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I. United States

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4. DPRK Famine Prospects

The Associated Press ("N. KOREANS FACE BLEAK WINTER," Seoul, 9/23/97) reported that Kathi Zellweger of the Caritas relief agency said Tuesday that DPRK citizens, facing their third grim harvest in as many years, are too malnourished and too low on medicine to survive more hunger and disease. "The resistance of the people is low. They have no medicine, little food. And the next year, if

there is no water, we will have a major catastrophe," said Zellweger, who returned Tuesday after a week-long visit to the DPRK. Drought has so damaged crops that the crucial fall harvest likely will be less than half the 4.5 million tons of grain the DPRK needs to feed its 24 million people, a shortfall far worse than last year's, meaning the DPRK's food supply will give out in April at the latest, Zellweger said. Zellweger described people stretching rations as far as they can, and said that in one county, a local mill stores bags of powder from dried grass to add to the thin rice and corn gruel that most people live on.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

Four-way talks to arrange a peace conference for the divided Korean peninsula broke down Friday after the DPRK refused to soften demands that the agenda include withdrawal of US troops from the ROK. No further preliminary talks were scheduled and the US will not resume them unless the DPRK signals its willingness to compromise. Officials from the US, the DPRK, the ROK and the PRC met on Friday to hear whether the DPRK would join peace talks without a guarantee to discuss the removal of US troops from the ROK. The DPRK also insisted on a separate peace treaty with US, excluding the ROK, and for firm guarantees of more food aid to stave off famine. Both the US and ROK have long rejected those conditions. (Korea Times, "PRELIMINARY 4-PARTY KOREAN PEACE TALKS BREAK DOWN AGAIN," 09/20/97) Regards, Shin, Dong-bom

ROK President Kim Young-sam yesterday cautioned against haste and impatience in trying to get the DPRK to enter four-party Korean peace talks. This was the first time that ROK President Kim has responded to the failure of the preliminary talks in New York last week. ROK Foreign Ministry officials had earlier ruled out the possibility that the Seoul government would offer further incentives to persuade the North to enter the four-party talks. (Korea Herald, "KIM REACTS COOLY TO FAILURE OF NEW YORK TALKS," 09/24/97)

ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha left for New York Sunday to attend the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly, where he will deliver a keynote speech on UN reforms and global issues such as refugees and the environment, and will meet with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Tuesday to discuss measures to be taken following a breakdown in preliminary four-party peace talks last week. Before his departure he said that the ROK cannot allow the DPRK to use its participation in the four-way peace talks as a device to draw concessions from the ROK. (Korea Herald, "YOO LEAVES FOR NEW YORK TO ATTEND U.N. SESSION," 09/23/97)

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3. Kim Jong-il Ascension

The DPRK has begun the process of making Kim Jong-il its official leader. He was elected as general secretary by party cadres at a local chapter convention of the DPRK Workers' Party in South Pyonyan Province Sunday. On Monday, the 1 million-strong DPRK People's Armed Forces endorsed

Kim as general-secretary in a ceremony in Pyongyang. The Armed Forces, according to the Workers' Party charter, have the same power as the provincial party chapters. DPRK analysts here believe the process will quickly continue in the other seven provinces and three major cities in the DPRK, officially ushering in the Kim Jong-il era. DPRK watchers had predicted Kim would undergo a full coronation either through a plenary session of the Central Party Committee or a Party Congress, an elaborate process which requires time, money and a new policy. By choosing to elect Kim through a series of provincial party conferences, the DPRK has opted for a minimum of cost and procedure while gaining public exposure for the Oct. 10 ascension. Kim Jong-il is then expected to assume the presidency through confirmation by the Supreme People's Assembly, either by the end of this year or on the 50th anniversary of the Pyongyang regime next year. (Korea Herald, "NORTH KOREA BEGINS FORMAL SUCCESSION; KIM JONG-IL CHOOSES LOW-COST PATH FOR HIS ACCESSION," Kim Ji-soo, 09/24/97)

4. US-DPRK Agreement on Defector

The US and the DPRK reportedly agreed at their meeting in Beijing September 10-11 on five items which included US agreement not to allow the defected former DPRK ambassador to Egypt, Chang Soon-kil, to go to the ROK. The US accepted the DPRK's request to not send Chang to Seoul in order to facilitate the up-coming four-party talks. (Chosun Ilbo, "RESULTS OF US-DPRK TALKS IN BEIJING," 09/21/97)

5. Hwang Criticizes DPRK Calendar Change

DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop yesterday criticized the DPRK for beginning to use another calendar system, called the juche era, which began at the birth of its deceased leader Kim Il-sung. In a letter released through the Agency for National Security Planning (NSP), Hwang said that the DPRK "challenges time and sound common sense" by using the juche calendar. Entitled "The juche era can't save North Korean leadership," Hwang's article said that the staying tied to the "feudalistic" juche era is "a grievous error" to the Korean people. He added, "It will only bring the bankrupt North Korean regime more abandonment, and also expedite its termination." Hwang also asked North Koreans to stand up against their "rotten and sick" regime and to fight for peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula. He called on the DPRK to abandon its anachronistic approaches in inter-Korean relations, and to implement open policies. (Korea Herald, "DEFECTOR HWANG CRITICIZES NORTH KOREA FOR INTRODUCING NEW CALENDAR," 09/24/97)

6. EU Becomes Member of KEDO

The EU has formally joined the US-led reactor consortium, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), as a member of the decision-making executive council. The EU has pledged to contribute 1.5million ECUs (US\$17 million) to KEDO every year for the next five years. The EU's entry will help the consortium settle budget-related problems and raise its international status. The three original executive council members, the ROK, Japan, and the US, will retain their veto power despite the EU's entry, while the EU is expected to play a role as a "junior member," unable to veto any step agreed upon by the three original members. (Korea Times, "EU BECOMES EXECUTIVE MEMBER OF KEDO," 09/20/97)

7. ROK Defense Budget

The ROK will require 570 trillion won (US\$630 billion) for its defense budget over the next 18 years for effective post-unification national protection, it was suggested yesterday at a national security seminar. To procure the US\$630 billion by the year 2015, the ROK needs a 10.35 percent annual increase in its defense budget, said Prof. Lee Pil-joong of Seoul's National Defense College. Lee said

the proposed defense expenditure is based on the potential military threat from neighboring countries. To achieve the target level, the government should allot 3.5 percent of gross national product, instead of the current 3.2 percent of GNP, to defense by 2015. In a post-unification era, Korea's ability to increase its defense budget would be limited, mainly because of the enormous costs needed for development of the DPRK; therefore, the ROK should procure as much military supplies as possible before unification, he said. (Korea Herald, "570 TRILLION WON FOR DEFENSE NEEDED OVER 18 YEARS," 09/24/97)

8. New USFK Land Mine System Deployment

The US Forces in Korea (USFK) has recently installed 10 rapidly deployed mine systems called "Volcano." A vernacular newspaper said the USFK has also deployed 20 MICLIC mine-clearing devices. The newspaper based its story on an unclassified USFK fact sheet. The report comes at the same time the US has been under fire for not signing an international agreement to ban landmines worldwide. The ROK also is not participating in the so-called Oslo process, saying land mines are an important tool deterring an invasion from the DPRK. (Korea Times, "USFK DEPLOYS NEW RAPIDLY DEPLOYED MINE SYSTEMS," 09/24/97)

9. US-Japan Defense Guidelines

The ROK urged the United States and Japan yesterday to maintain transparency in coming up with any joint military operation strategies and cooperation plans under the new defense guidelines agreed upon Tuesday to replace the 1978 guidelines. In a statement, the Foreign Ministry noted the parts of the new guidelines that call for the observation of the basic format of the US-Japan security alliance, engagement in activities only for defensive purposes under the Japanese Constitution and the principle of denuclearization. It hoped that Tokyo and Washington will continue to closely consult Seoul on issues which involve the Korean peninsula in connection with the implementation of the new defense guidelines. The new guidelines allow Japanese forces to operate in emergency situations in surrounding areas in support of US troops, which has triggered concerns over the expanded role of the Japanese military among Asian neighbors. (Korea Herald, "SEOUL URGES TOKYO, WASHINGTON TO MAINTAIN GUIDELINES TRANSPARENCY," 09/24/97)

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