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I. United States

1. DPRK-ROK Border Skirmish

The Associated Press ("KOREA-BORDER GUNFIRE EXCHANGED," Seoul, 7/16/97) and Reuters ("ARTILLERY SHELLS FLY AT KOREAN FRONTIER," Seoul, 7/16/97) reported that DPRK and ROK troops on Wednesday exchanged heavy gunfire in a relatively remote mountainous area in the central portion of the demilitarized zone separating the two countries. The DPRK said several of its soldiers were wounded in the exchange and accused the ROK of a "grave armed provocative act," while the ROK called it an "intentional provocation" by the DPRK. The clash was considered the most serious incident between the two countries since last September's DPRK submarine incursion incident. The ROK Defense Ministry said that ROK border guards spotted at least seven DPRK troops on the southern side of the demilitarized zone and ordered them to withdraw through a loudspeaker, subsequently firing some 200 warning shots into the air. The DPRK fired back at the ROK soldiers, who then directed fire at the DPRK soldiers with machine guns and rifles, at which point DPRK soldiers at a guard post across the border fired 10 mortar rounds and two more rounds of unidentified artillery, the ministry said. The DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency issued a

report that denied its soldiers had crossed the border and accused the ROK of obstructing its soldiers' "routine patrol duty." "The people's army soldiers were compelled to take self-defensive measures under the grave situation," the KCNA report said. "From this attack, several soldiers were injured and several guard posts were destroyed," it added, giving no further details. The ROK said it will lodge a complaint with the military armistice commission. The shooting occurred just three weeks before senior officials from the DPRK, ROK, PRC and US are to meet in New York to prepare for commencement

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no Daily Report issued on Thursday, July 17. The Daily Report will return on Friday, July 18.

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US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JULY 16, 1997," USIA Transcript, 7/16/97) confirmed news reports that DPRK and ROK soldiers exchanged gunfire July 16 when, according to the UN Command, some 14 DPRK soldiers crossed the demilitarized zone about 60 kilometers east of Panmunjom. "The United States is obviously concerned by this incident," Burns said, adding that the US believes the incident "should be addressed as soon as possible in the framework of the Military Armistice Agreement." Burns refused to speculate on what DPRK motives might be behind the incident, calling the idea that it was engineered by the DPRK to rally domestic support "curious logic indeed." Burns added that the incident will not affect US plans to provide humanitarian food aid to the DPRK, nor is there any indication that DPRK officials will not

participate in the August 5 four-party preparatory peace talks. "My statement was more meant to encourage them to get in the spirit of why we are having the four-party talks so that needless incidents like the one this morning are not repeated and people's lives are not put into danger," Burns said. Burns also said the particulars of the incident are under investigation by the UN military authorities in Korea. Burns concluded by acknowledging that the US had been in touch with DPRK officials about the incident, adding, "I don't want to go into our conversations with the North Koreans. But you can be assured that we communicated our deep concern about this incident to North Korea."

US Presidential Press Secretary Mike McCurry ("WHITE HOUSE DAILY BRIEFING, WEDNESDAY, JULY 16," USIA Transcript, 7/16/97), asked whether the DPRK-ROK border skirmish might derail the upcoming peace talks, replied, "I think, to the contrary, the administration believes that the continuing status of ongoing hostility absent a peace agreement between the two Koreas is precisely the reason why the President and the President of the Republic of Korea advanced the proposal for four-party talks. We hope that the dialogue that we are seeking to foster will create a more secure, safer, more peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula. That's the answer to incidents such as the one that has occurred."

2. DPRK Famine Situation

The Associated Press ("AID WORKER: N. KOREA HUNGER GROWS," Beijing, 7/16/97) reported that Kathi Zellweger of the Roman Catholic charity Caritas said Wednesday that the number of North Korean children dying from acute food shortages is growing and the malnutrition rate has more than doubled over the past three months. Zellweger, who returned Tuesday from the DPRK, said 800,000 children are considered malnourished and 80,000 suffer severe malnutrition. She added that DPRK officials told her the rate of malnutrition among children under age 6 has climbed from 16 percent in April to 37 percent today. "Officials are having a very, very hard time," Zellweger said. "First, they feel ashamed about the situation, that this is happening to their country, and second, they don't know what to do." Zellweger said officials reported hunger was claiming more lives. "Everywhere we went, they confirmed an increase," she said. Zellweger said she visited towns on the east and west coasts of the country, as well as the capital, Pyongyang, and showed photographs of children with stick-like limbs, saying they lacked the energy even to stand. A colleague told her that he hadn't seen children in such poor condition since the Ethiopian famine in the mid-1980s, she said. "Some of the kids we saw were in a state that I felt if aid doesn't go in, they will not survive," Zellweger said. "We are moving into a very, very serious situation if we don't help them now," she said.

3. US MIAs in DPRK

The Associated Press ("U.S. TEAM TO SEARCH KOREA FOR MIAS," Washington, 7/15/97) reported that US Defense Department officials announced that a ten-member team of US government officials arrived in the DPRK on Tuesday to begin searching for remains of US servicemen killed in the 1950-53 Korean War. The officials, in a joint operation with DPRK authorities, will first set up a base camp in Unsan County, in the northwest corner of the country, from which suspected burial sites will be surveyed and eventually excavated. The operation is expected to last until August 3. Several hundred US servicemen are known to have been killed in fierce fighting in Unsan County after PRC troops entered the war in November 1950. In talks in May, the DPRK agreed in principle to allow three recovery operations this year, and the US agreed to pay US\$316,500 as reimbursement for DPRK expenses such as food and fuel. Last month details of the operations were worked out in talks in New York. [Ed. note: See also "Searches for US MIA Remains" in the June 30 Daily Report.]

4. Cambodia Coup

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JULY 16, 1997," USIA Transcript, 7/16/97) stated that the US is "very deeply troubled by these reports of the executions. We're deeply concerned about the reports of the executions" in Cambodia in the wake of the apparent coup by Hun Sen. Asked if the reports affected US policy toward Hun Sen's government, Burns said, "I wouldn't say we support Hun Sen in any way. It's not a question of being less supportive or more supportive. We certainly don't support what he has done in usurping power. We certainly reject the actions of executing people, arresting them, intimidating them, threatening Prince Ranariddh." Burns added that the US is also "very concerned" about Hun Sen's announcement that Prince Ranariddh would be replaced as first prime minister by the current foreign minister, Ung Huot. "We recognize Prince Ranariddh to be first prime minister because he was elected to that position by the Cambodian people," Burns said. However, Burns said the US is likely to resume humanitarian aid after a suspension of 30 days, despite calls from within Congress that financial help should be eliminated. "I think that we are inclined here to try to continue humanitarian programs that clearly benefit average people like the de-mining activities, like the people-to-people programs on HIV prevention and the maternal and child care. But ... if there are programs that Hun Sen is clearly now benefiting from, I am not sure those programs have a good chance of continuing. ... We don't want to penalize the Cambodian people because of Hun Sen's deplorable behavior."

The Associated Press ("U.S. WON'T RECOGNIZE HUN SEN," Washington, 7/16/97) reported Burns' comments, and also reported that Representative Doug Bereuter, R-Neb., chairing a US House International Relations subcommittee hearing on Cambodia, alleged that the US administration is violating the law by not halting aid to Cambodia until democracy is restored. A US funding cutoff law is triggered by a coup, but the State Department has refused to apply that label. "I think the administration is playing word games with us, but a coup has taken place," an angry Bereuter declared at the hearing. Aurelia Brazeal, assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs, replied that the government is more focused on protecting US citizens and ending turmoil in Cambodia than in name-calling. "We were more interested in stopping that (violence) than in labeling it," Brazeal said. She said calling it a coup "ends options" for diplomatic measures seeking to restore the previous government.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK to Assess Readiness Against DPRK

The ROK government decided yesterday to establish a special provisional body under the auspices of the Defense Ministry to ensure defensive preparedness against potential military aggressions by the DPRK. The ad hoc group will assess military, government, and civilian readiness against possible DPRK aircraft, artillery and chemical weapon attacks on Seoul and surrounding cities. The decision to implement the special body was prompted after DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop warned that Pyongyang had completed preparations to invade the ROK. The group, after thorough investigations, will submit its observations and recommendations to Prime Minister Koh Kun in order to help the government improve overall defense readiness. (Korea Herald, "AD HOC BODY ESTABLISHED TO CHECK DEFENSE SYSTEM IN CAPITAL AREAS," 07/16/97)

2. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Food Aid Talks

The DPRK's Red Cross Society has accepted the ROK's proposal to meet for what will be the third inter-Korean Red Cross talks on aid. The ROK's Korean National Red Cross (KNRC) yesterday said it received a telephone message from its DPRK counterpart accepting the KNRC's July 15 proposal to meet for discussions on food, medical, and agricultural aid to the impoverished DPRK. "I accept that the two Red Cross societies will meet again, but as it will be an extension of the last talks, it is

appropriate that we meet in Beijing July 23," Ri Sung-ho, chief of the DPRK Red Cross said in the telephone message. The last two rounds of inter-Korean Red Cross talks were held in Beijing at the request of Pyongyang. (Korea Herald, "DPRK RED CROSS ACCEPTS SEOUL'S OFFER TO MEET," 07/16/97)

3. ROK Protests Against DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal

ROK environmentalists yesterday angrily reacted to a recent report that Taiwan has initially approved shipments of nuclear waste to the DPRK. "Taiwan's move to approve the shipment plan is to abandon its membership in the international community," said a statement by a coalition of ROK environmental groups. The statement came after a Taiwanese local newspaper reported that Taiwan's Atomic Energy Council (AEC) praised the DPRK for willingly agreeing to take the waste. Taiwan reportedly plans to export up to 200,000 drums of radioactive waste to the DPRK which is in dire need of cash. The United Daily News reported that Taiwan will give the final go-ahead after further "substantive" checks on the DPRK's storage sites. ROK environmentalists called on Taiwan to withdraw its shipping plan, and comply with the UN principle which recommends that radioactive waste should be disposed of within its own country. The coalition of ROK environmental groups said it will hold a massive protest rally in central Seoul today to denounce the AEC's recent moves. Campaigns against Taiwan will also include a large-scale maritime protest to discourage ships carrying nuclear waste. ROK environmentalists said that they will seek help in deterring the controversial shipping plan by visits to PRC and Japanese embassies in Seoul. (Korea Herald, "ENVIRONMENTALISTS PROTEST TAIWAN'S NUKE WASTE EXPORT," 07/16/97)

4. ROK-Russia Hot Line to be Installed

Cabinet ministers of both the ROK and the RF governments yesterday resolved an accord on the installation of a hot line between the Chong Wa Dae (the Blue House) in Seoul and Moscow's Kremlin. The direct connection is the third one to be established between the ROK and another nation, following the ROK-US (July 1993) and the ROK-Japan (November 1993) lines. Its installation signifies diversification of the nation's foreign policy between the four superpowers, which surround the Korean peninsula and wield influence on the political situation. (Joong-ang Ilbo, "HOT-LINE BETWEEN CHONG WA DAE, KREMLIN TO BE INSTALLED," 07/16/97)

5. Japan's Defense Agency White Paper

Worried about the PRC's military build-up, the Japanese Defense Agency said Tuesday in its annual defense white paper that it will pay close attention to China's efforts to upgrade the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The PLA, shifting from its earlier doctrine of the "People's War," underwent a series of modernization programs during the late 1980s to "prepare for regional wars and borders, territorial water disputes," the report said. Regarding the PRC's military exercise aimed at Taiwan in March 1996, the agency said "Beijing's military maneuver had meant to seek understanding of its Taiwan policy from the international community." The Japanese agency called on China to be more transparent with its defense policy and expressed its objection to their concealment of military equipment. The PRC has also stepped up foreign policy in Asia, the report noted, citing Premier Li Peng's visit to Vietnam and Jiang's meeting with then Indian prime minister H.D. Deve Gowda, which resulted in the signing of a border agreement. According to the report, the Japanese government is also concerned with the DPRK development of Scud missiles and the suspicion that Pyongyang might possess nuclear weapons. Tokyo called Pyongyang's missile development and its nuclear weapons potential a "main destabilizing cause that is a potential threat not only in Asia but also in the international community." DPRK's Nodong-1 missile is said to be capable of hitting Japan and Pyongyang plans to develop a new model that would have a longer range, the agency said. Despite scarce information on the situation in the DPRK, the report maintained that "Japan must pay very

close attention to Pyongyang's maneuvers." (Korea Times, "JAPAN TO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO CHINA, NK'S MILITARY BUILD-UPS," 07/16/97) [Ed. note: See also "Japanese Defense White Paper" in the US section of the July 15 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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