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In today's Report:

I. United States

- 1. Hwang Defection
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- 3. DPRK Leader Reported Concerned Over Food

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- 2. DPRK To Accept Peace Talks
- 3. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal
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I. United States

1. Hwang Defection

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facilities and to ease tension in the Korean peninsula." Ramos would say nothing about Hwang's actual location or exactly when he would leave. "The security of our visitor is of paramount importance," Ramos said. Other officials said that special presidential task force has kept Hwang in a hideaway since he arrived on Tuesday, out of fears he could be a target of DPRK assassins. Military officers said on Tuesday that military helicopters flew Hwang and his party to the northern mountain city of Baguio, but Baguio officials said they were unaware of his presence. Another officer said Hwang was flown to Manila, but a report that Hwang was being kept at the armed forces intelligence compound in Manila's Camp Aguinaldo could not be verified.

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns (STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 19," USIA Transcript, 3/19/97) stated regarding recent developments in the Hwang defection, "Of course, we have a great interest in this case, as you would expect, and we're very pleased that it was resolved peacefully by the Government of China -- the People's Republic of China -- and by the Government of Korea, with the assistance of the Government of the Philippines." Burns added that, if and when Hwang reaches the ROK, "it will certainly be up to him and of the Government of the Republic of Korea to decide what his role is or if he is public about his views or not."

Andrew Pollack wrote in the New York Times ("A PHILOSOPHICAL MARXIST IDEOLOGIST," Tokyo, 3/19/97) an analysis of the biography and character of DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop. Pollack wrote that Hwang gained a reputation for reasonableness perhaps surprising for an individual "who is considered the architect of North Korea's ideology of juche, or self-reliance, which has been the philosophical underpinning of one of the world's most repressive governments." Pollack described Hwang as a scholar as much as an ideologist, and one anxious to pursue opportunities for intellectual encounters with others outside the DPRK. Pollack speculated that Hwang, able to see "beyond his country's slogans," recognized the signs of his own impending fall from power and was driven to defection by "idealistic but perhaps naive dreams." Pollack noted that foreign scholars close to Hwang believe that Hwang, a close aid to long-time DPRK ruler Kim Il-sung, may have felt he was on the verge of being purged following Kim's death in 1994 and the subsequent efforts of Kim's son and successor, Kim Jong-il, to consolidate his power by moving his own confidants into key positions. Pollack quoted Han S. Park, a professor of political science at the University of Georgia who met Hwang regularly on visits to the DPRK, as saying, "After the death of Kim, he said he didn't have any political energy left." Pollack continued, "One thing that seems clear is that Hwang's dissatisfaction was known to South Korean intelligence many months before he defected." Pollack quoted a senior ROK official as saying, "We didn't know when he would defect, but we knew that he might try."

2. US Statements on US-DPRK Relations

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns (STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 19," USIA Transcript, 3/19/97) commented on aspects of US-DPRK relations other than the Hwang defection. Asked whether the US thinks that a purge of top DPRK military leaders is in progress, Burns said, "It's very difficult for us to come to a definite conclusion about what's going on in North Korea. We have seen now, I think, the departure of two Defense Ministers in the last -- a Prime Minister and two Defense Ministers or senior Defense people in the last month. Whether there's a pattern here to be established on an analytical basis or whether these are simply coincidental events, I think you might get a variety of viewpoints from experts on North Korea to answer that question. We will simply have to try to wait and see what it all means -- perhaps this July when the three-year mourning period ends -- to see if the Government of North Korea reveals more about its own internal composition and its own policies. ... As for analyzing what's happening in North Korea, you can probably get that from Think Tanks around town, but we're a little bit reluctant to do that on the record, on camera, because there's so many different explanations of what might be happening."

Burns would not comment on whether the US has agreed to unfreeze DPRK assets in the US as part of its offer proposing the four-party peace talks, nor on other substantive elements of the proposal. "We have really enveloped those talks in a veil of secrecy and confidentiality, as you would agree we should, in a situation like this. I mean, I'm sure you wouldn't want to write about most of this stuff, because we think our ability to be effective is going to be enhanced by maintaining the confidentiality of the talks."

3. DPRK Leader Reported Concerned Over Food

The Associated Press ("FOOD-SHORTAGE CONCERNS NKOREA," Seoul, 3/19/97) reported that the ROK newspaper Chosen Ilbo reported Wednesday that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il warned party officials during a secret meeting Dec. 7 that worsening food shortages could set off rioting. The newspaper said that it had obtained the full text of Kim's speech at the meeting, which focused on the country's near-famine conditions and expressed concern that even the military, the fulcrum of the country's political and social stability, is not getting enough food. "I don't know what our party workers are doing when an anachronistic situation is being created because of food problems," Kim said in the speech. "If the U.S. imperialists knew that our military doesn't have food, they would launch an invasion." Kim warned that if the food shortage is not alleviated, citizens may rise up against their leadership as they did in 1945 several months after the installation of the Soviet-backed communist government. The paper did not explain how it got the speech, and the authenticity of the newspaper's report could not be independently verified.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Food Situation

Officials from the UN World Food Program (WFP) have inspected flood-hit areas in the DPRK, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency reported Monday. A delegation led by WFP executive director Catherine Bertini visited North Hwanghae province Sunday and made an inspection tour of agricultural cooperatives, according to the news agency statement monitored in Tokyo. Bertini was quoted by KCNA as saying she was concerned about the seriousness of the food shortage caused by flood damage. The WFP chief was also quoted as saying it was necessary for the international community to supply the DPRK with 100,000 tons of emergency food. The UN has appealed for US$41.6 million in emergency aid for 100,000 tons of food to help 1.7 million North Koreans, notably farmers and children. Bertini and Choe Su-hon, the DPRK's vice minister of foreign affairs, also signed a letter of understanding on emergency food assistance. (Korea Times, "UN AGENCY OFFICIALS INSPECT FLOOD-HIT REGION IN N. KOREA, 03/19/97)

2. DPRK To Accept Peace Talks

A senior ROK Foreign Ministry official said yesterday that the DPRK likely will agree to the proposed four-party peace talks within a month, as it has no other option due to its aggravating food shortage. On March 5, the ROK and the US offered a joint briefing to the DPRK on the talks, designed to replace the Korean Armistice Agreement with a formal peace pact. The official said that the DPRK officials had not yet given an answer on whether to accept the four-party talks, adding that the DPRK delegation, led by Kim, is still in the US. A DPRK official stressed the importance of large-scale aid packages to "restore trust on each other before the four-party peace talks." However, Seoul and Washington told the DPRK that they would consider offering aid packages only after the DPRK enters the four-party peace talks. In addition, they told DPRK officials that if Pyongyang agrees to a preliminary meeting for the four-party talks, the PRC would take part in the meeting. The ROK official noted that the ROK holds no other means but food aid if it wants the DPRK to take part in the four-party talks sincerely. He added that even after the four-party talks begin, Seoul will offer grain

to Pyongyang step by step, fully taking into consideration whether the DPRK is taking reciprocal steps to alleviate tension on the Korean peninsula and build confidence on each other. (Korea Times, "P'YANG TO ACCEPT PEACE TALKS IN ONE MONTH, 03/19/97)

3. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board of directors has adopted a summary by its president expressing concern over the planned shipment of Taiwan's nuclear waste to the DPRK. The brief summary, adopted at the 35-member IAEA board meeting in Vienna Monday, said a number of members expressed concern that the shipment may not conform to international safety regulations and practices. "The board wishes to make note of their concern and express the hope that the parties concerned will fully respect all agency and international safety standards and guidelines dealing with the handling, shipping and disposal of such material," the summary said. A ministry official said 10 board members, including the US, the PRC, Japan and Australia, took issue with the nuclear waste shipment from Taiwan to the DPRK and expressed their concern over it. He said the adoption of the IAEA document will help push Taiwan and the DPRK to seriously reconsider their controversial nuclear deal. (Korea Herald, "IAEA ADOPTS SUMMARY ON TAIWAN'S NUCLEAR WASTE," 03/19/97)

4. Japanese Officials Visit ROK

Chief policy-makers of Japan's three ruling coalition parties will arrive in Seoul today on a three-day visit for talks with top ROK officials, the ROK Foreign Ministry said Monday. During the visit, they will meet with ROK President Kim Young-sam, Deputy Prime Minister and Unification Minister Kwon O-kie, Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha and Defense Minister Kim Dong-jin. The Japanese lawmakers and ROK officials are expected to discuss the situation in the DPRK along with measures to promote bilateral ties between the ROK and Japan, a ministry official said. The agenda for their discussions is certain to include Japan's food assistance to the DPRK and the improvement of relations between the two countries. The chief policymakers are Taku Yamasaki of the Liberal Democratic Party, Kazuo Oikawa of the Social Democratic Party, and Seichi Mizuno of New Party Sakigake. They will be accompanied by three other Japanese lawmakers and four aides. (Korea Herald, "POLICYMAKERS OF JAPAN'S COALITION PARTIES DUE HERE," 03/19/97)

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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