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3. Alleged DPRK Grain Shipments to Japan
4. Alleged DPRK Plot of Hwang Assassination

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DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency that the US action raised suspicion over US intentions at the preliminary peace talks next month. The US "slandered the DPRK, alleging that the responsibility for the recent incident rests with the DPRK," said the spokesman, who was not identified in the statement. The US-led UN Command lodged a complaint Thursday with the DPRK, accusing it of an armistice violation. The DPRK refused to accept the written protest letter. [Ed. note: see item below.]

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US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JULY 17, 1997," USIA Transcript, 7/18/97) commented Thursday on the DPRK-ROK border skirmish at a central portion of the demilitarized zone. Burns stated, "If there's any lesson here, it is that the North Koreans should adhere to the armistice agreement. If there is another lesson, it is that we should get on with the four-party talks so that we can create the basis for a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. The United States fully, obviously, supports forward movement on the four-party talks. We will have a meeting on August 5th in New York -- a preparatory meeting which for the first time will include China, and we are looking forward to that meeting." Asked about the effect of the skirmish on the upcoming four-party talks preliminary meeting, Burns replied, "It will not affect our own intention to go to New York on August 5th and to negotiate and discuss seriously the four-party talks proposal. We think we should go on with that because that is in our best interest and the best interest of the Korean people -- the people of South Korea and North Korea." Burns added that the US expects all parties to the talks to attend.

US Defense Department Spokesman Mike Doubleday ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 7/18/97) commented Thursday on the DPRK-ROK border skirmish at a central portion of the demilitarized zone. Doubleday stated, "Let me just point out that the United Nations Command filed a protest yesterday based on the results of a United Nations Command Joint

Observer Team/Special Investigation Team's review of this incident. The review determined that the Korean People's Army had committed an armistice agreement violation. The KPA delegation at Panmunjom informed the UN delegation that it did not accept the protest. That is what has happened since. I want to go on, however, to say that any exchange of gunfire within the DMZ is a matter of serious concern due to the potential for the situation to spiral out of control." Doubleday added, "We are calling on the North Koreans to adhere to the procedures which guard the military armistice agreement. This incident emphasizes the importance of moving forward on the four-party talks to move from the armistice to a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula." Asked if the incident was precipitated deliberately by the DPRK to bolster domestic support, Doubleday replied, "I can't characterize for you exactly what this is other than to say that there have been no further incidents since this one."

2. DPRK-ROK Food Aid Talks

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("RED CROSS OF TWO KOREAS TO MEET NEXT WEEK TO TALK FOOD AID," Seoul, 7/17/97) reported that ROK Red Cross officials agreed Friday to meet their DPRK counterparts next week for new food aid talks. The ROK accepted the DPRK demand that the talks take place in Beijing on Wednesday, giving up on their hopes to meet at the Korean border. "It is desirable that the meeting take place in Korea, but taking your position into consideration, we agreed to meet with you in Beijing," Kang Young-hoon, head of the ROK Red Cross Society, said in a telephone message to the DPRK.

3. Alleged DPRK Grain Shipments to Japan

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JULY 18, 1997," USIA Transcript, 7/18/97) commented Friday on reports that the DPRK has exported grain to Japan that it had received from the PRC as food aid. Burns stated, "This is an important question. We have seen different reports in this matter. An early report said that the corn came from North Korea. A later report quoted a source as saying that the grain was a commercial transshipment from China through a North Korean port to Japan, rather than the export of food aid that North Korea had received from China. I know that both Japanese and South Korean authorities are looking into this matter. I have to refer you to them. We remain very confident that our food aid makes sense; that it is going to be delivered through the World Food Program which has expanded the number of monitors to 30; and that our food aid will arrive where it should arrive -- that is to help little kids and the elderly overcome the effects of famine in North Korea." [Ed. note: See related items in the ROK and Japan sections, below.]

4. Alleged DPRK Plot of Hwang Assassination

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA TIGHTENS SECURITY," Seoul, 7/18/97) reported that ROK police said Thursday that they had tightened security after an intelligence report that the DPRK is attempting to assassinate a high-ranking DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop. Police stepped up security at air and sea ports and were watching for two suspected assassins allegedly sent by the DPRK, officials said on condition of anonymity. [Ed. note: See related item in the ROK section, below.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Border Skirmish

Analysts in Seoul portrayed the incursion by DPRK troops into the ROK side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) Wednesday as an example of Pyongyang's tactic of trying to improve its position through heightening tensions. They said the fact the fourteen DPRK troops who crossed the border

ignored loudspeaker warnings and warning shots from ROK troops showed that the incident was a deliberate provocation by the DPRK. The DPRK seemed "eager to cause trouble with the ROK" since their guard post countered the ROK's warning shots with mortar rounds and heavy machine-gun fire, the analysts said. Such motives contrast the conciliatory mood recently shown by the DPRK on a range of issues, including agreement last month to come to a preparatory meeting for proposed four-way peace talks with the ROK, the US and the PRC in New York August 5. Former US Ambassador to the ROK James Laney and former US Senator Sam Nunn are also still expected to visit Pyongyang soon. (Korea Herald, Kim Kyung-ho, "DMZ INCIDENT ANOTHER DPRK BID TO IMPROVE ITS POSITION," 07/18/97)

US funding for the construction of DPRK nuclear reactors could be barred under a rider bill passed by the US Senate on Wednesday. The measure, a direct response to the recent DMZ firefight, would deny US$14 million in US funds to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) until Secretary of State Madeleine Albright certifies that the DPRK has not violated the Military Armistice Agreement of 1953 during the last nine months. The amendment was attached to a foreign aid bill that still awaits final Senate approval. "If there was ever a case of a recipient biting the hand that feeds it, it is North Korea." said Republican Senator Frank Murkowski, who sponsored the amendment, which passed overwhelmingly in a voice vote. "I think we should be outraged at the DPRK's continued belligerent actions that are clearly designed to intimidate. The South Koreans did nothing wrong today, unless you think defending one's borders and shooting in self-defense is wrong," Murkowski continued. (Korea Times, "US SENATE PLACES CONDITIONS ON FUNDS FOR N. KOREAN NUCLEAR REACTORS," 07/18/97)

The White House said Wednesday that the DMZ firefight underscored the need to push ahead with peace talks. "[The] 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," spokesman Michael McCurry said. "We hope that the dialogue that we are seeking to foster will create amore secure, safer, more peaceful environment on the Korean peninsula. That's the answer to incidents such as the one that's occurred," McCurry said. (Korea Times, "KOREAN FIREFIGHT UNDERSCORES NEED FOR PEACE TALKS: US," 07/18/97) [Ed. note: For excerpts from the US Presidential statement, see "DPRK-ROK Border Skirmish" in the US section of the July 16 Daily Report.]

ROK and DPRK soldiers exchanged light artillery and rifle fire yesterday in the Demilitarized Zone after a group of armed DPRK soldiers violated the border. No ROK casualties were reported, but a hardened bunker in the DMZ was partially damaged in a 23-minute exchange of fire, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. It was the first time in years that the DPRK fired mortar and anti-tank shells against ROK soldiers at the DMZ, though they often fire rifle shots, a JCS spokesman said. After the incident, the JCS ordered Army units along the heavily fortified buffer zone to step up defense postures against additional DPRK provocation. The fire fight broke out after at least seven DPRK army soldiers crossed the Military Demarcation Line (MDL), the center line of the four-kilomete--wide buffer zone, in the mountainous Chorwon, Kangwon Province area at 10:57 a.m. Using loudspeakers, ROK guards repeatedly warned the intruding troops to return to the DPRK side. After the DPRK soldiers ignored the warning and proceeded some 70 meters south of the MDL, ROK soldiers fired about 200 warning shots in the air with K-2 rifles at 11:02 am. At 11:03 a.m., DPRK troops in two DMZ guard posts some 1.3 km to 2.5 km away, fired about 80 aimed rifle and machine gun shots at two ROK guard posts. In response to machine gun fire by ROK guards, the DPRK fired two 82-mm anti-tank recoilless cannon shells and a score of mortar shells at the ROK side. The shells hit close to two ROK guard posts in the ROK side of the DMZ. ROK soldiers then fired scores of rifle shots, and a 57-mm recoilless gun was fired at 11:25 a.m. Approximately 20 minutes later, ROK soldiers suggested a cease-fire through the loudspeaker, and the seven DPRK intruders returned to

the DPRK side at 12:02 p.m. An ambulance was seen entering a DPRK guard post at 12:20 p.m., but casualties among the DPRK soldiers were not confirmed, the JCS spokesman said. (Korea Herald, Lee Sung-yul, "ROK, DPRK KOREAN SOLDIERS EXCHANGE FIRE IN DEMILITARIZED ZONE," 07/17/97)

2. DPRK Food Aid

The UN World Food Program (WFP) has received an exceptionally rapid response to its plea for assistance for starving children in the DPRK, WFP executive director Catherine Bertini said Tuesday. Bertini said that never before had 75 percent of a request been met within a week, adding, "This shows how seriously the food crisis in the DPRK is viewed." The WFP had called for supplementary aid totaling US$45.7 million in order to purchase 13,000 tons of food, doubling the rations for 2.6 million DPRK children. In response to the WFP's request, the US contributed US$16.2 million and the European Union supplied US$12.5 million. Ajay Markanday, a Food and Agriculture Organization expert, who visited the DPRK in May warned that the food situation there was extremely critical. He said that the country's food reserves are now exhausted, and all supplies were coming from imports and international aid. Markanday remarked that urban dwellers are now the worst off, as those in the country are still able to find something to eat. In addition, he also warned that after the catastrophic floods of 1995 and 1996 which destroyed most of the DPRK's crops, the forthcoming harvest was not very promising because of lack of fertilizer and the poor condition of cultivable land. (Korea Times, "UN FOOD BODY REPORTS RAPID RESPONSE TO PLEA FOR N.KOREA," 07/17/97)

3. US Search for MIAs in DPRK

US officials said on Tuesday that a 10-member US team arrived in the DPRK to search for US MIAs and the remains of US soldiers who died while fighting in the Korean War (1950-53). The search team will work jointly with the DPRK and will stay until August 4. Temporary offices will be set up in Unsan, Northern Pyongan Province, where hundreds of American soldiers died in November 1950 in fierce combat against PRC forces at the peak of the Korean War. Washington and Pyongyang agreed last May to conduct three joint searches this year, with the US promising to pay US$316,500 to the DPRK. The two sides held their first joint search last year and found the remains of one American soldier. US Department of Defense officials said there are more than 8,000 American MIAs from the Korean War and expect to retrieve the remains of 3,000 to 4,000 US servicemen during this year's searches. (Korea Times, "US MIA SEARCH TEAM ARRIVES IN NORTH KOREA," 07/17/97)

4. Alleged DPRK Grain Shipments to Japan

The DPRK, in the midst of severe food shortages, sent 1,030 tons of corn to Japan, the Japanese newspaper Sankei reported on Thursday. The vessel, Mangyongbongho, was loaded with corn and left the DPRK's Chongjin Harbor last Saturday and arrived at Japan's Aomori port on Monday. Though its origin has not been confirmed and is currently under investigation by the Japanese government, the powdered corn was intended for chicken feed in the Aomori area. The original arrangements, made by a pro-DPRK trade company in Yokohama, stipulated that the DPRK was supposed to export the corn in the spring, but the shipment was delayed due to domestic problems. Sankei reported that despite its food shortage, the DPRK exported the corn, worth US$13 million on the international market, in order to acquire foreign currency. (Chosun Ilbo, "DESPITE FOOD SHORTAGE DPRK EXPORTS CORN TO JAPAN," 07/18/97)

5. Alleged DPRK Plot of Hwang Assassination

ROK police said yesterday that the DPRK is sending two professional assassins to the ROK to kill

Hwang Jang-yop, the highest-level DPRK defector. A police spokesman said although it is not certain whether the hit men have already entered the ROK, "we are on the alert and are seeking the suspects." Police identified one of the two assassins as 43-year-old Lee Chol-hyong, a DPRK undercover agent who operates a restaurant in Yanbian, a province in northeastern PRC. The other killer has not been identified, but ROK police confirmed that he is from "a third country." Police noted that the two assassins who gunned down another prominent DPRK defector, Lee Han-young, in February are still at large. The two men, presumed to be DPRK agents, shot Lee, a nephew of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, in his apartment in Bundang. (Korea Herald, "DPRK SENDING ASSASSINS TO ROK TO KILL HWANG JANG-YOP," 07/18/97)

6. ROK-US Aviation Negotiations

ROK and US negotiators failed to iron out their differences in a two-day conference on an open skies agreement, which ended on Tuesday, the ROK Foreign Ministry said yesterday. Lee Tae-syk, Director General of the Ministry's International Trade Bureau, headed the ROK delegation and Dan Fantozzi, Director of the US State Department's Office of Aviation Negotiations, led the US side. The ROK side stuck to its terms for accepting US demands that an airline be allowed to lease its aircraft and crew to another airline and change the type of aircraft on a beyond point route, a ministry official said. The two sides also stalled on another key US demand that airlines from the two countries be permitted to jointly market their flights or that an airline from each country be allowed to operate cargo flights to a third country. The two sides agreed to continue to review the unresolved issues before deciding when to schedule the next round of talks, the ministry official said. ROK officials anticipate that the new open skies agreement, which is aimed at lifting restrictions on passenger and cargo services between the ROK, the US, and other nations, will benefit airlines from both countries. The US proposed open skies agreements to seven Asia-Pacific countries last year and has since concluded one with Singapore. The US has also signed such agreements with twelve European countries and six Central American countries. With roughly 3 million passengers a year, the ROK is the second-largest market for US airlines in Asia. The US push for an aviation agreement with the Asian countries seems to be ultimately targeted at Japan, the largest aviation market in the region, which, after a dozen rounds of talks with the US, is still reluctant to sign an accord. (Korea Herald, Lee Sung-yul, "WASHINGTON, SEOUL AT ODDS OVER OPEN SKIES," 07/17/97)

7. PRC Crushes Labor Protest

PRC security forces violently suppressed protests by more than 100,000 laid-off workers in the southwest province of Sichuan last week, a US-based human rights group reported on Thursday. Human Rights in China said in a fax statement that more than 100 workers were injured and more than 80 were arrested in a crackdown on the anti-corruption protests. Local government and police officials contacted by telephone said the protests involved only hundreds and denied that there were any arrests. The human rights watchdog said the workers took to the streets in late June when three state-run enterprises in Mianyang City declared bankruptcy and company officials embezzled unemployment-relief funds. In response, authorities imposed a citywide curfew, and an editorial in the official Mianyang Daily accused hostile foreign and domestic forces of stirring up the trouble. The wave of unrest ended around July 10, when the People's Armed Police executed a brutal crackdown. Li Jun, a city government official, said only a small number of protesters took to the streets and caused traffic jams. "We counted around 300 (protesters)," he said, blaming unrest on workers whose outdated socialist concepts made it difficult for them to understand market reforms. Nonetheless, the city is still under strict police control, and "many" of the arrested workers remain in custody. Labor discontent is building across the PRC as bankruptcies accelerate in the lumbering state sector, putting millions out of work. Fearing public anger, Beijing has made placement of laid-

off workers one of its top policy priorities. The sporadic worker unrest in the PRC often goes unreported outside of major cities as authorities cover up such incidents. (Korea Times, "CHINESE SECURITY FORCES CRUSH PROTESTS BY 100,000 WORKERS IN SICHUAN," 07/18/97)

III. Japan

1. Japan-DPRK Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("NORTH KOREA TO CONSIDER VISITS HOME FOR JAPANESE WIVES," Evening Edition 1, Seoul, 7/17/97) and the Nikkei Shimbun ("DPRK SOFTENS ITS STANCE ON JAPANESE WIVES' VISITS TO JAPAN," Evening Edition 2, Seoul, 7/17/97) reported that according to the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), a spokesman for the Korean Asia-Pacific Peace Committee announced July 16 that the DPRK government will take steps toward allowing Japanese women married to North Koreans to visit their hometowns in Japan. The spokesman suggested that solving this problem is a key to normalizing Japan-DPRK relations, and that the DPRK hopes Japan takes a 'sincere attitude' toward the DPRK's gesture. Both reports indicated that despite the DPRK's reported humanitarian stance, the DPRK may bring up economic matters such as food aid as a bargaining chip for the realization of the visits.

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSES DISSATISFACTION," Evening Edition 1, 7/17/97) and the Nikkei Shimbun ("ONLY OFFICIAL DIPLOMATIC CONSULTATION IS ACCEPTABLE," 2, 7/17/97) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto expressed his dissatisfaction with the peace committee announcement, saying "such statements should come through an official diplomatic route." The Daily Yomiuri ("GOVERNMENT TO UPGRADE TALKS," 1, 7/18/97) also reported that the Japanese government is ready to send a high-ranking official for negotiations on the visits. Government sources revealed that Japan and the DPRK are planning unofficial talks in Beijing July 19 by officials at the section-chief level, but the government may send a councilor, the equivalent of a deputy bureau head, if the DPRK comes up with more specific proposals on realization of the visits.

2. Alleged DPRK Grain Shipments to Japan

The Sankei Shimbun ("DPRK EXPORTED GRAIN TO JAPAN," 1, 7/17/97) reported that despite its severe food shortage, the DPRK has shipped 1,030 tons of corn to Japan and that the corn is now being unloaded at the Aomori Bay. According to the report, an Aomori chicken farmer imported the corn from the DPRK through a DPRK-related trading company in Yokohama. The report added that although the DPRK has been receiving food aid from the international community, it has reportedly been exporting grain or embezzling food aid to third-party countries in order to acquire hard currencies.

3. Japan-Russia Relations

The Sankei Shimbun ("JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER AND RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER AGREE JAPAN-RUSSIA INFORMAL SUMMIT MEETING TO BE HELD THIS YEAR," Moscow, 4, 7/17/97) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and visiting Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov agreed to an informal Japan-Russia summit meeting this year. Primakov stated that the future meeting, which was originally proposed by Hashimoto and Russian President Boris Yeltsin at the Denver Summit, comes at a time when "bilateral relations are becoming more friendly than ever before." In light of the recent incident on the Korean peninsula, the Russian Foreign Minister emphasized Japan's increased involvement in the so-called six-nation peace talks. He also suggested increasing economic ties between the two nations in order to expedite the resolution of the Northern Territory issue.

4. Japan's Defense White Paper

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("DEFENSE WHITE PAPER URGES REVISION OF SELF-DEFENSE FORCES LAW," 1, 7/15/97) and the Nikkei Shimbun ("DEFENSE WHITE PAPER URGES REVISION OF SELF-DEFENSE FORCES (SDF) LAWS," 1, 7/15/97) reported that Japan's national defense white paper, released July 15, called for the first time for revisions of the Self-Defense Forces Laws to prepare for emergencies in the areas surrounding Japan. The paper stated, "It is desirable to revise legal systems concerned with SDF and US military activities, as well as those designed for the protection of lives and property in case of national emergencies." In addition, it added that "The most important point of the new guidelines is to ensure--through bilateral cooperation--an effective means of coping with military attacks on Japan and crises in the surrounding area." The white paper also suggested strengthening security arrangements in the Asia-Pacific region through multilateral frameworks, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and bilateral confidence-building measures.

5. Japan-PRC Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("JIANG ZEMIN EXPECTS JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO PRC," Beijing, Evening Edition 2, 7/18/97) reported that PRC President Jiang Zemin told Japanese Liberal Democratic Party Director General Koichi Kato, now visiting Beijing, that he is optimistic about Japan-PRC relations. Although Jiang said he felt that relations were not in good shape last year, the last Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting helped them improve and that he hopes Hashimoto's prospective visit to be a good one. With regards to the ongoing review of Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines, Jiang agreed with Kato's position that Japan continue a dialogue with the PRC and that it is necessary to openly exchange views on each other's defense policy.

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPANESE VICE FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS THAT REVIEW OF JAPAN-US DEFENSE COOPERATION GUIDELINES WILL NOT INCLUDE TAIWAN STRAIT," Beijing, Evening Edition 2, 7/18/97) reported that Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Masahiko Takamura, now visiting Beijing, met with the PRC Foreign Minister on July 18. Takamura assured the PRC government that the ongoing review of Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines will not exceed the framework of the Japanese constitution. He also affirmed that Japan is not assuming the Taiwan Strait as a region of its defense concern and that Japan will make the review as transparent as possible to win understanding from the neighboring countries.

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.

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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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