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I. United States

1. US Announces More Food Aid to DPRK

The US State Department on April 15 issued the following press release ("STATE DEPT. ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO NORTH KOREA," USIA Transcript, 4/16/97): "NORTH KOREA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. In response to an expanded appeal targeted specifically towards feeding children by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), and after consultation with the Republic of Korea and Japan, the United States Government has decided to provide humanitarian assistance in the amount of 50,000 metric tons of corn valued at approximately \$15 million for use in

assisting the 2.4 million children under the age of 6 in North Korea who we believe are at risk. Flooding in 1995 and 1996 destroyed considerable farm land in the DPRK. This exacerbated North Korea's chronic food production shortfalls, resulting in widespread food shortages and malnutrition. The WFP estimates this year's shortage at 1.8-2.3 million metric tons, or nearly half of North Korean needs. The U.S. Government assistance will be in the form of PL 480 Title II Emergency Food Aid. Specifically, the U.S. Government will provide corn to feed nursery and kindergarten children under age 6. The U.S. Government has chosen the WFP as the channel for this assistance because of the WFP's proven ability to monitor distribution to ensure that aid reaches those in need." [Ed. note: Most major media carried stories on this announcement. Excerpts from US State Dep

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I. United States

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2. Four-Party Peace Talks Meeting

Reuters ("U.S. SEES PROGRESS IN CRUCIAL KOREA TALKS," New York, 4/16/97) reported that US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said that, after two hours of talks on among the DPRK, the ROK, and the US in New York to discuss the four-party Korean peace talks proposal, the US is "encouraged by the early progress that has been made." "We hope very much that as a result of these talks North Korea will decide to agree with the four-party proposal," Burns told reporters in Washington. He based his upbeat assessment on a telephone conversation with the chief US negotiator, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman, during a lunch break in the talks. "The talks are under way on a trilateral basis. They're going well. We're certainly encouraged by the first few hours of the talks and we hope very much for a positive result from these discussions," Burns said. During the lunch time break, another ROK official, Ji Won-suk, told reporters he was encouraged but the DPRK had not yet given their formal response to the four-party peace talks proposal. The morning session involved Pyongyang making a "presentation," he said.

Reuters ("CRUCIAL KOREA MEETING OPENS ON POSITIVE NOTE," New York, 4/16/97) reported earlier that Kim Gye-gwan, the head of the DPRK delegation to the meeting in New York Wednesday, suggested entering the meeting that it would produce "good results." "I think we will come out with good results," Kim told Song Young-shik, his ROK counterpart, during a photo session with journalists. Song was also in an upbeat mood, laughing and chatting with Kim, and said he hoped the meeting would reflect the warm spring day in New York. The two delegation leaders, smiling broadly, joined in a three-way handshake with the US delegation leader, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman. US officials have been cautiously optimistic that the DPRK will respond positively to the year-old US-ROK proposal for four-party peace talks -- also including the PRC -- to bring a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War. Asked by reporters Wednesday how he thought the meeting would go, Song held up his fingers crossed, a sign that he hoped the results would be positive.

The Associated Press (Terril Yue Jones, "NORTH KOREA WEIGHS OFFER TO TALK," New York, 4/16/97) reported that US officials said that the US-DPRK-ROK meeting in New York on Wednesday, while scheduled for one day, could continue on Friday. Privately, US officials said they were optimistic that the DPRK would accept the four-party peace talks offer. ROK diplomat Suh Ji-won was quoted as saying prior to the meeting, "They came here to deliver their response on our briefing. So the fact that they came to give a response is good." Kim Gye-gwan, the DPRK vice foreign minister and delegation head, recalled a Korean proverb that "the beginning means the work is half done." The ROK's Yonhap News Agency quoted an unidentified ROK official as saying that if the DPRK asked for another meeting before explicitly making a decision, the ROK government would invite the PRC to participate.

3. Linkage of Food Aid and Peace Talks

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 15," USIA Transcript, 4/16/97), replying to a question regarding whether the US would explicitly disavow a linkage between its announcement of DPRK food aid and the DPRK's agreement to meet with the US and the ROK in New York, said, "I can certainly do that. ... That meeting is to hear the North Korean response to our suggestion, with South Korea, for four-party talks to improve stability in the Korean Peninsula. There is no relationship between the announcement by the United States today on food aide to the political discussions that will take place tomorrow. We view the issue of food for children as a humanitarian issue only. It is not linked to politics, nor should it be." Asked subsequently whether the timing of the food aid announcement could be interpreted as a reward for DPRK approval of the four-party talks, Burns added, "Frankly, we're mindful that a lot of people think that we're doing this for political reasons. We're not. And to make that very clear, we decided to announce it before the talks started -- before we even knew what the North Korean response would be to the four-party talks proposal. And if the response is negative, the food aide goes forward. If the response is positive, the food aide goes forward. We have to meet humanitarian imperatives before we meet political ones."

The New York Times (Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. GIVING NORTH KOREA MORE FOOD," Washington, 4/16/97, A7) reported that although the Clinton administration has insisted that it will not link food aid to the DPRK to DPRK participation in Korean peace talks, the DPRK government has in recent months withheld promises of improved relations until the US and others do more to help it deal with chronic food shortages. An unnamed administration official said Tuesday that the US announced the new contribution the day before a DPRK delegation was to meet US and ROK delegations in New York as a way to pre-empt efforts by the DPRK to make more aid a condition for it to take part in talks. Perhaps to play down expectations, officials have said the administration does not expect an unequivocal answer this week from the DPRK; rather, Washington expects to hear a "litany of needs," as one senior administration official put it. The official also acknowledged that, although the US separates the issues, the food crisis is impacting the DPRK's own stance in its external relations. "The regime is coming to the realization that it has no choice but to engage the United States and South Korea in a significant and meaningful way," the official said. "Its options are quickly running out."

4. DPRK Missile Threat

US Defense Department Spokesman Mike Doubleday ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR BRIEFING APRIL 15," USIA Transcript, 4/16/97), replying to a question regarding reports that the DPRK is ready to deploy a new class of long range missiles that could reach the ROK and Japan, stated, "I certainly am aware of the report, but I'm not in a position to discuss intelligence matters. I do want to point out, however, that we monitor very closely the developments in ballistic missile programs such as this one very closely. We've done that for many years. We'll continue to do that

kind of monitoring. We're very concerned about the development and possible deployment or export of such missiles. I also want to point out that there are talks which are scheduled to take place next month in New York City regarding North Korean missile-related activities."

5. Hwang Defection

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("HIGH-RANKING N. KOREAN DEFECTOR TO ARRIVE IN SEOUL NEXT WEEK," Seoul, 4/16/97) reported that ROK government officials said Wednesday that DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop will arrive in Seoul next week. One official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he will be flown from the Philippines, where he has been staying since March 18 pending arrangements for his flight to Seoul. State KBS-TV, quoting an unidentified senior government official, reported that a special plane will be sent to take Hwang to Seoul early next week. Seoul government officials, citing security concerns, refused to disclose his travel plan, but the foreign news media in Seoul was asked to form a pool to cover his arrival. [Ed. note: Please see the related item in the ROK section, below.]

6. DPRK Leader Visits DMZ

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("NORTH KOREA KIM JONG IL VISITS BORDER UNIT - REPORT," Seoul, 4/16/97) reported that Pyongyang Radio announced Wednesday that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il visited a military unit inside the tense buffer zone separating the DPRK and the ROK. The announcement said Kim made the trip on Tuesday, the 85th birthday of his late father and president, Kim Il-sung. He did not attend celebrations in Pyongyang marking the national holiday. Kim's public appearances have been mostly related to the military in an apparent attempt to placate the nation's 1.2 million-man armed forces, which reportedly are growing unhappy with the government's inability to resolve severe food shortages. Kim climbed an observation post in the DPRK side of the four-kilometer-wide demilitarized zone and viewed an enemy post 1,000 meters away, the announcement said.

7. DPRK Building Memorial to Great Leader

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA BUILDING COSTLY MEMORIAL," Seoul, 4/16/97) reported that the ROK's Agency for National Security Planning said Wednesday that the DPRK is building a multi-million dollar memorial to its late leader, Kim Il-sung. The US\$190 million project is scheduled for completion in July, the third anniversary of Kim's death, the said. The project comes as the DPRK is appealing for outside aid to alleviate a potential famine.

8. Japan-ROK Relations

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("JAPAN DEFENSE CHIEF TO VISIT S. KOREA FOR SECURITY TALKS," Seoul, 4/16/97) reported the ROK Defense Ministry said Wednesday that Fumio Kyuma, head of Japan's Defense Agency, will visit the ROK on April 28 for a three-day visit to discuss military cooperation and long-range missile threats from the DPRK. Kyuma will visit ROK military units near the border with the DPRK after discussing "regional security matters and military cooperation" with ROK Defense Minister Kim Dong-jin, the ministry said. The brief news release gave no further details, but officials said the DPRK's missile threats will be an important topic. This week, Japan said it was investigating unconfirmed news reports that the DPRK was preparing to deploy long-range Rodong I missiles capable of hitting the ROK and much of Japan. Japanese news media had earlier reported that Pyongyang had readied the missiles for immediate test firing in the Sea of Japan, which separates Korea from Japan.

9. PRC Protests US Arms Sale to Taiwan

Reuters ("CHINA BLASTS U.S. OVER F-16 SALES TO TAIWAN," Beijing, 4/16/97) reported that the PRC said that the US sale of F-16 fighters to Taiwan has seriously harmed Sino-U.S. relations. "The Chinese government has already voiced its strong opposition to the U.S. side," PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said in a statement. "Now the U.S. side, in spite of the opposition and representations from the Chinese side, has persisted with conducting its erroneous decision and the Chinese side voices its strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition," he said. Taiwan took delivery on Tuesday of the first two of 150 F-16s that the island has bought to upgrade its defenses.

10. Japanese Nuclear Accidents

Reuters ("JAPAN ADMITS COVER-UP IN NUCLEAR ACCIDENT," Tokyo, 4/16/97) reported that supporters and opponents of nuclear power united in anger with government officials on Wednesday after another embarrassing incident forced the shutdown of a power plant. The beleaguered state-run firm, the Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corp. (PNC), was ordered to halt operations at its Fugen reactor in western Japan after it emerged that it had waited 30 hours before reporting a radiation leak that occurred on Monday. Local government officials in Fukui Prefecture said 11 workers were exposed to small doses of radiation in Monday's accident. In what has become a ritual for the company, it admitted it had erred and apologized. "Our report was delayed because of our misjudgment. I am sorry for causing trouble," Norito Takeshita, head of the Fugen plant, told a news conference on Tuesday.

The Associated Press (Seth Sutel, "JAPAN SEEKS CRIMINAL NUKE CHARGES," Tokyo, 4/16/97) reported that the Japanese government sought criminal charges against its own nuclear development agency on Wednesday because of accidents and cover-ups that have angered the public and spurred doubts about the program's future. The Science and Technology Agency filed a criminal complaint with police asking them to pursue charges against the Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corp. (PNC) for falsifying a report to the government about the March 11 fire and explosion at the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in Ibaraki Prefecture northeast of Tokyo. Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, speaking of PNC after the Science and Technology Agency's announcement, promised to "investigate them thoroughly and beat them into shape." While for years there seemed to be no stopping Japan's controversial program to use highly toxic plutonium to make energy, despite mounting protests at home and abroad, Wednesday's unprecedented action is a sign of growing resolve in government circles to heed calls for reform.

11. Along the PRC-DPRK Border

Mary Jordan wrote in the Washington Post ("FEARING DELUGE, POLITICAL FALLOUT, CHINA SPURNS FLEEING N. KOREANS," 4/14/97, A14) that the PRC has captured many North Koreans trying to escape repression and starvation in the DPRK and returned them to almost certain execution, according to missionaries, Asian and Western diplomats, and government officials in the PRC. Although the PRC officially denies it, many people interviewed said the PRC government fears a massive flood of hungry and sick refugees from the famine-stricken DPRK, so it is taking strong measures to deter them. While exact numbers are impossible to know, the number returned is thought to be at least in the hundreds. Top officials of the ROK government, who are building closer economic and political ties with the PRC, are reluctant to criticize the actions publicly, but express private concern. "We don't think it is right; it's inhumane," said one leading official in ROK President Kim Young-sam's government, who, like others willing to describe the situation, spoke on the condition of anonymity. "It's an awful situation," said one US official in Seoul. The situation highlights the PRC's increasingly complex position regarding the two Korean states. Since the end of the Cold War, Beijing has improved its relations with the ROK while cutting most of its aid to the DPRK. The shift was exemplified when Beijing sided with Seoul over the Hwang Jang-yop defection. But the policy to return North Korean refugees indicates that the PRC is finding other ways to

continue to nourish its relations with the DPRK. Those interviewed said the PRC's approach may be motivated by self-interested concern to defer the flight of perhaps millions of starving refugees, rather than by allegiance to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, who has presided over his country's economic collapse and the approaching famine.

Sonni Efron wrote in the Los Angeles Times ("TRAVELERS FROM N. KOREA RECOUNT HORRORS OF FAMINE," Tumen, PRC, 4/16/97) that the evident contrast across the border between the DPRK and the PRC is striking. Efron wrote, "On the Chinese side of the broad river here is a boomtown with bright lights, tall cranes and gleaming new buildings springing up amid open sewers and shacks. On the other bank is the North Korean city of Namyang, where factories are shut, water service is sporadic and on a recent night only three tiny lights could be seen twinkling." Efron wrote that PRC visitors venturing across the long bridge between the two towns "are returning with tales of a hunger far more harrowing than anything Western aid workers have been permitted to observe on carefully supervised visits to North Korea." Efron recounted the stories of one Korean refugee who described "winter mornings when she passed corpses of children who had died of hunger and cold in the streets," and "families committing suicide, parents splitting up to scour the countryside for food, and abandoned children begging in railroad stations." She told of trading away precious quilts for food and spending evenings guarding her few remaining belongings against famished thieves and marauding soldiers. Efron wrote that the woman called the DPRK government's recent admission that 134 children have died of malnutrition "a total lie." Instead, she said, North Koreans believe that at least 100,000 people have perished since 1995, although this is a number that cannot be confirmed. "In the past we never complained, but now it is different," the woman said. "Among your friends, you criticize the government, and even in public people criticize, because even the security people have not gotten a distribution [of food] since last year." However, Efron wrote, the woman said that the conditions pose no threat to the control of Kim Jong-il and his regime, as did other ethnic Koreans interviewed in two cities along the border. The woman, rather than finding fault with the government, blamed the US-led trade embargo for the nation's suffering, and said that North Koreans long to make war on those they believe are persecuting them. "Everyone, including me, is wondering why our dear leader Kim Jong Il is sitting idle while we are going hungry," Efron quoted another woman as saying. "It is all because of the isolation policy of outsiders. We can either starve to death or we can die fighting. ... We should fight."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Hwang Defection

As the "mandatory" period of transit for top DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop is over, ROK officials are now considering when would be the proper timing to bring him to Seoul. A senior official in Seoul yesterday ruled out the possibility that Hwang, who has been staying in the Philippines since March 18, will come to Seoul in a day or two. His remarks followed a local press report that Hwang may arrive here tomorrow. News media here have speculated Hwang will be brought to Seoul April 18, a month after Hwang was sent to Manila from Beijing, where he sought asylum in the ROK February 12. Such speculation came after a senior presidential aide revealed last month that Seoul originally agreed with Beijing to make Hwang stay in the Philippines for two weeks as a cooling-off period but then asked the Philippine government to host him for two more weeks. ROK officials are tight-lipped about the timing of Hwang's arrival in Seoul, saying an announcement will be made after he leaves the Philippines. There is a possibility that Hwang's arrival will be delayed until after April 18, if ROK officials do not wish to provoke the DPRK in the process of convening of proposed four-party peace talks. Ahead of Hwang's arrival in Seoul, the ROK has been facing repeated US calls for joint interrogation of Hwang, who is believed to have valuable information as a member of the DPRK's ruling elite. The US and Japan have shown interest in information that Hwang, the

DPRK's top ideologue and tutor to Kim Jong-il, will disclose after his arrival in Seoul. ROK officials have expressed willingness to share information to be obtained from Hwang but ruled out the possibility of US officials participating in Hwang's interrogation. (Korea Herald, "OFFICIALS TIGHT LIPPED ON HWANG'S ARRIVAL DATE," Kim Kyung-ho, 04/16/97)

2. US KEDO Representative Appointed ROK Ambassador

The US government has designated Stephen Bosworth, executive director of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), as its new ambassador to Seoul, US news reports said. President Bill Clinton reportedly is likely to announce the appointment as early as Tuesday. Bosworth is a career diplomat who had previously worked as US ambassador to Tunisia and the Philippines. He had had no particular link with Korea until he assumed the post at the KEDO, the organization formed to implement elements of the 1994 US-DPRK nuclear agreement, including providing two light-water nuclear reactors to the DPRK. A Korean official said Clinton chose Bosworth for the post for his knowledge about both the ROK and the DPRK, which he has acquired while working as KEDO executive director. (Korea Herald, "BOSWORTH PICKED AS U.S. ENVOY TO SEOUL," 04/16/97)

3. DPRK Food Aid

With the campaign to send food aid to famine-stricken DPRK expanding among ROK civic and religious sectors, ROK opposition political parties have decided to join the drive. The political world has kept silent about the campaign to help North Koreans suffering from a severe food shortage, so far, apparently keeping in mind the Kim Young-sam administration's policy of not giving aid at the government level. The main opposition National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) initially decide to ask each of its lawmakers to contribute 3,000 won or more to the campaign. The money will be turned over to the pan-national campaign headquarters which will send it to the North, a party spokesman said. The minor opposition United Liberal Democrats (ULD) also decided to help DPRK children by sending cans of powdered milk, in response to warnings by international organizations that DPRK children are on the verge of starving to death. Meanwhile, the ruling New Korea Party is still taking a "prudent attitude" toward the issue. (Korea Times, "OPPOSITION PARTIES JOIN N. KOREA FOOD AID CAMPAIGN," 04/15/97)

4. IAEA Posts

Former science and technology minister Chung Kun-mo has his eye on the International Atomic Energy Agency director general's position, but the ROK government doesn't think he has enough support to warrant nominating him for the post. The three-week nomination period, during which member states of the IAEA submit names for the position, began Monday. The board of governors is to vote on a replacement for Hans Blix in May and the entire membership must approve the selection in September. Chung, an expert in nuclear physics who twice served as Korea's Minister of Science and Technology, recently won the backing of the 46-member International Nuclear Society Council. But the ROK's Foreign Ministry hasn't made any moves to submit his name. The government has said that the US is concerned Chung's appointment could irritate the DPRK. The IAEA removed the DPRK as a member in 1994, but the organization is still involved in monitoring the country's nuclear activities. The head of the agency will be dealing with issues like Taiwan's shipment of nuclear waste to the DPRK and the DPRK's construction of nuclear reactors as well as unrelated problems like Iraq's secret nuclear program. Because candidates can be nominated any of the IAEA's 123 member countries, Chung does not require the ROK's support. Should he be nominated, Chung may still face difficulties getting the two-thirds support needed from the board's 35 governors. The board has already rejected six candidates. Only three men -- two of them Swedes -- have held the director general position since 1957. (Korea Times, "CHUNG KUN-MO FACES

5. Buryatia-ROK Relations

Buryatia, one of the Russian Federation's 21 autonomous republics, awaits the ROK's participation in the privatization of its military industries. Despite the Republic's superb capabilities in the production of sophisticated fighters and helicopters, its military industries have been hit hard by dwindling orders from Moscow, President Leonid Potapov of the Republic of Buryatia said Monday. Potapov arrived in Seoul Saturday for an eight-day visit aimed largely at expanding economic ties with Korean companies. The republic of about one million people is located southeast of the Lake Baikal. He pointed out that Buryatia produces such fighters as the Sukhoi 25 and 37 and all models of MI helicopters. In particular, President Potapov called on Seoul to join in the privatization of the passenger plane industry. Meanwhile, he also called for the formation of joint ventures between Korean and Buryatian companies in the development of natural resources such as lithium, zinc and other rare metals. "Buryatia has an abundance of natural resources," he said. Potapov expressed hope that the republic would sign a pact with the ROK on the promotion of economic relations including direct investment, if such a pact were endorsed by the Russian Federation. (Korea Times, "BURYATIA WANTS KOREA TO JOIN PRIVATIZATION OF MILITARY INDUSTRY," 04/16/97)

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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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