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I. United States

1a. Hwang Defection: DPRK Position Shift

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA EASES UP ON DEFECTOR," Beijing, 2/18/97) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, in an apparent reference to Hwang Jang-yop, who sought asylum in the ROK consulate in Beijing last week, said Tuesday in statement read on a domestic radio broadcast monitored in Tokyo that "cowards" who wanted to leave the country should go ahead and do so. "As the revolutionary song says, Cowards, Leave If You Want To! We will defend the red flag of revolution to the bitter end," Kim said. Kim's statement came just one day after the DPRK indicated it could accept Hwang's defection, and also appears to be the first official comment by Kim that could be construed as touching on the incident. However, the statement did not specifically mention Hwang and was not personally read by Kim. Shinya Kato, an editor at Radio Press, the monitoring service that reported the remarks, said the broadcast likely was aimed at the few high-ranking officials in the DPRK who may have learned of Hwang's apparent defection. "It can be seen as a warning," Kato said. Kato noted, however, that the vast majority of DPRK citizens have no knowledge of Hwang's apparent defection.

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The Associated Press ("N. KOREA EASES UP ON DEFECTOR," Beijing, 2/18/97) reported that the ROK on Tuesday said it believes the DPRK's statements Monday concerning the apparent defection of Hwang Jang-yop indicate that the DPRK would assent to Hwang's defection if convinced he had fled willingly. On Monday, the DPRK Foreign Ministry issued a statement through the DPRK's official news agency that said, in reference to Hwang, "If he was kidnapped, we cannot tolerate and we will take decisive countermeasures. If he sought asylum, it means that he is a renegade and he is dismissed." On Tuesday, ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-na told reporters in Seoul, "There appears to be a big change in North Korea's position, which we'll check through appropriate channels." Yoo added, "If it wants, North Korea can participate in a process to confirm his intention to defect."

1b. Hwang Defection: PRC Position

Reuters ("CHINA URGES CALM IN KOREA DEFECTOR STANDOFF," Beijing, 2/18/97) and The Associated Press ("N. KOREA EASES UP ON DEFECTOR," Beijing, 2/18/97) reported that the PRC on Tuesday again appealed for calm in the defection crisis as signs emerged that the two Korean states might be following this advice. Sources in Beijing, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the PRC refused to discuss Hwang's case with the DPRK until they made a conciliatory gesture demonstrating their willingness to deal with the issue through diplomatic channels. Western diplomats said that a meeting between the DPRK ambassador and PRC Foreign Ministry officials apparently produced Monday's shift in Pyongyang's tone and position and the withdrawal of DPRK agents who had been keeping a round-the-clock vigil at the ROK consulate since Hwang arrived. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Tang Guoqiang would not comment on the status of the talks Tuesday. ROK officials said talks continued with Beijing over Hwang's fate. Meanwhile, the PRC sent three armored personnel carriers to reinforce approaches to the ROK consulate in Beijing. The deployment, part of heightened security precautions more generally, suggested that PRC authorities did not fully believe that the DPRK had relaxed its position. However, some interpreted the deployment as a possible sign of preparations to move Hwang, which would indicate progress in negotiations.

1c. Hwang Defection: New York Times Analysis

Andrew Pollack wrote in The New York Times ("ANALYSIS: ALLIED FRICTION IN KOREA," Seoul, 2/18/97) that DPRK ideologue Hwang Jong-yap's apparent defection and the subsequent shooting of past DPRK defector Lee Han-young outside his apartment building in Seoul not only have again increased tensions between the two Koreas, but also threaten to deepen the friction between the ROK and the US. Pollack wrote that the central issue -- whether the events of the past week should be allowed to delay efforts to provide aid to the DPRK and build a permanent peace on the Korean peninsula -- is familiar. In recent years, the US has pursued a policy of engagement with the DPRK, seeing this as the way to end the latter's isolation and reduce the risk of a war. ROK leaders have tended to view this policy as naive appeasement of a communist government that cannot be trusted, believing that the DPRK's economic woes provide leverage to drive a harder bargain. The ROK has only reluctantly accepted US initiatives, such as the proposed four-party peace talks. Pollack wrote, "While publicly in agreement on how to deal with North Korea, Washington and Seoul have for three years been squabbling under the surface. At times it has seemed that US relations with South Korea were worse than with North Korea." Pollack noted that the divergence of views is sure to be on the agenda when new US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright arrives in the ROK on Saturday on a previously scheduled visit.

2. Analysis of DPRK Economic Situation

Tad Szulc wrote in The Los Angeles Times ("FAMINE MAKES CAPITALISM NO LONGER A 4-LETTER WORD," Washington, 2/16/97) that DPRK initiatives for investments at the recent World Economic Forum conference symbolize an intensive policy struggle going on in Pyongyang over how to relate to the capitalist world economy. Kim Jong U, who chairs the DPRK Committee for Promotion of External Economic Cooperation, outlined the benefits of investing in the Rajin-Sonbong Free Economic Trade Zone. Kim's high visibility at the conference, Szulc wrote, suggested that "moderates" in Pyongyang may still hold the upper hand over hard-liners, who oppose all contacts with the outside world and advocate the self-sufficiency represented by longtime DPRK leader Kim Il-sung, who died in 1994, and crafted by Hwang Jang-yop, now seeking asylum in Beijing. Hwang's apparent defection, Szulc wrote, "raises the question of whether a major reshuffling of personnel has begun in Pyongyang." Szulc quoted Selig S. Harrison, a US expert on the DPRK, as saying that "within the regime, there is an intense policy conflict between an orthodox old guard and a younger

generation of reform-minded pragmatists with greater cosmopolitan exposure," and that Kim Il-sung's son and de facto DPRK leader Kim Jong-il "plays a mediating role but is generally identified with the pragmatists." However, Szulc wrote, the approaching exhaustion of food supplies in the DPRK may mean that time has run out for strategies of economic improvement depending on foreign investments. Pragmatists are caught in a bind, threatened by hard-liners if they cannot deliver food but at the same time undermining the prospects for food aid by holding up political progress with the US and the ROK in its absence. "All this has produced a dangerous stalemate," Szulc wrote. "Put another way, 24 million people are being held hostage to Pyongyang and Washington politics. Should the food crisis and its attendant consequences be eliminated, relations between North Korea and the rest of the world could become more flexible," Szulc concluded. [Ed. note: Tad Szulc chaired the North Korean Discussion Panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.]

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of [other NAPSNet resources](#).

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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