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop might reveal when he arrives in Seoul later this week, a ROK Foreign Ministry official said yesterday. The official ruled out the possibility of US or Japanese participation in the debriefing of Hwang, calling it a matter of "national sovereignty," but showed a willingness to share any information afterwards. The US and Japan are deeply interested in the depth of information that top-level DPRK defector might reveal to ROK intelligence authorities. Hwang is known to be the architect of the DPRK's juche (self-reliance) ideology and may have insider's knowledge on the decision-making processes in Pyongyang and the current status and health of de facto DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. He is believed to have information on the DPRK's military capabilities, including the country's Rodong missiles, for which a test launch reportedly is currently being prepared at a site on the east coast. (Korea Times, "GORE, COHEN, GINGRICH CALL FOR SHARING HWANG'S INFORMATION," 04/15/97)

5. DPRK Famine

The DPRK's production of food grain reached only 40 percent of its consumption demand last year, according to the Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI). The DPRK's yield of food grain was estimated to be between 2.44 and 2.81 million tons, 40 percent of its demand estimated to be between 6.06 and 6.22 million tons. The organization said that the shortage in food grains was caused by flood disaster and the ineffective production structure of the collective farming system. (Korea Times, "NK'S GRAIN PRODUCTION ONLY 40 PCT OF DEMAND LAST YR," 04/15/97)

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