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I. United States

1. Former US Officials on Visit to DPRK

Former US Ambassador to the ROK James Laney and former US Senator Sam Nunn held a press conference in Seoul July 22 to discuss their recent trip to the DPRK ("LANEY-NUNN 7/22 PRESS CONFERENCE ON NORTH KOREA," USIA Transcript, 7/23/97). At the press conference, Laney said that the participants on the trip, which included several US government escorts, "urged early and full participation by the DPRK in the Four Party talks to bring about lasting peace and security. We also emphasized that Four Party talks were the best vehicle to address increased economic cooperation with the US, the ROK, and the world community, including long-term solutions to the DPRK's agricultural difficulties." The group also stressed the importance of the 1994 Agreed Framework and its full implementation, and the need for early resumption of high-level dialogue between between the ROK and the DPRK, Laney said. Nunn commented on the lack of progress on

inter-Korean talks. "There is no North-South dialogue in spite of the fact there was an agreement, a Basic Agreement in 1991, pledging both North and South to that dialogue," he said. "After President Clinton made a proposal for Four Party talks, it has taken fifteen months for us to really even get a date to sit down and have preparatory talks. That is a matter of frustration." [Ed. note: The full transcript of this press conference will be distributed in a separate Special Report. For a prior news item, see "Former US Officials Conclude Visit to DPRK" in the US section of the July 22 Daily Report.]

2. Russia Supports Four-Party Talks

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("RUSSIA SUPPORTS PROPOSED PEACE TALKS FOR TWO KOREAS," Seoul, 7/24/97) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov said Thursday his country supports the four-party peace talks proposal aimed at negotiating a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War. "Russia supports easing tension in Korea. So we support the peace talks," Primakov told a news conference after his talks with ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha. Primakov indicated Russia was not totally happy with the exclusion of Moscow from the process, saying Russia can play an important mediating role. Yet Yoo said Primakov promised a "constructive role" in bringing the DPRK to the peace talks, a goal the ROK has sought. Representatives from both Koreas, the US, and the PRC are scheduled to meet August 5 in New York in a preparatory session. Also Thursday, Primakov and Yoo signed treaties on opening a presidential hotline between Moscow and Seoul, and on exchanging land for new embassies in each other's capitals.

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3. DPRK Nuclear Plants Construction Progress

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S.-LED ENERGY GP TO OPEN N. KOREA NUCLEAR SITE OFFICE," United Nations, 7/24/97) reported that the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) on Thursday announced plans to open a liaison office at the DPRK light-water nuclear reactor construction site. The office will be staffed by US, ROK and Japanese individuals. A statement by KEDO's New York headquarters said the office will formally open July 28 and be operational in August.

The Washington Post (Mary Jordan, "80 S. KOREAN WORKERS MOVE TO NORTH THIS WEEK," Tokyo, 7/23/97, A27) reported that, by the end of this week, eighty ROK engineers, construction workers, telecommunications specialists and physicians will arrive in the DPRK to begin working on the KEDO project to construct the two new nuclear reactors in the DPRK. The report noted that the workers' arrival coincides with other recent positive developments, including the initiation of telephone links between the ROK and the construction site and the DPRK's agreement to allow Japanese wives of North Korean men to make visits to their homeland. The report also cited comments by former US Ambassador to the ROK James Laney and former US Senator Sam Nunn at their press conference in Seoul July 22. [Ed. note: See "Former US Officials on Visit to DPRK," above.]

4. New DPRK Food Aid Appeal

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("UNICEF TRIPLES N. KOREA CHILDREN'S AID APPEAL TO \$14.3M," United Nations, 7/24/97) reported that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is tripling the amount of money it is seeking to aid DPRK children, citing an "alarming incidence" of severe malnutrition. UNICEF representative Anthony Hewett said Thursday that the agency is seeking US\$14.3 million to provide "high-energy milk" and other nourishment to at least 110,000 severely malnourished children in the country. "We have seen an alarming incidence of severe malnutrition developing in the country," Hewett said. He said DPRK officials estimate that 38 percent of children aged 5 and under suffer from malnutrition and about 5 percent of them are seriously malnourished. Hewett said UNICEF suspects that the number of children being treated for malnutrition has increased in part because one or both parents die of the effects of the food crisis and "the surviving parent can't manage." UN agencies say the DPRK needs about 800,000 tons of food aid before its October harvest to avert widespread famine, but the DPRK has said a drought and heat wave has damaged this year's corn crop, raising doubts the October harvest will resolve the food crisis. [Ed. note: See "DPRK Drought" in the US section of the July 21 Daily Report and the ROK section of the July 22 Daily Report.]

5. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Food Aid Talks

Reuters ("S. KOREA SEES AGREEMENT ON NORTH FOOD AID," Seoul, 7/23/97) reported that ROK Red Cross officials anticipate that an agreement with the DPRK on a new shipment of food aid is likely to be signed this week despite a complaint by Pyongyang that Seoul's offer is not enough. Lee Byoung-woong, secretary general of the ROK Red Cross Society, said the ROK has offered the DPRK a food aid package of about 50,000 tons of rice and corn, a plan similar to one agreed to in May. "We suggested the second assistance program be almost the same as the first assistance program," Lee told reporters at a briefing after recent talks in Beijing. Lee added that the talks had gone well, and ROK embassy spokesman Chang Moon-ik said Red Cross officials hoped an agreement could be

signed before the end of the week. Chue Gyongrin, head of the DPRK Red Cross delegation, said after Wednesday's meeting that Seoul's offer was not big enough, especially compared with aid donations from other countries. However, Chue was also upbeat. "Today's talks were very friendly and I am very optimistic about the prospects of tomorrow's talks," Choe said.

6. ROK-Japan Fishing Dispute

United Press International ("S.KOREA PARLIAMENT DENOUNCES JAPAN," Seoul, 7/24/97) reported that the ROK National Assembly has passed a unanimous resolution to protest Japan's recent change in fishing boundaries that legislators call "illegal." The resolution demands that Japan "recognize the need for prior negotiations" on what it dubs an expansion of territorial waters, and says, "we will no longer sit idly by and let such an illegal act pass unchallenged." Tokyo has unilaterally imposed a straight baseline boundary, drawn from two points along its west coast. Seoul has complained it violates a 1965 bilateral fishing agreement. The change led to the seizure of five ROK fishing boats since early June. Joo Joong-chul, a spokesman for Seoul's foreign ministry, says two fishermen remain in Japan awaiting trials.

7. US, Japan Seek to Assuage PRC on Expanded Defense

The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition (Eduardo Lachica, "U.S., JAPAN TRY TO EXPLAIN THEIR DEFENSE PLANS TO CHINA," Washington, 7/24/97) reported that Koichi Kato, the secretary general of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and Kurt Campbell, the US deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asia and the Pacific, were both in Beijing on separate visits last week to seek to persuade the PRC that it isn't the target of US-Japan plans for expanded defense cooperation. The interim US-Japan defense-cooperation guidelines issued by the two governments June 6 would allow Japan to dispatch military equipment and personnel in support of US forces in the event of an emergency in "surrounding" areas. Military analysts have identified the Korean peninsula as the area where the sort of blowup envisioned in the guidelines could occur, but the document itself draws no distinct geographical boundaries. PRC commentators have warned that Beijing remains unconvinced of US and Japanese assertions that the new guidelines aren't aimed at the mainland. A recent article in the official journal Beijing Review discusses a number of reasons for this skepticism, including the supposed need of both allies to find a "common enemy" to replace the vanished Soviet empire. The PRC officials who received Mr. Kato reportedly asked him repeatedly how the interim guidelines would handle an event in the Taiwan Strait. "I clearly stated to them that these guidelines aren't aimed at China but at a possible contingency in North Korea," Mr. Kato was quoted as replying. An unnamed US Defense Department official, referring to Mr. Campbell's visit, was quoted as saying, "They were most concerned about two issues -- whether Japan is expanding its defense role beyond its constitutional parameters and whether Taiwan is included in the scope of the guidelines." The official said that the US answered no to the first question, and on the second question is telling the PRC and other interested parties that the interim guidelines aren't "geographically specific." The final version of the guidelines is expected to be issued in the fall. The US is generally satisfied with their current form, but a number of Japanese political parties, including the LDP's coalition partner, the Social Democratic Party, have yet to endorse them. The report noted that neither Japan nor the US has succeeded in its efforts to assuage the PRC's concerns over the expanded US-Japan defense cooperation that the guidelines envision. "We keep hearing the same questions over and over again," the Pentagon official said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Food Aid Talks

ROK and DPRK Red Cross representatives met for the third time on Wednesday to discuss the size,

route, and contents of a second delivery of food assistance. At the 90 minute meeting held at Beijing's China World Hotel, the ROK Red Cross proposed an October shipment of 50,000 tons of corn, the same amount as the first shipment delivered on July 23. Lee Byong-woong, chief of the ROK delegation, also proposed a plan which will mark food assistance with the names of recipients, and the DPRK will confirm whether the designated recipients are still living. At the meeting, the ROK delegates proposed the inclusion of medicine and clothing, and, though the DPRK has adamantly refused on prior occasions, again suggested Panmunjom as the delivery point. The ROK delegation said the DPRK expressed gratitude for the first shipment, and the two sides intend to conduct a follow up meeting on Thursday. (Chosun Ilbo, "ROK AND DPRK RED CROSS DELEGATES DISCUSS AID IN BEIJING," 07/24/97)

2. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal

According to recent information, the DPRK has already begun construction in preparation to receive nuclear waste from Taiwan. Green Korea disclosed a blueprint of nuclear waste facilities which the DPRK has sent to the Taiwanese government. The blueprints, received by the Taiwan Power Corporation at the end of May, were attached to plans outlining the transportation and treatment of nuclear waste. The Taiwan Atomic Energy Committee has finished preliminary reviews of the plan, and disclosed to the local press on July 12 that two tunnels are currently under construction in the Pyongsan region of the DPRK. According to the blueprints, the treatment facilities are located in the southwest region of the DPRK, 120 km south of Pyongyang and 95 km north of the DMZ. The DPRK is planning to build three storage areas with capacities of 15,000 tons, 10,000 tons and 30,000 tons respectively, expanding to 60,000 tons in two years. According to DPRK sources, no residents are located within 5 km of the area. A Green Korea official stated that Taiwan is to send a survey team to the DPRK in July and wishes to make its first shipment in September. (Chosun Ilbo, "DPRK BEGINS CONSTRUCTION FOR TAIWAN'S N-WASTE," 07/23/97)

3. ROK-Japan Fishing Jurisdiction Dispute

A senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official made an unofficial three-day trip to Seoul as part of a final effort to reach an agreement on the reopening of fishing talks. On Tuesday, Ryozi Kato, director general of the Asian Affairs Bureau, met with his ROK counterpart Ryu Kwang-sok to discuss the agenda for the July 28 meeting between Foreign Ministers Yoo Chong-ha and Yukihiko Ikeda in Malaysia on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). "We have exchanged views with the aim of resuming fishing talks next month. However, we are still apart on some specific issues," a ROK Foreign Ministry official said. As the two countries still have a few days before the foreign ministers talks, they will try to narrow differences through diplomatic channels, he said. Kato came to Seoul on his way to India where he will join Foreign Minister Ikeda's entourage, as they visit southwest Asian countries. Seoul has boycotted fishing talks with Tokyo following Japan's seizure of five ROK vessels in the newly expanded territorial waters which Seoul does not recognize. Earlier, Seoul hinted at the possibility of resuming fishing talks if Japan expresses "regrets" over its maritime police's alleged beating of a ROK sailor. ROK officials believe that Japan should apologize for the beating incident because public opinion on the resumption of fishing talks is still negative. Cabinet members responsible for unification and security affairs decided that fishing talks with Japan will be resumed as soon as Japan stops seizing ROK fishing boats in its newly expanded territorial waters and settles the beating issue. The ministry official said that Japan had not officially threatened to scrap the 1965 fishing agreement, although it believes that the forthcoming foreign ministers meeting will be decisive in deciding Japan's future course of action. Japanese politicians and fishing industries have pressed the Japanese government to nullify the agreement if Seoul does not hold talks in a sincere manner. "Japan is expected to finalize fishing talks with the PRC in September. Therefore, Japan appears to be paying keen attention to the foreign ministers meeting

late this month," the official said. Japan is expected to take a stronger position if the Kuala Lumpur meeting fails to find a solution to the deadlock on the fishing talks. So far, Seoul raised objections to the way Japan has drawn some parts of its baselines, claiming that it does not abide by international laws. At the same time, it has contended that the expansion of territorial waters, affecting allowable fishing zones, is a matter of prior negotiations between the two countries under the 1965 fishing agreement. (Korea Times, Son Key-young, "JAPAN OFFICIAL MAKES 'UNOFFICIAL' TRIP TO SEOUL FOR FISHING TALKS," 07/24/97)

4. ROK-Russia Relations

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov will fly into Seoul today for a four-day visit aimed at strengthening ties between the ROK and Russia. Tomorrow, he will hold talks with his ROK counterpart Yoo Chong-ha on measures to increase bilateral cooperation and the recent situation on the Korean Peninsula. Prior to the talks, Primakov, the first Russian foreign minister to visit the ROK in five years, is scheduled to visit meet with President Kim Young-sam. In a joint statement at a news conference following the meeting, Russia is expected to express a more flexible attitude toward the proposed four-party talks aimed at establishing a permanent Korean peace settlement. Moscow has recently eased its reservations about the four-way talks involving the two Koreas, the US, and the PRC. During their meeting, Yoo and Primakov will sign agreements on the exchange of embassy compounds in Seoul and Moscow and compensation for the site of a former Russian legation in Seoul. They are also scheduled to conclude an accord on the establishment of a hot-line between Chong Wa Dae and Kremlin, the respective presidential offices of the ROK and Russia, which was initially agreed upon in 1994. Primakov will be accompanied by his wife, Irina, and a group of Russian officials and correspondents, including Vice Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin. He will also receive a honorary doctorate in politics from Hanyang University and visit the site of the new Russian Embassy compound. Primakov will make an overnight stopover on the ROK's Cheju island before he leaves for Kuala Lumpur Saturday to attend a ministerial meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its dialogue partners.(Korea Herald, "RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ARRIVES HERE FOR FOUR-DAY VISIT," 07/23/97)

5. ROK Purchase of Israeli Anti-missile System

Negotiations for the purchase and deployment of an Israeli naval anti-missile system in the ROK entered its final stages, "Defense News" reported Monday. According to the weekly paper, Samsung Aeronautics' two-year negotiations to obtain the Barak system is almost complete. The Barak is capable of intercepting missiles launched towards naval ships within a 10 km range throughout a full 360 degrees from a ship. The missile can intercept cruise missiles, skimming missiles, as well as smart bombs. Samsung is planning to import the missile in parts and assemble it in the ROK. (Chosun Ilbo, "KOREA TO INTRODUCE ISRAELI ANTI-AIR MISSILE: DEFENCE NEWS," 07/23/97)

6. ASEAN and Northeast-Asian Summit

Leaders from ASEAN states, the PRC, the ROK, and Japan will hold meetings as part of an informal three-day summit in December, Malaysian Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Abdul Kadir Mohamad told reporters on Monday. The Malaysian official acknowledged that after an ASEAN senior officials' meeting, they discussed the "provisional agenda for the ASEAN plus Three summit." The senior officials proposed for discussion the prospects for East Asia in the 21st century, preparations for the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in April 1998, and the Mekong Basin development, Abdul Kadir said. "These are subjects which concerned all the leaders of ASEAN plus Japan, the ROK and the PRC. They are all members of ASEM on the Asian side, they are all prospective participants in the ASEAN Mekong cooperation," he added. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) includes Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand

and Vietnam. Burma and Laos are set to be inducted on Wednesday. Abdul Kadir said that ASEAN leaders would also adopt an ASEAN Vision statement in their December 14-16 summit, outlining the organization's goals and objectives to 2020. Cambodia was also scheduled to join ASEAN on Wednesday, but ASEAN foreign ministers decided on July 10 to postpone its entry following heavy domestic fighting between troops loyal to the country's feuding co-premiers. (Korea Times, "ASEAN, PRC, JAPAN, ROK HEADS TO MEET AT DECEMBER. SUMMIT," 07/23/97)

7. ROK Student Politics

The student body at Seoul National University (SNU) publicly demanded that Hanchongryun, the radical nationwide union of college students, abandon its pro-DPRK position. The SNU student body has played a leading role in recent efforts to reform Hanchongryun from within. SNU students held a meeting on Wednesday and claimed that Bumchunghagryun, the umbrella organization which controls Hanchongryun, is being used as a device to advocate DPRK's political and political and diplomatic policies. "Because the organization lacks an objective recognition of the present situation of the ROK and the DPRK, it should be self-dissolved," student leaders said. The students also asked Hanchongryun to give up the idea of holding a three-day Pan-Nation Rally scheduled for August 13, and instead form a committee to set a new direction for the student movement. SNU's student body will not attend the upcoming rally, but will launch a petition drive next week to ask for a special convention of Hanchongryun delegates. (Joongang Ilbo, "SNU STUDENT BODY DEMANDS HANCHONGRYUN TO ABANDON ITS PRO-DPRK STANCE," 07/24/97)

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