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I. United States

1. US Media on DPRK Reactors Groundbreaking

The New York Times (Nicholas D. Kristof, "CONSTRUCTION CEREMONY IN NORTH KOREA BREAKS MORE THAN GROUND," Tokyo, 8/20/97, A10), The Washington Post (Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan, "N. KOREA INITIATES HUGE ENERGY PROJECT; VENTURE VIEWED AS AID TO

STABILITY," Tokyo, 8/20/97, A18), and The Washington Times (Willis Witter, "RELATIONS STILL ICY AS KOREAS LAUNCH REACTOR PROJECT," Tokyo, 8/20/97) all carried reports on the groundbreaking ceremonies Tuesday inaugurating construction of two 1000-megawatt nuclear power plants in the DPRK, sponsored by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) as part of implementation of the 1994 US-DPRK Agreed Framework. [Ed. note: See "KEDO Begins Construction of DPRK Reactors" in the August 19 Daily Report.]

The New York Times report noted that the project, which many critics had doubted would ever begin, "will lead to thousands of South Korean laborers, presumably well salted with spies, working within North Korea and sending mail and equipment and messages between two nations that technically remain at war." Evincing the hopes that the project will produce more than energy, the report quoted Paul Cleveland, US representative to KEDO, as saying at the ceremony, "The work we celebrate today is on the cutting edge of future progress in the search for peace on this peninsula." A senior ROK official in Seoul, interviewed by telephone, was quoted as saying, "I think the presence of a South Korean work force in North Korea will help bring about changes and openness in North Korea. I understand 5,000 South Korean workers will go to North Korea to implement this, and I think that's an important first step in building inter-Korea exchanges." The report added that DPRK representatives at the ceremony seemed unsure how to react to their ROK counterparts; "some North Koreans applauded the chief South Korean delegate, while others looked around for guidance." The report also noted that reporters allowed to attend the ceremony in Kumho, on the DPRK's east coast, said they saw no obvious sign of malnutrition and famine, and the fields seemed lush.

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The Washington Times report called the nuclear project groundbreaking "a dramatic though limited opening of the secretive, Communist-ruled state to the outside world," three years after the standoff over the DPRK nuclear program that brought the two Koreas to the brink of war ended with the agreement that initiated the project. The report noted that "North Koreans in the audience appeared uncertain whether to applaud when ideological foes from the other side spoke of building a peaceful future." The report quoted DPRK official Kim Byong-gi as saying, "Although we have successfully held this groundbreaking ceremony, the road ahead of us is still very long and twisted." The report also noted that, in his statement, Kim acknowledged neither the ROK or Japan, who together will fund most of the US$5 billion reactor construction project.

2. US-ROK Military Exercises

US Defense Department Spokesman Mike Doubleday ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR TUESDAY BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 8/20/97) on Tuesday responded to a question concerning the US-ROK military exercises that began on Monday. [Ed. note: See "US-ROK Military Exercises" in the August 18 Daily Report.] Doubleday stated: "First of all, I think that, although I can't cite for you

any details on exercises that are going on, our exercises in that part of the world are defensive in nature. We operate and exercise from time to time with the forces of the Republic of Korea. They go on almost year-round in some form or another. They are certainly not meant to be provocative in any way."

3. US-DPRK Soccer Match

US State Department Spokesman Jamie Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20," USIA Transcript, 8/20/97) responded to a question concerning reports that the US may allow a DPRK women's soccer team to tour the US. Rubin stated: "We have had working-level discussions with the North Koreans about the possibility of a visit by the North Korean women's national soccer team. Such a visit, if it were to occur, would be consistent with U.S. policy dating from October 1988 allowing unofficial exchanges in the area of academics and sports and cultural affairs. No dates for such a visit have been agreed upon at this time. In principle, however, we are willing to consider such a visit."

4. EU Aid to DPRK

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("NORTH KOREA GETS E.U. APPROVAL FOR FOOD, MEDICAL AID," Brussels, 8/20/97) reported that the European Union said Wednesday it had approved another 6.175 million European currency units (US$6.65 million) in food and medical aid for the DPRK. The new aid brings the total of humanitarian support from the 15-nation EU for the DPRK to 46.3 million ECUs (US$49.8 million), the EU Commission said in a statement.

5. ROK Supports US on Landmine Ban

United Press International ("S.KOREA WELCOMES U.S. LANDMINES SUPPORT," Seoul, 8/20/97) reported that ROK foreign ministry spokesman Lee Kyu-hyung said Wednesday that the ROK welcomed US defense of the use of anti-personnel landmines on the Korean peninsula. On Monday, the US called for an exemption of the region in announcing its support for a global ban on such landmines. [Ed. note: See "US View of Global Landmine Ban" in the August 18 Daily Report.] "That's what we wanted to hear. South Korea must be recognized as an exception because we face an imminent threat," Lee said.

6. ROK Military Developments

Jane's Defence Weekly (Volume 28, No. 7, 8/20/97) reported that the ROK has ordered an improved version of the Loral-Vought Multiple-Launch Rocket System from the US in a deal worth US$335.4 million. Jane's also reported that the US Army will deploy a third ARL-M reconnaissance aircraft to the ROK to monitor the demilitarized zone, in order to allow US forces to fully exploit the capabilities of the new aircraft.

7. ROK Economic Growth

The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition ("SOUTH KOREA'S GDP GREW 6.3% BUT PACE IS EXPECTED TO SLOW," Seoul, 8/20/97) reported that ROK officials and Bank of Korea economists said Wednesday that the ROK gross domestic product (GDP) grew at a 6.3 percent rate in the second quarter from a year earlier, compared with a 5.5 percent rise in the first quarter. The stronger-tha--anticipated economic growth was spurred by a 24 percent increase in exports and a 7.6 percent rise in manufacturing production. [Ed. note: See "ROK Defense Budget" in the ROK section, below.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. KEDO Groundbreaking for DPRK Reactors

The light-water reactor project commenced in earnest as KEDO (Korea Peninsula Energy Development Organization) and the DPRK held a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday at Kumho district in Shinpo, Hamnam province. KEDO will finish building the basic infrastructure for the reactor project (US$45 million) and will begin the main construction of two 1000-megawatt reactors in August of next year, with the aim of completing the project by 2003. Chang Song-sop, chief of the ROK light-water reactor planning group, said that he was expecting that Shinpo will become a place for cooperation and reconciliation as construction workers from the ROK and the DPRK will work alongside one another for the first time since Korea's division. Hur Jong, the DPRK's senior representative, stated, "only when the light-water reactor project is not to be used for unjustified political purposes, and especially only when the principle of concurrent actions between the US and the DPRK is completely respected, will the light-water reactor project progress smoothly." (Chosun Ilbo, "LIGHT-WATER REACTOR PROJECT COMMENCES AT SHINPO," 08/20/97)

2. ROK on US-Japan Defense Agreement

The ROK asked Japan and the US yesterday to closely consult with it and seek its agreement when implementing joint defense activities affecting the ROK's sovereign rights and the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula. Announcing its position on ongoing work to revise the 1978 US-Japan defense guidelines, Seoul hoped the two countries would maintain transparency in the work and set out limits and requirements for their defense cooperation. The government asked Japan to stick to its defense-only principles and focus on rear support activities for US troops, in consideration of neighboring countries' concerns over Japan's expanded military role. It also requested that the US and Japan cooperate and consult with Seoul if Japan's Self-Defense Forces send personnel, aircraft or ships to Korean territory, its surrounding waters or airspace in order to evacuate noncombatants, sweep mines or impose economic sanctions. Seoul also made it clear that it wants Japan's military activities in waters covered by the ROK's sovereign rights also to be subject to prior cooperation with and consent from Seoul. (Korea Herald, Kim Kyung-ho, "KOREA ASKS JAPAN, US FOR CONSULTATION ON DEFENSE; SEOUL ANNOUNCES ITS POSITION ON ONGOING REVISION OF TREATY," 08/20/97)

3. ROK Defense Budget

ROK President Kim Young-sam yesterday ordered a "maximum possible increase" in the defense budget for the fiscal year 1998, presidential officials said yesterday. Kim issued the instruction while receiving an interim report on next year's state budget from Deputy Prime Minister Kang Kyung-shik. Presidential officials quoted Kim as saying that tension between the ROK and the DPRK remains high and that the ROK needs to modernize its military and raise the morale of its soldiers. Economic officials said the government plans to set the state budget for the fiscal year 1998 at somewhere between 74.5 trillion won and 75.5 trillion won, a 4.3 to 5.8 percent rise from this year's 71.4 trillion won. This year's defense spending totaled 14.35 trillion won, which is a 12.6 percent increase from the previous year, the largest rise in five year. (Korea Herald, Kim Kyung-ho, "KIM PLACES EMPHASIS ON DEFENSE IN BUDGET PLAN," 08/20/97)

III. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK Leader on Peace Prerequisites

Wen Hui Daily ("KIM JONG-IL APPEALS TO ROK, US AND JAPAN TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH DPRK," Pyongyang, A4, 8/14/97) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, in a new book published recently, emphasized the prerequisites for the improvement of relations with ROK, US and Japan. In

his book, Kim said that if ROK authorities show an active attitude with concrete actions, his country will consult with them frankly and sincerely at any time on the issues related to the nation's fate and make common efforts with them to realize the reunification of motherland. On DPRK-US relations, Kim said that the US must fundamentally change its policy to the DPRK and not hinder the self-determining and peaceful reunification of Korea any longer. Kim noted that the DPRK does not want to regard the US as an enemy and hopes to normalize its relations with the US. As to the DPRK's relations with Japan, Kim pointed out that Japan must sincerely respect history, give up its policy hostile to the DPRK, and not hamper Korean reunification any longer. [Ed. note: See also "DPRK Aims in Peace Talks" in the US section of the August 13 Daily Report.]

2. ROK Leader on Peace Prerequisites

People's Daily ("KIM YOUNG-SAM PUTS FORWARD FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR PEACE ON KOREAN PENINSULA," Seoul, A3, 8/16/97) reported that at a conference on August 15 commemorating the 52nd anniversary of the end of Japanese colonial rule over Korea, ROK President Kim Young-sam put forward four principles for peace on Korean Peninsula: establishing trust, abandoning armed force, respecting each other and mutually cooperating. In his speech, Kim said that the reunification of Korea should be realized on the basis of peace no matter what happened, and that it was time to clarify the genuine meaning of peace and to practice it.

3. PRC View of Korean Situation

Jie Fang Daily ("THE ORDER ON KOREAN PENINSULA ENTERS INTO A TRANSFORMATION STAGE," A4, 8/9/97) published a commentary on August 9 saying that international politics on the Korean Peninsula is changing from bipolar equilibrium to mutual restriction in a multipolar world. After Bill Clinton came into power, the article said, he emphasized that the US should maintain its military presence in ROK, continuously strengthen the defense capability of ROK troops and appropriately share defense expenses with the ROK. These facts indicate that the US has no intention of withdrawing from the Korean Peninsula, but on the contrary seeks to participate comprehensively in Korean affairs and play a dominant role on Korean issues. The US hopes to show its dominant role through the "four-party talks," using them to consolidate its hegemony in Northeast Asia. The long-time US pressure on the DPRK, however, will certainly cause instability on the Korean peninsula. The article said that over a long period of time, the PRC has made a lot of efforts to promote dialogue between the ROK and the DPRK. The article also considered Japan's concern over Korean issues and Russia's continuing role despite its diminished influence, and concluded that order on Korean Peninsula has entered into an important stage in which the major powers' policies to Korea are gradually becoming clearer.

4. PRC-US Relations

An article in Jie Fang Daily ("China AND US LOOKING FOR COMMON STRATEGIC INTERESTS," A4, 8/15/97) said that the PRC and the US are concentrating on common interests to ensure that PRC President Jiang Zemin's visit to the US will be a success. Recently, senior US officials frequently visited the PRC and were received by high-level PRC leaders. These facts showed that both the PRC and the US regard the visit by President Jiang Zemin to the US as a turning point. By this opportunity, they hope to bring a stable, healthy and cooperative Sino-US bilateral relationship into the 21st century.

5. DPRK-Swiss Relations

People's Daily ("DPRK AND SWITZERLAND ENHANCE BILATERAL COOPERATION," Pyongyang, A6, 8/13/97) reported that DPRK and Switzerland issued a joint communiqué on August 11, saying

that the two countries will carry out mutual cooperation for the further development of their economic and trade relations and for the bilateral and multilateral cooperation with other countries. According to Korean Central News Agency, a delegation from the Foreign Ministry of Switzerland visited the DPRK from August 5-9. The delegation visited Pyongyang and some areas that were hit by floods in recent years. The delegation said that the Swiss Government would not only provide urgent aid the DPRK, but also carry out mid-term and long-term cooperation with the DPRK on agriculture and animal husbandry.

6. Japan-US Defense Cooperation

Jie Fang Daily ("DEFENSE IN NAME, INTERFERENCE IN REALITY," A4, 8/19/97) published a commentary on August 19 strongly criticizing some Japanese officials for remarks that Taiwan is considered to be within the so-called Japanese-US "defense range." The commentary said that when the PRC and Japan normalized their diplomatic relations, Japan promised to recognize "one China" and that Taiwan is a part of China. Whether to carry out defense cooperation with the US is Japanese business, but such cooperation should not exceed its bilateral range, the commentary said. Military alliance is the continuity of "cold war" thinking, the article added. If such military cooperation interferes other countries' internal affairs, and even threatens other countries' territorial sovereignty and security, it could not bring security to Japan, the commentary concluded.

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