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I. United States

1. Allies Plan DPRK Collapse

Reuters ("US, ALLIES DISCUSS N. KOREA CONTINGENCY PLANS," Tokyo, 01/21/97) reported that a senior Japanese government official, in an interview with the news agency on condition of anonymity, said Tuesday that the US, Japan, and the ROK have been discussing contingency plans in the event of a famine-driven "crisis" in the DPRK. "Japan, the United States and South Korea have been exchanging information on the situation in North Korea," the official said. "I would say we (the three countries) have been discussing contingency plans in the event of a crisis," he said. The official added that the ROK has already mapped out various crisis scenarios including a mass exodus of starving refugees, a military invasion and the collapse of Pyongyang's government. Although the Japanese official did not expect an uncontrolled outflow of refugees any time soon or the imminent collapse of the DPRK government, he painted a gloomy picture of the next few months. "North Korea has already been in a considerable degree of (food) crisis," he said. "Food stocks would become extremely tight in March or April." "If North Korea failed in its efforts to secure enough food supplies from other countries, the food situation would reach a crisis point," he said. "We believe North Korea does not have much food left now." The report follows last month's arrival in the ROK of a seventeen-member family that fled the DPRK through the PRC and Hong Kong, which alerted many to the prospect that the food and economic situation could collapse sufficiently to trigger a mass exodus.

2. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Agreement

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA: IGNORE NUKE FEARS," Taipei, 01/21/97) reported that Yang Chi-fang, head of the DPRK's representative office in Taipei, said on Tuesday that Taiwanese nuclear waste will be shipped to the DPRK despite a protest from the ROK. Yang said that Pyongyang had

asked Seoul "to tend to its own business before interfering with that of others." On Friday, Kang Min-soo, head of the ROK unofficial mission in Taipei, asked the Taiwan Power Company to call off the planned shipments, saying they run the risk of turning the Korean Peninsula into a nuclear waste dump. Taiwan Power officials also rejected the demand, saying the ROK's own nuclear power plants produce more waste. Taiwan Power signed a contract on January 11 to transport 60,000 barrels of nuclear waste to the DPRK over the next two years for storage, and has an option of shipping up to 200,000 barrels. Taiwan says the waste is of very low radioactivity and that the agreement meets both DPRK and Taiwanese nuclear safety requirements. While the financial details of the deal were not revealed, Taiwan's United Daily News said Taiwan would pay the DPRK at least US\$70 million. The ROK is considering mobilizing diplomatic help from the US, the PRC, and Japan to stop the trade, according to the ROK's national news agency Yonhap. Taiwan severed all formal ties with the ROK when Seoul switched its diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC in 1992. While the DPRK and Taiwan have no diplomatic ties, unofficial contacts between the two nations have increased in recent years.

3. ROK Reconsiders Controversial Labor Law

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT RETREATS ON LABOR LAW," Seoul, 01/21/97) reported that ROK President Kim Young-sam, in a tacit admission of public anxiety and damage to the economy, agreed Tuesday to send the controversial labor law back to parliament. The move was considered a stunning concession to Kim's political opponents. At a meeting with his main rivals, Kim expressed sorrow for output losses of billions of dollars through strikes sparked by forced passage of the controversial law. Production losses from stoppages have been estimated at more than \$3 billion. Labor strife had defeated the law's aim of revitalizing a sluggish economy, Kim said. In a further retreat, Kim reportedly said at the meeting that he would suspend the arrest warrants for strike leaders, including the seven sheltering in Seoul's Myongdong Cathedral, and that the outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions should be recognized. Although the confederation welcomed Kim's retreat from his earlier stance, it said that strikes would continue if the government did not declare the law null and void. Confederation president Kwon Young-kil, told a news conference at the cathedral: "Talks today have not solved any of the basic problems."

Reuters ("S. KOREA STRIKE GOES ON UNTIL LAW QUASHED," Paris, 01/21/97) reported that the ROK's outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) said on Tuesday that strikes would continue unless President Kim Young-sam wholly abandoned the new labor law. "We are calling on the government to make a categorical statement of intention to annul the law and open talks," Yoon Young-mo, spokesman for the KCTU, told a news conference in Paris. "The reason the trade union movement is calling for a firm commitment is that we are used to being misled," he said. "The statement from the government is not clear." "The plan of the KCTU is to continue for the moment the one day a week strike, which is on Wednesday this week," Yoon said, echoing comments in Seoul by his federation's president, Kwon Young-kil. Yoon and other ROK trade union representatives are in Paris to attend a review of ROK labor law by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD, an organization espousing free-market economics, just admitted the ROK in December. OECD Secretary General Donald Johnston said earlier this month he was deeply concerned by the situation in the ROK because of his organization's attachment to human rights, including labor rights. Johnston also noted at the time that the ROK had pledged to review its industrial relations after the issue was raised by several OECD members during membership talks.

4. ROK Reconsiders Controversial Security Law

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT RETREATS ON LABOR LAW," Seoul, 01/21/97) reported that ROK President Kim Young-sam, in backing off from the controversial labor law, also agreed to reopen debate on the equally controversial law reviving the once notorious domestic spy agency.

"Anything can be discussed in parliament again, whether it is the labor law or the law on the Agency for National Security Planning," a spokesman quoted Kim as saying. The security law changes return to the Agency for National Security Planning police-like powers to arrest anyone "praising" the DPRK or suspected of not reporting known pro-DPRK activities. Both laws were pressed through parliament in a seven-minute pre-dawn session on December 26 without debate and in the absence of opposition representatives. Kim previously had insisted the laws could not be altered and had rejected demands by the opposition for dialogue.

United Press International ("S.KOREA ASKED TO STOP BLOCKING RIGHTS," Seoul, 01/21/97) reported that Pierre Sane, secretary general of Amnesty International, has asked ROK President Kim Young-sam to lift restrictions on freedoms of expression and association in an open letter that is critical of the ROK's recent reforms to labor and security laws. Sane's letter called the ROK "one of the strongest and most dynamic economic and political forces in the Asia-Pacific region" but condemned the reforms as "a huge step backwards for human rights protection and the democratization process." Sane's letter called on Kim to show what "practical steps" Seoul has taken to ensure its security agency won't repeat past abuses of power.

5. US President Urges Arms Control

US President Bill Clinton, in a statement presented to the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva January 21 ("CLINTON URGES CD ACTION ON FISSILE MATERIAL, LANDMINES," USIA Report, 01/21/97), urged the conference to adopt a ban on producing fissile material for use in nuclear explosives and to negotiate a global ban on anti-personnel land mines. In the statement, read at the start of the CD's 1997 session by US representative Ambassador Stephen Ledogar, Clinton described the actions as "key steps to advance the process of nuclear and conventional disarmament." Clinton's statement said that a treaty banning the production of fissile material suitable for nuclear weapons purposes should be the CD's "first priority in the field of nuclear disarmament." Ledogar also read a statement issued January 17 in Washington by White House Press Secretary Michael McCurry, who said that President Clinton -- in order to "give further impetus" to the CD effort on banning land mines -- "has decided that the United States will observe a permanent ban on the export and transfer of anti-personnel land mines (and)...to cap our anti-personnel land mine stockpile at the current level of inventory."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks Briefing

Working-level officials from the ROK and the US met yesterday to prepare for a joint briefing for the DPRK on the proposed four-party peace talks. The briefing is to be followed by a US-DPRK bilateral meeting, which was agreed today to be limited to one day. (Chosun Ilbo, "US-DPRK BILATERAL MEETING TO BE HELD FOR ONE DAY ONLY," Seoul, 01/22/97) Yu Myung-hwan, director general for North American affairs at the ROK Foreign Ministry, told reporters after the meeting that the briefing session will open in New York in January 29. He said seven to eight-member delegations from each of the three countries will attend the briefing. The ROK delegation will be composed of working-level officials from the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of National Unification and the presidential office of Chong Wa Dae, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Song Young-shik. His DPRK and US counterparts will be Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartmann, respectively. Yu said US and DPRK diplomats have been continuing discussions in New York on the length of the three-way briefing and of the US-DPRK talks. The briefing is likely to be held for one day and the ensuing US-DPRK meeting will not be held longer than the briefing, Yu said. Yu said he discussed ways to operate the briefing with Mark Minton, head of the Korea Desk at the US State Department, who arrived in Seoul Sunday. Lee Young-joon,

director of the ministry's North America Division I, and Richard Christenson, deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Seoul, also attended the meeting. Yu said Seoul and Washington envision that chief delegates will make keynote remarks at the start of the briefing session, followed by item-by-item discussions and question-and-answer sessions. ROK officials, however, see little possibility that the DPRK will respond positively to the four-party meeting proposal during the briefing session. A ROK official predicted that the DPRK would react negatively to the offer from Seoul and Washington in the initial stage in order to draw maximum concessions from the ROK and the US. But he said he believes Pyongyang eventually will agree to the four-party talks, as the DPRK is facing internal and external situations that do not permit it to take any other course. (The Korea Herald, "BRIEFING ON 4-WAY TALKS PROPOSAL TO BE HELD IN NEW YORK JANUARY 29," Seoul, 01/21/97)

The ROK government plans to remain as flexible as possible over the format and procedures of the proposed four party talks, and Seoul also plans to seek the active participation of Japan and Russia in the process of implementing the talks, ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha said in an exclusive interview with the Joong-Ang Ilbo. "The DPRK's acceptance of the joint briefing (by the ROK and the US) on the four-way talks is an indication, to a certain degree, of its positive attitude towards the four-way talks," Yoo said, expressing optimism that the talks actually would take place. Yoo also said, "If the North agrees to the four-way talks, it won't help to wrangle over the format and venue of the talks. We plan to remain quite flexible on procedural matters." (Joong-ang Ilbo, "SEOUL NOT TO PLACE RESTRICTIONS ON FORMAT, PROCEDURES OF 4-WAY TALKS," Seoul, 01/20/97)

2. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Agreement

The DPRK announced Saturday that it plans to fulfill its contract to accept Taiwan's nuclear waste for storage despite protests from the ROK. A DPRK official visiting Taipei to discuss the issue said, "South Korea should mind its own business before interfering in the matters of other nations." The Taiwanese government on Friday also told visiting ROK government officials that Taiwan cannot bow to Seoul's protests. (Joong-ang Ilbo, "DPRK SAYS; NO CHANGE IN NUCLEAR CONTRACT WITH TAIWAN," Seoul, 01/20/97)

The ROK is moving to increase international pressure on Taiwan to thwart its plan to transport nuclear waste to the DPRK for storage. "We are actively considering taking the issue to international forums, including the United Nations," said a ROK Foreign Ministry official yesterday. He said mustering international pressure would be the most effective way to stop Taiwan from shipping nuclear waste to the DPRK. He said the ROK will seek to join hands with the US, the PRC and Japan to pressure Taipei to cancel its contract with the DPRK. Under the contract between the Taiwan Power Company and a DPRK trading firm, Taiwan will have the option of transporting up to 200,000 barrels of nuclear waste to the DPRK. The ROK is vehemently opposing the shipment, saying it will turn the Korean Peninsula into a nuclear waste dump. Seoul officials indicate that the shipment goes against the international practice of banning the transportation of radioactive waste from one country to another. A ROK Foreign Ministry official admitted the ROK has little diplomatic leverage over Taiwan, with which the ROK severed diplomatic relations in 1992. The state-run Taiwan Power Company Friday rejected a demand from the head of the ROK unofficial mission in Taipei that it cancel the planned shipments. The DPRK representative in Taipei also vowed Saturday that his country will follow through with an agreement to store nuclear waste from Taiwan despite the ROK protest. (The Korea Herald, "KOREA PRESSING TAIWAN ON NUKE WASTE DEAL," Seoul, 01/21/97)

3. Asia-Pacific Security Council

Nihongeijai of Japan reported yesterday, quoting a Japanese defense ministry official, that twenty Asia-Pacific nations, including the ROK, the US, the PRC, and Japan, have agreed in principle to hold

an annual security meeting in which security policy makers of each nation will attend. The meetings are intended to heighten the relatively little security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, as compared to Europe, and to increase security policy transparency. (Hankyoreh Shinmun, "ASIA-PACIFIC ANNUAL SECURITY COUNCIL AGREED," Tokyo, 01/21/97)

4. Japanese Defense Intelligence Agency Launched

Japan yesterday opened its Defense Intelligence Headquarters, a military intelligence agency intended to lessen Japanese dependence on US intelligence, including intelligence regarding the Korean Peninsula. The agency consolidates the dispersed intelligence functions of the three defense forces, the defense ministry, and the united ministerial council. (Kyonghyang Shinmun, Kang Sung-bo, "JAPANESE DEFENSE MINISTRY LAUNCHES INTELLIGENCE AGENCY," Tokyo, 01/21/97)

5. ROK to Resume Relief Aid to the DPRK

The Korea National Red Cross (KNRC) will resume private relief aid to the DPRK's flood victims around January 25. The KNRC announced yesterday that it plans to send 130 million won worth of relief goods, including 300 tons of flour and 15,000 pairs of winter gloves, to the DPRK through the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC). The ROK's relief goods will be loaded on a third-country vessel that will sail from the ROK's Inchon Harbor to the DPRK's Nampo Harbor. The goods will be handed over to the DPRK in the presence of IFRC officials. (Joong-ang Ilbo, "KNRC TO RESUME DELIVERY OF RELIEF GOODS TO DPRK AROUND JAN. 25," Seoul, 01/20/97)

6. DPRK-US Relations

Yang Hyong-sop, speaker of the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), is pushing to visit the US next month at the invitation of renowned US pastor Billy Graham, a ROK government source said yesterday. The source said that Yang wants to head a DPRK delegation accepting Graham's invitation to attend a prayer meeting scheduled for February 6 in Washington. However, the source also said that as far as he knows, Yang has not yet applied for a US entry visa, and that whether the US administration will issue a visa to Yang and his delegates is unknown. If the visit happens, Yang will be the highest-level DPRK official to visit the US. News reports have said Hwang Jang-yop, secretary of the DPRK's Workers' Party and chairman of an SPA committee on foreign relations, plans to make a US trip in March after his trip to Japan. A ROK official said Hwang is scheduled to visit Japan January 30-February 10 to attend an international seminar and hold talks with Japanese officials. (The Korea Herald, "DPRK SPEAKER YANG MAY VISIT US NEXT MONTH," Seoul, 01/20/97)

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