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I. United States

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2. DPRK Rhetorical Attacks

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA ACCUSES S. KOREA OF SHOOTING NEAR BORDER," Tokyo, 6/20/97) reported that the DPRK on Friday accused the ROK of shooting rounds from tanks near the border intended "to provoke and threaten us." The al

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near the border intended "to provoke and threaten us." The alleged shooting was reported by the DPRK's official Korean Central Radio, which was monitored by the Tokyo-based Japanese news agency Radiopress. The DPRK radio report said that ROK tanks deployed along the central part of the border "randomly" fired more than 380 rounds of shells Wednesday afternoon, and later fired 50 rounds in the western border region. "[The South] should understand that reckless playing with fire will always invite strong reprisal measures," the report said. The ROK's defense ministry confirmed that the ROK military is conducting a week-long firing practice, but said that it is being held away from the border at the Yongmoon-san practice range, 80 kilometers south of the border and 50 kilometers east of Seoul.

US Defense Department Spokesman Ken Bacon ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 6/20/97), in response to a question on June 19 concerning increasingly inflammatory rhetoric from the DPRK regarding US-ROK military exercises, stated, "Let me just say that both sides conduct military exercises on a regular basis and these are necessary to maintain readiness. We watch the North Korean exercises every carefully, and they clearly watch the U.S./Republic of Korea exercises very carefully."

3. US, Japan Leaders Discuss Security

Deputy Director of the US President's National Security Council Jim Steinberg ("WHITE HOUSE DAILY BRIEFING FOR JUNE 19," USIA Transcript, 6/20/97), during a White House briefing conducted by several officials on the then just-concluded meeting between US President Clinton and Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto, stated: "The two leaders also spent a considerable amount of time talking about key regional and global foreign policy issues of concern to them both. They began with a brief discussion of the defense guidelines review. The President noted ... his satisfaction and pleasure with the progress in the review and the interim report, which he said he thought was very well received and represented real progress in implementing what the two leaders had agreed to at the Tokyo Summit in terms of bringing a fresh perspective to our security alliance, and stressing the fact that it was an alliance that was not directed at any one country, but rather designed to enhance regional stability, and looking forward to the completion of the guidelines review. He next turned to a discussion of Korea, and the President briefed the Prime Minister on our discussions in trying to get the four-party talks started between North Korea, South Korea, the United States and China, and his hope that we would be able to move forward in the not too distant future with further work in terms of getting those negotiations begun." Steinberg added that the two leaders "had a long interchange on China," discussing a number of issues including US extension of MFN status to the PRC and the PRC's upcoming takeover of Hong Kong.

4. DPRK Famine Situation

Reuters ("FIVE MILLION N.KOREANS SAID NEAR STARVATION," Geneva, 6/20/97) reported that Ole Gronning, representative in Pyongyang for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said on Friday that more than five million North Koreans are near starvation and many could die in coming months. "We think that a bit more than five million people are in such a bad situation that they will die shortly if they don't get food now and also medical assistance," Gronning told a news conference in Geneva. Gronning also said that, based on UN estimates of the harvest this coming October, the country's food deficit was expected to be worse in 1998 than in 1997. Gronning added that government food stocks ran out in May, although some private markets operate where people barter for food. Gronning travels regularly to 19 counties in the DPRK. The IFRC, which links 171 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, ended a two-day meeting to launch its latest emergency appeal of \$18 million to increase its food aid and start medical assistance to the DPRK. The IFRC plans to quintuple the number of food aid recipients to 740,000 from the current 139,000, distributing 10,000 tons of food a month in daily rations of about

a pound. The ROK is already providing corn, rice, wheat flour, soybeans and vegetable oil valued at US\$11 million under the existing five-month appeal. However, Gronning noted that nearly 25 trains of maize bound for the DPRK are stuck in Dandong, PRC, where train cars to transport it are lacking. "Everything now is blocked on the other side of the border because the Chinese railway network is not able to cope with huge amounts of rail movement," Gronning said. "We are trying to work fast because maize cannot last very long. They also forgot to fumigate it," he added.

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.N. OFFICIAL TO VISIT S.KOREA, N.KOREA; STUDY FOOD SHORTAGE," Seoul, 6/20/97) reported that UN Undersecretary General Yasushi Akashi will visit the ROK next week after visiting the DPRK, where he will inspect the extent of the food shortage there, the ROK Foreign Ministry said Friday. Akashi, who heads the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, will be the highest-ranking UN official to visit the DPRK during the food crisis. In March, Catherine Bertini, executive director of the UN World Food Program, led a fact-finding mission there. Akashi will visit the DPRK June 24-28, and then visit Seoul June 28-30 to brief ROK officials on his trip to the North

5. Russia Faces Weapons Destruction Costs

Reuters ("RUSSIA NEEDS \$5 BILLION TO DESTROY WEAPONS," Moscow, 6/20/97) reported that Colonel General Stanislav Petrov, the head of Russia's chemical and biological defense force, said Friday that Russia needs more than US\$5 billion to carry out its program to destroy its 40,000-ton arsenal of chemical weapons. Russia's Interfax news agency quoted Petrov as saying that the program lacked sufficient domestic financing and lamenting that foreign countries "are not rushing to provide Russia with financial assistance in this area." Petrov said that given stable financing Russia could destroy its chemical weapons completely by 2007, but that in 1996 only one percent of the required sum was earmarked for the program from the Russian budget, while foreign cash from Germany and the US would not account for more than 3.5 percent of the cost. Russia has more than once said it has no money to eliminate its chemical stockpile, and Petrov's comments were interpreted as an indirect appeal for more help from the West. Russia's parliament resisted international pressure in April to ratify a treaty banning chemical weapons, appealing for a significant increase in financial aid and a possible extension of the period for liquidating its chemical arsenals.

6. Deep Cuts in US Nuclear Weapons Considered

The San Francisco Examiner (Keay Davidson, "SLASH NUCLEAR ARSENAL, U.S. URGED," 6/18/97) reported that the US National Academy of Sciences, a prestigious body that advises the US Congress on science policy and often has a major impact on opinion, issued a new report on Tuesday calling for reducing the US nuclear weapons arsenal to a few hundred warheads, a roughly 90 percent deeper cut than presently planned. The academy report says, "The Future of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy," says that such a cut in the nuclear arsenal could be hastened by taking all nuclear forces off alert, by improving weapons-monitoring techniques, and by negotiating new arms agreements with Russia and other countries. John P. Holdren, co-chair of the report, said such cuts, unthinkable during the Cold War, are feasible now "because we [and the Russians] no longer have this hostile relationship in which we think the other side is implacably determined to blow us up." Under the Start II treaty with Russia, the US is scheduled to shrink its arsenal of strategic nuclear weapons to about 3,000 in the next few years, and the next round of arms-control negotiations could produce a Start III treaty that reduces arsenals to a range of 2,000 to 2,500 strategic weapons per side. The report's backers said that unilateral US action to cut arsenals, far from undermining these negotiations, would induce Russia to follow along. John Steinbruner, the report's vice chairman, said that, given the Russian economy, "it's not too hard to realize [the Russians] are headed for numbers much lower than 2,000 within a decade." The report says that both sides could reduce their arsenals

to 1,000 weapons each without fearing for their survival, simply by deploying them aboard relatively invulnerable missile submarines. Going to a few hundred weapons each would require "improvements in verification -- political, institutional and technical improvements," Holdren said. "I don't think they're out of reach," he added. [Ed. note: Copies of the report can be obtained from The Committee on International Security and Arms Control of the National Academy of Sciences, by sending email to: cisac@nas.edu.]

The Washington Post (R. Jeffrey Smith and Bradley Graham, "ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS CHANGING MIX OF NUCLEAR WARHEAD DEPLOYMENT," A06, 6/18/97) reported that the Clinton administration is considering altering the mix of nuclear warheads on submarines, bombers and missiles so that the arsenal's size can be maintained at lower cost, according to senior US officials. One option under review by the Joint Chiefs of Staff would cut the number of deployed US ballistic missile submarines -- an invulnerable but highly expensive strategic force -- and increase the number of warheads based on cheaper but more vulnerable land-based missiles and strategic bombers, the officials said. The administration's tentative planning runs counter to recent advice by two expert panels -- one established by Congress to provide an independent assessment of the Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review, and the other by the National Academy of Sciences [Ed. note: see item above] -- that maintain the US can both trim costs and enhance security by sizably reducing its nuclear arsenal. The administration has sought to maintain the current arsenal levels as a means to pressure the Russian Duma into ratifying the 1993 START II treaty. The officials said that cutting costs by redistributing the deployments could help fend off pressure to cut costs by undertaking the kinds of unilateral nuclear reductions recommended by the two panels. Currently, the US maintains a total strategic stockpile of more than 10,000 nuclear warheads, of which 6,000 are deployed.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Protests ROK, US Provocation

A spokesman for the DPRK's Peoples Armed Forces Ministry threatened full scale military retaliation should the ROK and the US incite a military confrontation, according to the Naewoe Press. Aimed at their domestic audience, the statement was carried by the DPRK's central broadcasting network. ROK officials said the latest DPRK threat is a routine reaction to the military training demonstration carried out by ROK Marines on Tuesday. ROK authorities believe that the DPRK is creating an atmosphere of war in an effort to prevent public unrest, as aid food packages marked with the names of ROK donors are now being distributed to hungry inhabitants in the DPRK provinces. (KPS, "DPRK THREATENS MILITARY RETALIATION AGAINST THE SOUTH," 06/19/97)

US military officials confirmed that routine missions were flown between air bases in Japan and the ROK last weekend. The missions were subject to DPRK accusations of "mobile exercises" by a Marine aircraft group in the area. A spokesman for US forces in Japan confirmed two "routine familiarization" flights by the 12th Marine Aircraft Group between Iwakuni Air Base, in southern Kyushu, and Osan Air Base, south of Seoul, on June 14. The 12th Marine Group is based in Iwakuni, he said, whereas the 13th Marine Aircraft Group mentioned by a DPRK spokesman is based in Arizona, not in the Western Pacific area. The DPRK spokesman said on June 14 the US "moved the control stations of the 13th Marine flying regiment" from Iwakuni and the US west coast to Osan to carry out "a long-distance non-stop flight exercise" along the Iwakuni-Osan route and the US mainland-Okinawa-Osan route. (Korea Times, "US MILITARY CONFIRMS 'ROUTINE' FLIGHTS BETWEEN JAPAN, KOREA," 06/20/97)

2. DPRK Regime Vulnerability Reported

Two hundred students from Kangke Defense College organized a secret group to assassinate Kim

Jong-il, who was scheduled to visit the school in early 1995, according to the Japanese news weekly, Sappio. The students planned to use an ax to kill Kim Jong-il during a martial arts exhibition, the magazine reported in its June 25 issue. After the plan was leaked to the National Security Department, however, the students were executed or sent to labor camps. According to the magazine, there have been 24 anti-government incidents since March 1990. Sappio also reported 10 such incidents after Kim Il-sung's death on July 8, 1994, indicating the possibility of a coup d'etat or assassination attempt on the younger Kim. After his father's death, Kim Jong-il visited military units located on the front lines and in the Pyongyang area 35 times, suggesting that his influence has not yet stabilized and could be vulnerable to a collapse of the system. (Chosun Ilbo, "ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON KIM JONG-IL: JAPANESE MAGAZINE," 06/20/97)

3. KEDO, DPRK to Sign Repayment Liability Protocol

The Korea Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the DPRK will sign a protocol on regulations that will enact penalties in the event that the DPRK defaults on repayment obligations for funding the light water reactor project. The meeting, which is scheduled to be held on June 24 in New York, will be held in conjunction with the third working level negotiations on the construction of the Shinpo sector light water reactor. The June 23-28 negotiations are expected to be focused on issues regarding North Korean workers, wages, and communications. (Chosun Ilbo, "DPRK TO SIGN PROTOCOL ON REPAYMENT LIABILITY FOR LIGHT WATER REACTOR PROJECT," 06/20/97)

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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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