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I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks Meeting Postponed

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA WANTS DELAY IN TALKS," New York, 4/18/97) reported that the DPRK on Friday delayed the resumption of talks with US and ROK officials to discuss the proposed four-party peace talks. The parties were to meet Friday to continue discussion begun in a meeting Wednesday, but the DPRK delegation repeatedly asked for postponements Friday and then asked the ROK delegation to remain in New York one more day. "North Korea simply told us to wait," said a ROK official who had been scheduled to return home Friday and spoke on condition of anonymity. "They said they did not get instructions yet from Pyongyang. They did not know when they would get instructions. They asked us to stay one more night." After consulting with the US, the ROK delegation decided to comply. Earlier, a US official said the delay was not necessarily an indication of a major problem. "We understand they are consulting with their capital and that is not inconsistent with diplomatic negotiations," a State Department official said, also on condition of anonymity. The talks Wednesday reportedly ended mired in debate over conditions for additional food aid, and by the DPRK's request for assurances that the future peace talks would take up the withdrawal of US troops from the divided Korean peninsula.

2. Meeting Postponement and DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("N.KOREA DELAYS TALKS," Washington, 4/18/97) reported that the DPRK's decision to delay the scheduled meeting in New York Friday may have been a response to the U

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I. United States

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2. Meeting Postponement and DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("N.KOREA DELAYS TALKS," Washington, 4/18/97) reported that the DPRK's decision to delay the scheduled meeting in New York Friday may have been a response to the US refusal to consider new demands for additional food shipments. US and ROK officials say the DPRK made the request during Wednesday's meeting in New York as a quid pro quo for participation in the proposed peace talks. [Ed. note: Please see the following item.]

Reuters ("NO NEW U.S. AID SEEN FOR N. KOREA," Washington, 4/18/97) reported that US officials said Thursday that no new US food aid pledges are expected before the DPRK responds conclusively to the proposal for four-party peace talks. The officials said that the DPRK began Wednesday's meeting by essentially accepting the joint US-ROK proposal but then tied that acceptance to a new demand for international assistance to meet severe food shortages. As a result, "we don't have a deal," one official said Thursday. Another official said the US worked hard to avoid being put in a position where food aid was seen as a reward for the DPRK's acceptance of the peace talks proposal. Washington sped normal bureaucratic procedures to announce an extra US\$15 million in assistance last Monday. "My expectation is that sooner or later the North Koreans are going to feel they accomplished their first priority: They sensitized the outside world to their needs ... and they will turn to the question of peace talks and give a response. I'm still expecting that response will be favorable," the official said.

3. DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("U.S. URGED TO DROP N.KOREA DEMANDS," Washington, 4/18/97) reported that seventeen US humanitarian aid agencies said in a joint declaration Thursday that statements by senior US officials had raised concerns that the Clinton administration was hesitating to ship the food aid in hopes that the food crisis would prompt major policy changes by the DPRK. The groups urged the administration to drop demands for concessions from the DPRK and ship massive food aid to curb starvation there. "It is clear from the statements ... and from the administration's limited response to the food crisis that it is trying to use famine as a weapon to extract from the North Korean regime concessions which would entail fundamental changes in its military and economic policies," the declaration said. "While these changes are highly desirable, vulnerable groups within the North Korean population should not be held hostage by the US administration to the questionable willingness of the North Korean government to undertake fundamental changes," the declaration continued. The declaration urged the administration to "immediately initiate large scale shipments of emergency food to the people of North Korea without further attempts to extract concessions from North Korean authorities." The groups included Save the Children, Lutheran World Relief, Catholic Relief Services and Food for the Hungry.

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA MAY AID NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 4/18/97) reported that the ROK Red Cross proposed urgent cross-border talks Friday on aid to the DPRK. Because the ROK Red Cross is closely linked to the government, sending aid through the organization indicates that the ROK government may hope to ease the DPRK food crisis without being seen as weakening its policy of making no political concessions. In the message to his DPRK counterpart, ROK Red Cross chief Kang Young-hoon suggested a meeting at the border village of Panmunjon "at the earliest possible date." Because the DPRK rejected similar proposals in 1995 and 1996, its acceptance of the proposal would mark a significant change in its approach to relations with the ROK. In the past, the DPRK has shunned direct talks with the ROK, accusing it of being a US puppet.

The USIA (Wendy Lubetkin, "UN FOOD PROGRAM SAYS NORTH KOREA IS ON THE 'VERGE OF FAMINE'," 4/18/97) reported that United Nations World Food Program (WFP) spokesperson Christiane Berthiaume told a briefing in Geneva that the DPRK is on the "verge of famine," and that the WFP is appealing to the international community for additional funds to send food in as rapidly as possible. Up to the present, WFP says it has only received US\$34 million in response to its most recent US\$95 million appeal for food assistance. "Time is really running out," Berthiaume said. "We need funds and food rapidly to respond to the needs of the population because we believe North Korea is on the verge of famine." Pyongyang is now telling WFP its food supplies are likely to run out before the end of the month. "We need funds as quickly as possible if we want to avoid a catastrophe," Berthiaume said. "The population is only receiving about 100 grams of rice a day per person, that's not much," she said, pointing out that in better times, the government was able to distribute 450 grams of rice each day. Berthiaume said that funds WFP has received from the United States, European Union and others will allow it to distribute more than 60,000 tons of food in May, but that this is not enough to feed the 4.7 million people affected by the looming food shortfall. WFP estimates this year's shortage at 1.8 to 2.3 million metric tons of food.

4. US Ratification of Chemical Weapons Convention

The Associated Press ("SENATE TO VOTE ON WEAPONS TREATY," Washington, 4/18/97) reported that the full US Senate will vote on the chemical weapons treaty on April 24, just five days before the treaty takes effect. Agreement to bring the treaty to a vote came after hard-fought negotiations between Republican leaders and the Clinton administration. However, the Senate also will consider five amendments the administration says would kill US participation in the treaty. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., said today there is a 50-50 chance the treaty will pass. "Clearly, this is not in the bag yet. We've got a long way to go, and I'm very concerned about it," Daschle said. The Senate must support the treaty by a two-thirds majority to ratify it, but a simple majority vote of the Senate would be required to remove each amendment. Both President Clinton, the treaty's leading salesman, and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms, R-N.C., its most ardent foe, hailed the Senate decision finally to vote on the pact, four years after it was submitted. "These important developments reflect widespread, bipartisan and growing support for the Chemical Weapons Convention," said Clinton, who has enlisted the support of former Republican presidents, the military and a long list of prominent figures. Helms saw it differently, having lifted his objections to a ratification vote because the Senate agreed to vote on five key objections he has inserted into the ratification legislation. "The way the resolution now reads, the senator could vote for it tomorrow," said Helms spokesman Marc Thiessen.

II. Republic of Korea

1. US-DPRK Diplomatic Ties

The DPRK is seeking diplomatic recognition from the US as a prerequisite to starting negotiations on a Korean peace treaty. Pyongyang made the demand during talks with US and ROK officials in New

York earlier this week when they discussed proposed four-way peace talks involving the three countries as well as the PRC, the Yomiuri Shimbun said Friday. The mass-circulation daily, quoting ROK sources, said vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan, head of the DPRK delegation, was quoted as saying that Pyongyang's position in the proposed dialogue was not "level" as it only had diplomatic ties with the PRC while the remaining three parties had formal ties with each other. The US and ROK officials refrained from making an immediate reply to the demand, saying the issue should be left to bilateral discussions, the sources said. The officials also told the DPRK side that the four-way talks should focus on establishing a peace treaty that would formally end the 1950-53 Korean War. (Korea Herald, "NK SEEKS DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH US AS PREREQUISITE TO STARTING PEACE TREATY," 04/18/97)

2. Korea After Unification

Korea will likely face a domestic grain shortage, which is projected to reach some 20 million tons, after reunification. The forecast by the Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI), which released an estimate of the DPRK's grain production figure for 1996 yesterday, indicates that since the diet of DPRK citizens would quickly match that of ROK citizens, grain demand in the DPRK is expected to reach around 11.3 million tons per annum, five million tons more than last year's grain requirement. Considering that the ROK imports 14 million tons of grains a year, post-reunification Korea will have to purchase about 20 million tons from abroad. The DPRK's 1996 demand forecast for rice and other agricultural products was based on its population and standard of living as well as the per capita grain consumption recorded for the ROK, the KREI report said. According to the report, the DPRK could have met its demand for rice and other grains last year, but its inadequate level of cultivation technology at its collective farms kept agricultural productivity to only 40 percent of its requirement of about six million tons of grain. (Korea Herald, "KOREA LIKELY TO FACE GRAIN SHORTAGE AFTER UNIFICATION," 04/18/97)

3. ROK Food Aid to DPRK

Seoul yesterday proposed to Pyongyang to hold a meeting between Red Cross representatives to discuss how to smooth the path of grain aid to the DPRK, including the possible passage of relief goods through the truce village of Panmunjom. In a phone message delivered to the DPRK, the ROK National Red Cross (KNRC) called for a meeting between secretary generals of the two Red Cross societies at the earliest possible date in Panmunjom. "It is an encouraging sign that the North Korean side received a phone message from us. So far, we sent messages to North Korea indirectly via a radio broadcast because it refused to accept our phone messages," a KNRC spokesman said. The DPRK side last accepted a phone message from the South on Sep . 17 last year, regarding a possible meeting between the respective Red Cross chiefs to ensure grain deliveries. So far, the KNRC, designated by the government as the only channel of aid delivery, sent 15 batches of relief goods including wheat flour and blankets to the DPRK, worth 3.2 billion won, via the International Federation of the Red Cross. The KNRC spokesman said that, since the lifting of the government ban on rice aid to the DPRK on March 31, more and more ROK individuals and organizations have been joining the humanitarian efforts. However, the spokesman cautioned against donating domestically-produced rice to the Red Cross because the government allows only the shipment of foreign-produced rice to the DPRK due to Seoul's dwindling rice reserves and other political reasons. (Korea Times, "SEOUL PROPOSES RED CROSS TALKS FOR FOOD AID," 04/18/97)

4. Hwang Defection: ROK Opposition Party Remarks

Kim Jong-pil, president of the ROK United Liberal Democrats (ULD), said yesterday that the government should not regard DPRK Workers' Party secretary Hwang Jang-yop as a "hero." Pointing out the DPRK defector was the inventor of the "juche" (self-reliance ideology of Kim Il-sung) and is

responsible for the internal war, Kim claimed that he should never be forgiven unconditionally. "We have to receive his apology first at least," the minor opposition party leader stressed. "Not to mention his apology to the nation for what he did in the past, he must tell every information about North Korea (to authorities), thus helping prevent a war (on the Korean peninsula)," he said. (Korea Times, "HWANG JANG-YOP SHOULD APOLOGIZE FOR KOREAN WAR: KIM JP," 04/18/97)

5. PRC Denies Buying of DPRK Missile Secrets

A senior PRC official strongly denied Thursday that DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop had sold military secrets to Beijing. "That is utter nonsense. There is nothing to be said about this question. It's nonsense," Vice Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan told AFP in this mountain resort in the eastern province of Anhui where he is chairing a top-level meeting between the PRC and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). A Philippines newspaper on Wednesday quoted an intelligence source as saying Hwang had sold blueprints for two missile systems to the PRC, four months before his defection on Feb. 12 to the ROK embassy in Beijing. Asked whether any decision had been taken as to how long Hwang would remain in the Philippines, Tang indicated that Beijing was no longer directly involved in the defection. However, Philippine foreign undersecretary Rodolfo Severino said that Hwang could stay "a few weeks or a few months" in the Philippines. (Korea Times, "CHINA DENIES BUYING NK MISSILE SECRETS," 04/18/97)

6. ROK Courts Upholds Sentence for Ex-Presidents

Rejecting the appeals by two former ROK Presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, who were convicted of mutiny, treason, and corruption, the Supreme Court yesterday upheld the lower court's sentences of life imprisonment for Chun and 17 years in prison for Roh. The highest court also upheld the fines imposed by the High Court, 220.5 billion won for Chun and 262.8 billion won for Roh. The fines match the amount the two former Presidents were found to have received from businessmen during their presidency. The Supreme Court also confirmed the lower court's not-guilty ruling on defendant Park Joon-byong as well as the 8 year prison sentence and 7 year prison sentence for Hwang Young-shi and Chung Ho-yong for their roles in the 1979 military coup and the 1980 crackdown on Kwangju pro-democracy protesters. Joong Ang Ilbo, "SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS LIFE SENTENCE FOR CHUN, 17 YEAR TERM FOR ROH," 04/18/97)

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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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