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I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

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analyst at the Tokyo-based Radiopress news agency, which monitors the DPRK's official media, commented, "If 500,000 or 2 million people had actually died, North Korea would undoubtedly use the fact for its appeal for emergency international aid."

US State Department Deputy Spokesman James Foley ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, SEPTEMBER 16," USIA Transcript, 9/16/97), asked to comment on media reports of deepening famine in the DPRK, stated that, due to its "lack of a diplomatic presence in North Korea," the US continues to "rely heavily on international relief organizations for their assessments" of current conditions. Regarding provisions of additional aid, Foley stated, "We remain, I think, ready to respond appropriately and positively to future requests from international relief organizations."

3. US Position on Landmine Ban

Reuters ("ANTI-LANDMINE CONFERENCE OKS 24-HOUR DELAY," Oslo, 9/16/97) reported that the US, in a last-ditch bid to persuade more than 100 countries to accept a compromise it has proposed at the Oslo conference negotiating a treaty to ban landmines globally, on Tuesday gained a 24-hour delay in the treaty's final adoption. The text of the draft treaty was handed to delegates last Friday for consideration over the weekend. Unwilling to sign that draft, the US over the weekend offered an alternative that would add several escape clauses to the treaty, including one that would allow the US to continue using landmines on the Korean peninsula for nine more years. "The US government is engaged at the very highest levels with officials of other governments exploring the possibilities of a compromise," a US delegate told the conference. "I believe it is only reasonable to allow these 24 hours to see if these efforts can be successful," he said. In Ottawa, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, a prime advocate of a landmine ban, said Tuesday that after two overnight phone calls with President Clinton he detected movement in Washington's position. "They have moved a lot. Have they moved enough to meet the demands of the participants in the Oslo negotiations? I don't know. I am more confident this morning than I was yesterday evening," Chretien told reporters.

US President Bill Clinton ("WHITE HOUSE REPORT, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1997," USIA Transcript, 9/16/97), leaving the White House late in the afternoon of September 16, replied to a reporter's question as to whether his administration has changed its position on a global landmine ban treaty. Clinton stated: "No, I'm not changing my policy on land mines. I have been working very hard to try to reach agreement with the parties in Oslo. But I would like to remind everybody here of a few facts. I believe that I was the first world leader to call for an end to the land mines that are killing so many innocent people around the world. The United States does not produce, sell or deploy these mines, and we are destroying them. With the single exception of Korea -- everyone in the world recognizes that Korea is a special problem because of the number of North Korean troops that are very close to Seoul. And we have been working with the people in Oslo to try to get an extended period of time to deal with that. Now, there is another issue that relates to our antitank mines, which are slightly different from other countries, which also involve destruction devices that automatically go dead within a matter of hours or days. We're trying to work through these things. But the United States has done more than any other country to bring an end to land mines. We have spent \$150 million in the last four years in de-mining work. We are missing an airplane off the coast of Africa that deposited a de-mining team in Africa to continue this work. So we have not taken a back seat to anyone. But we have to make sure that our fundamental responsibilities through the United Nations for Korea, and to our own troops in terms of antitank mines -- which are legal under this treaty -- can be maintained. And we're working on it. I don't want to discuss the state of play because I'm not quite sure what it is. But we have another day or so to try to work through this. The United States would like to be a signatory to this agreement, but I have to be sure that we can fulfill our responsibilities and protect our troops."

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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