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I. United States

1. DPRK Boat Defectors' Warnings

Reuters ("N.KOREAN DEFECTORS TELL OF STARVATION, WAR FEAR," Seoul, 5/22/97) reported that on Thursday the recent "boat people" defectors from the DPRK told their first news conference that many DPRK citizens are starving to death and the country had been gripped by rumors of impending war against the South. "I had to struggle to feed five family members, and my parents had malnutrition from eating only flour porridge," said Kim Hwa-ok, 41, the wife of the vessel's

captain, who arrived with their three children and his mother. "In April and May, I saw two people who had died of starvation," she said. The ship's engineer, Kim Won-hyung, said that rumors were spreading that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il would launch an attack on the ROK between July and October, at the end of a three-year mourning period for his father, the late "great leader" Kim Il-sung. The dire statements came at a time when South Koreans are already alarmed by statements from Hwang Jang-yop, the highest-level DPRK official ever to defect, that the DPRK could "scorch" the ROK and Japan with nuclear weapons and was preparing for conflict. The news conference was televised nationally in the ROK.

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2. DPRK Denies War Intent

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA DECRIES WAR TALK," Seoul, 5/22/97) reported that an unidentified spokesman for the DPRK Foreign Ministry said in a statement, carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency, that the DPRK food shortage has reached crisis proportions but that the country has no intention to risk a war out of desperation. "It is true that our temporary food shortage has reached a serious stage," the statement said. "But war is not what we want," it said. The statement accused "bellicose elements" of spreading false rumors in an "ill-boding campaign" to justify plans to launch "pre-emptive" attacks on the DPRK. Worries that the DPRK was preparing for war grew after warnings by DPRK defectors, most notably high-ranking official Hwang Jang-yop, who arrived in the ROK in April. The DPRK denial followed similar warnings by recent defectors.

3. ROK Financial Scandal

Reuters ("EIGHT MORE CHARGED IN S.KOREAN GRAFT SCANDAL," Seoul, 5/22/97) reported that seven current or former lawmakers, including the mayor of Pusan, the ROK's second largest city, were charged Thursday with taking bribes from the founder of the collapsed Hanbo Group. The eight were among 33 politicians named by the Hanbo founder Chung Tae-soo, 74, as having accepted his money, chief prosecutor Shim Je-ryoon told reporters. Chung is on trial with 10 other people on charges of bribing top politicians and bankers to secure credit for his steel-making flagship, which collapsed in January under debts of five trillion won (US\$5.6 billion). Shim explained that the other 25 had only escaped indictment because of a legal loophole giving politicians immunity from prosecution for receiving money during an election. "I regret we could not indict all the other politicians," Shim said.

4. US Implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention

The Associated Press ("U.S. CHEMICAL WEAPONS TO BE CHECKED," The Hague, Netherlands, 5/22/97) reported that international inspectors will begin checking US chemical weapons facilities next month to verify US compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The convention, which came into force last month, bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons. Anil Wadhwa of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which oversees the convention, announced today that inspectors will examine US chemical weapons destruction sites to make sure arms are being demolished according to the convention's guidelines. There are nine destruction sites in the US, but only two -- one in the Pacific Ocean and the other in Utah -- are operating. Inspectors also will check chemical weapons production sites in the United States at the end of July. Although 165 countries have signed the convention, only 90 have ratified it. The US is the first to be checked because it is the only current signatory that has acknowledged it has chemical weapons. The fact that many countries with chemical weapons haven't signed the pact, let alone ratified it, has been the biggest source of international criticism of the chemical ban treaty.

5. Analysis of US Defense Review

Lawrence J. Korb, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Reagan Administration, wrote an opinion article for the New York Times ("THE PENTAGON'S WAR ON THRIFT," Washington, 5/22/97, A17(N)) in which he criticized the US Defense Department's latest Quadrennial Defense Review, released earlier this week, as "essentially an endorsement of the status quo." In particular, Korb questioned the premise that the United States must be prepared to fight two major regional wars simultaneously. Korb noted that in 1969, at the height of the Cold War and the Vietnam War, the Nixon Administration believed the US was secure enough that it needed to be ready to fight only one and a half wars simultaneously; the two-war strategy was adopted in 1991 by the Bush Administration, just as the Cold War was ending. Korb argued that, although the strategic review presumes the need to fight wars against Iraq and the DPRK, neither country poses the threat to the US that it did in the past. "Even the Pentagon's own war games -- which assume a North Korean soldier is as effective as an American soldier and more effective than a South Korean one -- cannot justify a need for more than eight Army divisions. Yet the Pentagon's report ... insists on 10 divisions," Korb wrote. Korb pointed out that the US now spends over US\$100 billion more on defense than called for in the Defense Department's last review in 1993, and more than all of its prospective enemies combined. Noting that both the Eisenhower and Nixon Administrations reduced military spending and changed military strategies and structures following the Korean and Vietnam Wars, respectively, Korb concluded: "The Pentagon's review offered an opportunity to reshape the military to address the new challenges to American security in the 21st century. But that opportunity has been squandered. A better approach would have called for the United States to be able to fight one large war while handling smaller peacekeeping operations elsewhere, with a weapons budget sufficient to maintain our technological edge."

6. US Secretary of State on Foreign Policy Needs

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Thursday testified before the US Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations ("SECSTATE BEFORE SENATE PANEL ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS," USIA Transcript, 5/22/97), seeking continued support for the Clinton Administration's foreign operations programs. In a prepared statement, Albright discussed US "efforts to reduce the number and stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction," claiming that US leadership has accomplished much, but cautioning that "arms control and nonproliferation are works in progress" that require continuing support. Commenting specifically on Northeast Asian issues, Albright said, "The 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea froze and established a road map for dismantling that country's dangerous nuclear weapons program. With

our partners, we created the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to implement key aspects of the agreement. Our earlier commitment helped jump-start KEDO and generated contributions from Japan and South Korea that will ultimately dwarf our own. KEDO now has 10 members -- and we will bring in at least three more this year to share the burden. I appreciate the support this subcommittee has shown in the past for our participation in KEDO, and ask your support for our proposed \$30 million contribution in fiscal year 1998. Those funds will leverage the support of others, while contributing directly to the safety and security of the American people." Albright also commented on relations with the PRC, stating, "The evolution of our relations with China will depend primarily on how China defines its own national interests during the remainder of this century and into the next. ... Currently, China is constructively engaged with the international community in some areas; in some, it is not. We have been able to work together well with respect to the North Korea nuclear issue and banning nuclear tests. We have also made progress on a range of specific commercial concerns and laid the basis for cooperation on responding to global threats of terrorism, crime, drugs and pollution. We do, however, still have important differences with China, especially on trade, arms-related transfers and human rights, including Tibet. We do not hesitate to raise these differences privately with China's leaders, or to express our beliefs publicly concerning the need for all countries to respect international standards."

II. Republic of Korea

1. US Troops in ROK

The US military's Quadrennial Defense Review, setting out the US plan for its military entering the twenty-first century, does not propose sufficiently bold changes, US senators said Tuesday. The plan, unveiled Monday, "is largely a status quo product that cautiously makes no changes to the organization of the current force," lamented Democratic Senator Joseph Lieberman. Some senators, such as Democrat Carl Levin, questioned the plan's assumption that US forces must still be prepared to fight two regional wars simultaneously and keep the total 200,000 troops now in Europe and Asia. However, Defense Secretary William Cohen dismissed one suggestion that the US consider reducing its troops levels in the Korean peninsula. Despite food shortages in the DPRK, "They have real military strength and hundreds of SCUD missiles targeted at the south," Cohen said. Under the quadrennial plan, the military says it will make do with 60,000 fewer troops, dropping the US active duty force to 1.36 million. Resistance is widely expected to the Pentagon's politically sensitive recommendation that there be another two rounds of military base closings, affecting an estimated 50 bases within the US. (Korea Times, "COHEN DISMISSES SUGGESTION TO CUT TROOP LEVELS ON KOREAN PENINSULA," 05/22/97)

2. US-ROK Aviation Dispute

Seoul and Washington failed to narrow their differences on several key issues of the proposed "open skies" agreement but agreed to meet again in July with the aim of concluding it, officials said yesterday. Among the controversial issues are code-sharing, which permits two foreign airlines to jointly market their flights, and wet leases, which allow a carrier to rent its aircraft and crew to another airline. "We demanded that some safety nets are required before agreeing to code-sharing and wet leases," said Lee Tae-sik, director general of the ROK Foreign Ministry's International Trade Bureau. Lee headed the Korean delegation while Dan Fantozzi, director of the US State Department's office of aviation negotiations, led the US team. The two countries are expected to tackle those two issues when the talks resume in Washington in July. In these talks, the two countries agreed on almost two-thirds of the issues on the agenda, which includes the opening of all routes and liberal chart arrangements. The ROK backed the concept of the open skies initiative because it would replace the Korea-US aviation agreement, regarded as an unfair accord between the two countries. According to the bilateral agreement, US airlines enjoy unlimited beyond rights

while Korean carriers are only allowed to offer flights from Seoul to 12 destinations in the US and only enjoy beyond rights to three countries from the US. Once the open skies agreement is signed, all limitations will be lifted, officials said. However, the issues of code-sharing and wet leases are controversial because they pose potential threats to Korean airlines. (Korea Times, "KOREA, US REMAIN APART ON KEY ISSUES OF OPEN SKIES," 05/22/97)

3. ROK, DPRK Christians Meet in Germany

ROK and DPRK Christians will gather in Germany next month and announce a "Leipzig Declaration," promising efforts to eradicate inter-Korean distrust and to work for peace and reconciliation. Representatives from the ROK National Council of Churches and the DPRK Christians Federation are to meet in Leipzig June 21 and issue the declaration at a press conference. The get-together was arranged after the two sides were invited to attend Germany's celebration of Christians' Day, held every two years. ROK and DPRK representatives will hold a joint prayer session at a Korean church in Leipzig on June 20 and visit the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva on June 22. A donation campaign will also be conducted for the famine-stricken DPRK during inter-Korean activities in Leipzig. (Korea Times, "SOUTH-NORTH KOREAN CHRISTIANS TO ISSUE 'LEIPZIG DECLARATION'," 05/22/97)

III. People's Republic of China

1. Four-Party Korean Peace Talks

At a news briefing on May 20, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said consultations on four-party talks among the parties concerned -- the DPRK, the ROK, the PRC and the US -- have made some progress. The PRC deems it realistic and feasible to discuss the establishment of the Peninsula Peace Mechanism by means of four-party talks, Shen said. He added that the PRC hopes relevant parties will reach consensus on holding the four-party talks to work toward the early establishment of the peace mechanism. China Daily ("NATION VALUES RELATIONS WITH ROK," A1, 5/21/97)

2. ROK Foreign Minister in Beijing

People's Daily ("LI PENG, QIAN QICHEN RESPECTIVELY MEET WITH ROK FM," Beijing, A1 and A4, 5/20/97) reported that PRC Premier Li Peng met with ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha in Beijing on May 19. Discussing the situations on Korean Peninsula, Li Peng said the PRC hopes that the region will maintain peace and stability. He told Yoo that the PRC has always held that problems on the Korean Peninsula should be solved through dialogue. During other talks between PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and Yoo Chong-ha, Qian said the PRC and the ROK have a wide range of common ground on many important issues, including safeguarding peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, and have made contributions to maintaining peace and stability in Northeastern Asia and Asia in general. Qian said that dialogue and improved relations between the South and North are of great importance for resolving problems and easing the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

On May 20, PRC President Jiang Zemin met with visiting ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha in Beijing, Wen Hui Daily ("CHINA AND ROK ARE IMPORTANT TRADE PARTNERS," Beijing, A1, 5/21/97) reported. During his meeting with the ROK foreign minister, Jiang said that the PRC attaches importance to relations with the ROK. The PRC is ready to further develop stable and friendly long-term relations with the ROK on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, Jiang said. According to him, the two countries share a wide range of common ground on issues including safeguarding peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in Asia and realizing

common development in the region.

3. US-PRC Trade Relations

The PRC welcomed US President Bill Clinton's decision to renew the most favored nation (MFN) trade status for the coming year while urging the US to grant the status permanently in order to promote bilateral economic and trade ties in a stable and smooth way. On May 20, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang described Clinton's decision as wise, saying MFN status constitutes a cornerstone of Sino-US economic relations. A spokesman for the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation also welcomed Clinton's decision, but urged the US to settle the MFN issue once and for all so that bilateral economic ties can enter a period of stable and smooth development. Shen Guofang also said that the annual review practice does no good for creating a long-term, stable trade pattern between the two nations. People's Daily ("CHINA WELCOMES MFN RENEWAL," A1, 5/21/97) Another report in China Daily ("WELCOME FOR MFN RENEWAL," A1, 5/21/97) said that the PRC would not accept any conditions attached to renewal of the MFN status. The report said PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang dismissed as "totally unacceptable" the recent suggestions by certain US lawmakers to link the MFN issue with progress in Hong Kong's return to the PRC.

4. Japanese-Russian Military Exchanges

Russian Defense Minister Igor Rodionov wrapped up a landmark visit to Japan on May 18, China Daily ("RUSSIA CALLS FOR MORE DEFENSE LINKS WITH JAPAN," Tokyo, A11, 5/19/97) reported. During his visit to Tokyo, the report said, Rodionov called for expanded defense exchanges with Japan, promised to cut the number of Russian troops, and gave Moscow's blessing to closer US-Japan military ties. "We welcome Japan and the US building even closer security ties," Rodionov said in reference to a review of US-Japan military cooperation under the 1960 US-Japan Security Treaty. Rodionov suggested holding tripartite military exercises between Russia, Japan and the US as a way to establish military cooperation among the three countries in the Asia-Pacific region, a Russian defense ministry official told Russia's Itar-Tass news agency in Tokyo, according to the Daily. As to the reduction of 200,000 troops this year, Rodionov did not elaborate but Japanese officials said they expected some of the troop reductions would be in the Far East. The Russian troop cut plans did not include forces in the disputed islands called the Southern Kurils by Moscow and the Northern Territories by Japan, the report said.

Jie Fang Daily ("RUSSIA AND JAPAN TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY EXCHANGES," A4, 5/19/97) said that Russian Defense Minister Igor Rodionov's visit to Japan improved the two countries' relations, although they still had territory disputes over Russian-held islands north of Japan. During the visit, Rodionov said his government would reduce 200,000 troops this year, and expand its military exchanges with Japan.

5. PRC New Nuclear Power Station

Construction started on the Ling'ao Nuclear Power Station in Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, China Daily ("CONSTRUCTION UNDER WAY ON NUCLEAR PLANT," A1, 5/16/97) reported. The plant, the second in Guangdong, is 45 kilometers from downtown Shenzhen and 50 kilometers from Hong Kong. It is 1.2 kilometers northeast of Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station. "The first phase of the plant will have two generating units each with a designed capacity of 1 million kilowatts. It demands a total investment of \$4 billion," said Zeng Wenxing, the power plant's general manager. Ministry of Power Industry of the PRC, China National Nuclear Power Corp and Guangdong Province will invest a combined \$400 million. The rest will be borrowed from the France-based National Bank of Paris and England-based West Merchant Bank with the help of the Development Bank of China. "The

Ling'ao plant will use more domestically-made equipment," Zeng said. "This will greatly reduce the cost."

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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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