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In today's Report:

I. United States

- [1. DPRK Ambassador Defects](#)
- [2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [3. DPRK-Japan Relations](#)
- [4. Views of DPRK Famine](#)

II. Republic of Korea

- [1. ROK Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [2. Four-Party Peace Talks](#)
- [3. DPRK-Japan Talks](#)

III. Russian Federation

- [1. DPRK Leader on DPRK-US Relations](#)
- [2. KEDO Nuclear Plant Groundbreaking](#)
- [3. ROK Arms Imports from RF](#)
- [4. RF Media on Soviet Military Involvement in Korean War](#)
- [5. PRC View of US-Japan Treaty Concerning Taiwan](#)
- [6. RF-Japan Ties](#)
- [7. RF Radioactive Container Sank Near Sakhalin](#)
- [8. RF Pacific Fleet Exercises](#)
- [9. RF Naval Missile Exports to PRC](#)

I. United States

1. DPRK Ambassador Defects

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asylum at the US Embassy in Cairo, and was flown out of Egypt Monday afternoon under a different name and carrying a US travel document. The official said Chang would appear at a news conference Tuesday in Washington. Egyptian foreign ministry official Said Ragab said the DPRK reported Chang missing Saturday and asked it to investigate, but that searches of hospitals and departure records at airports and seaports turned up no trace of the ambassador. "If he has left Egypt, he left under another name," Ragab said. Earlier, DPRK Embassy officials denied the defection but gave conflicting reports on the ambassador's whereabouts, while US Embassy officials in Cairo would not comment. Meanwhile, Egypt's official Middle East News Agency said Chang will be tried in the DPRK on charges of "escaping" and abandoning his duties. Other media reports said the ambassador's brother, Chang Sung-ho, the DPRK's trade representative in Paris, has also disappeared. The defection would be the first by a top diplomat from the DPRK. Cairo is a major DPRK diplomatic outpost, and Chang could be a valuable source of information about Pyongyang's alleged Scud missile sales to Iran, Syria and other Middle East countries.

Reuters ("NORTH KOREAN ENVOY TO EGYPT DEFECTS TO WEST," Seoul, 8/25/97) reported that unnamed ROK officials said Monday that Chang Sung-gil, DPRK ambassador to Egypt, is seeking to defect to a Western country and has left Egypt under protection in a third country, which they declined to identify. The Chosun Ilbo daily, quoting a government source, said Chang sought asylum Friday in the US embassy in Cairo and that Washington told Seoul Sunday it had decided to grant the request. The ROK officials said Chang's brother, Chang Sung-ho, another diplomat based in Paris, had also left for a third country with his family to seek asylum. "The two cases seem to be related," ROK foreign ministry spokesman Lee Kyu-hyung was quoted as saying. A statement by the ROK's ruling New Korea Party said the defections meant the North faced "a crisis of collapse." "The government should hurriedly work out various measures to cope with a sudden collapse of the North Korean system," it said. Chang, one of the DPRK's most senior envoys, was due to return home next month at the end of a three-year assignment.

US State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING, AUGUST 25," USIA Transcript, 8/25/97), asked to comment on the reported defection of Chang Sung-gil, DPRK ambassador to Egypt, replied, "I have nothing for you on that." Asked if the US had received a request from Chang for political asylum, Rubin replied, "I have nothing for you on that." Asked to explain why he had no comment, Rubin said, "I'm disinclined to get into it." Asked whether or not he was denying the report, Rubin said, "I'm not getting into it."

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NOTE: Production of the Daily Report will be intermittent for the remainder of this week. Also, there will be no Daily Report issued on Monday, September 1, due to the US Labor Day holiday. The Daily Report will resume regular production on Tuesday, September 2.

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[I. United States](#)

- [1. DPRK Ambassador Defects](#)
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- [3. DPRK-Japan Relations](#)
- [4. Views of DPRK Famine](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. ROK Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [2. Four-Party Peace Talks](#)
- [3. DPRK-Japan Talks](#)

[III. Russian Federation](#)

- [1. DPRK Leader on DPRK-US Relations](#)
- [2. KEDO Nuclear Plant Groundbreaking](#)
- [3. ROK Arms Imports from RF](#)
- [4. RF Media on Soviet Military Involvement in Korean War](#)
- [5. PRC View of US-Japan Treaty Concerning Taiwan](#)
- [6. RF-Japan Ties](#)
- [7. RF Radioactive Container Sank Near Sakhalin](#)
- [8. RF Pacific Fleet Exercises](#)
- [9. RF Naval Missile Exports to PRC](#)

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2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA TO SEND FOOD TO N. KOREA," Seoul, 8/24/97) reported that the ROK Ministry of National Unification announced Saturday that the ROK government will ship US\$10 million in food and other new aid to the DPRK. The ministry said that the assistance is targeted toward hungry children in nurseries, kindergartens and orphanages, and will be delivered through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The latest aid is in addition to US\$19 million the ROK already has donated to the DPRK through UN agencies in two earlier aid packages. UN officials have said famine could hit one-fifth of the DPRK's 22 million people without outside aid, and DPRK officials told relief agencies last month that 37 percent of the country's children are already malnourished. UN agencies have said that at least 800,000 tons of food aid are needed to sustain the DPRK until the grain harvest in October, which itself has been imperiled by a drought.

3. DPRK-Japan Relations

The Associated Press ("JAPANESE WIVES MAY LEAVE N. KOREA," Beijing, 8/23/97) reported that a Japanese official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the DPRK agreed Friday to allow Japanese wives of North Korean men to leave the communist nation for visits to their homeland as soon as late September. The agreement came during two days of talks, which ended Friday, aimed at eventually normalizing diplomatic relations between the countries. Negotiators also agreed to hold higher-level talks, with the date and location to be decided later, the official said. The status of as many as 1,800 Japanese women living in the DPRK is one of a series of emotional issues dividing the countries, which have never had diplomatic relations, and impeding Japanese willingness to provide aid to help alleviate famine conditions in the DPRK.

4. Views of DPRK Famine

The Washington Post (Kevin Sullivan, "N. KOREA'S STALINIST IMAGE MUTES IMAGES OF FAMINE," Seoul, 8/24/97, A19) carried a feature article discussing the difficulties of garnering public support in the ROK and the US to send food aid to the DPRK. The report described how an hour-long documentary on the DPRK famine, shown on ROK network television, helped stimulate a surge of private donations, whose US\$18 million total for the last two months is more than triple that contributed in the last two years. The report then noted, "As North Korea lets a few cameras inside its closed borders, the 'stealth famine' is coming into focus, and aid agencies say they are no longer finding that the outside world doubts the severity of North Korea's problem. But that's only half the battle: Even in the face of millions of starving children, many nations and people still have trouble writing a check for the Stalinist pariah state." Many in both the ROK and the US still heatedly resist sending aid to the committed communist government, the report said, due to both lingering historical animosities and concerns over more recent DPRK actions, as well as the prospect that the aid will end up supporting the DPRK's military, which might then come back to bite the hands that fed it.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Food Aid to DPRK

The ROK announced over the weekend that it will provide the DPRK with US\$10 million worth of food and other assistance through the UN. The ROK Ministry of National Unification (MONU) said Saturday that the new aid package will benefit mainly children. The aid, including food and medicine for children, to be delivered through the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), will also include the ROK's first provision of farm machinery and equipment to the DPRK. "We are offering this additional package out of brotherly love," Kang Ho-yang, the ministry spokesman, said in a statement. At the same time Kang urged the DPRK to ensure transparency in the distribution of international food aid there and to make its own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in food. ROK Ministry officials said that

the ROK is responding to floods and drought which have struck the DPRK for two consecutive years. International relief workers estimate that about 800 thousand tons of food are needed in the DPRK before its October harvest. The ROK has provided about US\$19.5 million worth of food aid to the DPRK via UN organizations since last year. In addition, the ROK National Red Cross has sent 100 thousand tons of food aid to the impoverished DPRK this year. (Korea Herald, Kim Ji-soo, "SEOUL ANNOUNCES MAJOR NEW AID PACKAGE TO DPRK," 08/25/97)

2. Four-Party Peace Talks

Director-general-level officials from the ROK and the US will meet in Washington Wednesday to discuss preparations for the second preliminary meeting for the four-party Korean peace talks slated for next month, the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said yesterday. The officials said the discussions between Yoo Myung-hwan, chief of the ROK ministry's North American Bureau, and Charles Kartman, US deputy assistant secretary of state, will focus on setting the agenda of the four-party peace talks. Delegates from the four countries met early this month, and managed to reach agreement on some matters, but failed to set the agenda of the formal four-party talks, and decided to hold a second round of preliminary negotiations in the middle of next month. At the first-round preliminary meeting, the DPRK insisted that the four-party talks should discuss its demand for the withdrawal of US forces from the ROK and establishment of a peace treaty between Pyongyang and Washington. Yoo, the ROK director general, is also scheduled to meet with Stanley Roth, the new assistant secretary of state, during his stay in Washington, ministry officials said. (Korea Herald, "KOREAN, US OFFICIALS TO MEET BEFORE NEXT PREPARATORY TALKS," 08/25/97)

3. DPRK-Japan Talks

The DPRK agreed Friday to let the Japanese wives of DPRK citizens visit their homeland as soon as late September, a Japanese official said. The agreement came during talks on forming diplomatic relations between the countries. Forming official ties with Japan could bring desperately needed aid for isolated, impoverished the DPRK, whose 24 million people are on the brink of starvation after three years of bad harvests. Two days of talks ended Friday with an agreement to have higher-level diplomats meet, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said the date and location would be decided later. The official wouldn't say whether the talks represented progress toward an agreement, noting that the last negotiations collapsed in 1992 after eight rounds of high-level meetings. The status of as many as 1,800 Japanese women living in the DPRK is one of a series of emotional issues dividing the countries, which have never had diplomatic relations. The DPRK resents past colonial domination by Japan while Tokyo suspects the DPRK of abducting Japanese citizens and wants information about narcotics found aboard a DPRK ship earlier this year. Japan raised both issues, and DPRK negotiators denied involvement in either drug trafficking or kidnappings, the Japanese official said. The DPRK officials were not available for comment. A committee set up by the Red Cross societies of the two countries will decide how many Japanese women in the DPRK make the first trip home and when, trying to do it within a month, the Japanese official said. "One month is sort of a goal. We are not bound by that date," he said, adding, "We felt that the DPRK was serious when talking about these home visits." Japan wants formal ties to ease the potential military threat from the DPRK, which is believed to have missiles that can reach Japanese cities and is suspected of trying to build nuclear weapons. (Korea Times, "NK AGREES TO LET JAPANESE WOMEN VISIT HOMELAND! ," 08/25/97)

III. Russian Federation

1. DPRK Leader on DPRK-US Relations

Segodnya's Ivan Shomov ("AMERICAN RICE IS NEEDED TO UNIFY THE MOTHERLAND," Moscow,

4, 8/15/97) reported on a new article by the DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, publicized via the DPRK's Central News Agency, in which Kim in particular said: "We do not want to see the USA as an eternal enemy, but wish for a normalization of Korean-American relations." Segodnya's author pointed out, though, that Kim Jong-il made no sensation. His good-will gesture just means that the DPRK has been made "ripe" for a rapprochement with its adversaries by the ever growing domestic difficulties. As different from his late father, the DPRK leader has no trump cards any more. Although he makes a precondition that "the USA must abandon the policy hostile to the DPRK," because "an attempt to make us stand on our knees by means of threats and pressure is futile and dangerous," in reality "it is the White House that's going to dictate the rules of the game."

2. KEDO Nuclear Plant Groundbreaking

Yuriy Savenkov of Izvestia ("LIGHT WATER' UNIFIES BROTHERS IN KOREA'S NORTH AND SOUTH," Moscow, 3, 8/20/97) reported on the international ceremony at Sinpo, in northeastern DPRK, to celebrate the beginning of the construction of two light water nuclear reactors there by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The US\$5 billion project is to be completed in 2003. Experts believe it might in particular contribute greatly to confidence-building on the Korean Peninsula due to inevitable working contacts between thousands of project-involved citizens of both the DPRK and the ROK. Pointing out that along with the ROK, the USA and Japan as major KEDO contributing members also Australia, Canada, Chile, Finland, Indonesia, New Zealand and the EU participate, Izvestia's author concluded that the RF "missed its chance in the past by refusing to become a member."

3. ROK Arms Imports from RF

Kommersant Daily ("SEOUL WILL CONTINUE IMPORTS OF RUSSIAN WEAPONS," Moscow, 3, 8/19/97) reported that the ROK will continue to import RF-made armaments and military equipment as payment for its loans extended to the USSR in 1991. In 1996 and the first half of 1997 those imports including T-80U tanks comprised US\$152 million. Imports are to continue next year.

4. RF Media on Soviet Military Involvement in Korean War

Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye's Andrey Pochtaryov (INTERNATIONAL LIE," Moscow, 5, 8/9-15/97 #29(56)) published an article based on archives and dedicated to Soviet military involvement in the 1950-1953 War in Korea. For many years the Soviet involvement was considered a state secret. Dwelling on some specific cases, the author reported that according to the latest estimate the USSR lost 142 officers, including 126 pilots, and 133 soldiers, in many cases their bodies left in unknown graves. Moreover, in 1951 some marked graves and monuments to the dead Soviet soldiers buried on Korean territory were demolished by Soviet bulldozers on an anonymous order. As a result the names of 40 thousand Soviet servicemen who went through the Korean War have been "written off" from the history.

5. PRC View of US-Japan Treaty Concerning Taiwan

Sovetskaya Rossia ("THESE DAYS BEIJING," Moscow, 7, 8/21/97) reported that a PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed the "grave concern" of the PRC Government over the statement by Seiroku Kajiyama, Secretary General of the Japanese Cabinet of Ministers, regarding the US-Japan Security Treaty's geographical application area covering the Straits of Taiwan. The PRC diplomat said the PRC hopes Japan will abstain from actions interfering with PRC domestic affairs and affecting PRC-Japan relations.

6. RF-Japan Ties

Nezavisimaia gazeta ("EURASIAN DIPLOMACY," Moscow, 5, 8/12/97) printed a full-page unofficial translation of Japanese Premier Ryutaro Hashimoto's speech on 7/24/97 at the Society of Economically Lime-Minded Persons in Tokyo, with a subtitle "A New Diplomatic Concept of Japan's Prime Minister" and a brief commentary that of major interest is the fact that "from now on Tokyo separates the problem of the Northern Territories (Southern Kurils) from the whole complex of the bilateral relations This step significantly changes the situation at Russia's Eastern borders to the better. But presently by all appearances in Tokyo they wait for Moscow's responsive actions."

Stanislav Kondrashov of Izvestia ("JAPAN HAS BEEN A LATE-COMER TO RUSSIA, NOW IT WISHES TO MAKE-UP FOR THAT," Moscow, 3, 8/16/97) commented on recent changes in Japan's attitude toward the RF, as manifested in Japanese Premier Ryutaro Hashimoto's proclaimed three principles of developing bilateral relations. In Izvestia's author's opinion, the rapidly developing PRC has become a factor necessitating it for Japan to try boosting its relations with the RF and to make its overall foreign relationships a bit more "Eurasian," as different from "Asian Pacific."

7. RF Radioactive Container Sank Near Sakhalin

Segodnya ("RADIOACTIVE CONTAINER SANK NEAR SAKHALIN COAST," Moscow, 1, 8/13/97) reported that on 8/11/97 a Mi-8 helicopter lost a radioactive container near the Sakhalin coast. The container, weighing 2300 kilograms with a thick lead cover and containing radioactive strontium-90, was as usual to be employed at an automatic weather-monitoring station in the same area. The container fell to the sea some 150 meters from the station and sank at 20 meters depth. Japanese authorities reportedly displayed concern, but tests undertaken immediately after proved no increase in radiation. Nevertheless, on 8/17/97 a naval ship is expected to arrive, locate the exact position of the container and to mark it for rescue.

Nezavisimaia gazeta ("RADIOACTIVE GENERATOR NOT FOUND," Moscow, 2, 8/19/97) reported that a naval ship sent to Sakhalin coast where a helicopter lost a weather-monitoring station radioactive power source device on 8/11/97 failed to detect it. The container is still at the sea bottom. It is recalled that a similar accident occurred 7 years ago approximately in the same area when a container was intentionally dropped off from a helicopter due to stormy conditions. It has not been discovered since.

8. RF Pacific Fleet Exercises

Nezavisimaia gazeta ("IN BRIEF ... LARGE-SCALE PACIFIC EXERCISES," Moscow, 1, 8/20/97) and Kommersant Daily ("PACIFIC FLEET TESTS ITS COMBAT-READINESS," Moscow, 3, 8/20/97) reported that on 8/19/97 the RF Pacific Fleet started large-scale tactical exercises. Those involve over 40 ships and submarines, including nuclear ones, as well as naval aircraft and aim at assessing the combat-readiness of the mobile rapid-response naval units. Pacific Fleet Commander Vice Adm. Mikhail Zakharenko is in command.

9. RF Naval Missile Exports to PRC

Nezavisimaia gazeta's Sergey Poutilov ("THEY TRY TO CATCH 'MOSQUITOS' ON THE CAPITOL HILL," Moscow, 2, 8/12/97) reported that the US Congress threatened to cut off any US aid to the RF were it to sell any of its newest supersonic ship-to-ship Moskit ["mosquito" in Russian; "Sunburn" in US classification] missiles to the PRC, indicating the US will not ignore growing RF-PRC military cooperation. The US has already criticized RF sales of Su-27 aircraft and armored vehicles there, but now "the patience seems to be over." According to the US, the planned sale would disrupt the regional balance. 5-6 Sunburns are enough to sink an aircraft-carrier, and no defense against them has been found so far; moreover, a highly improved version called "Yakhont" is being developed now

in the RF. On the other hand, the report noted that the ten missiles expected to be bought by the PRC would hardly endanger the 100,000-strong US forces deployed in the Asia Pacific region. Obviously the USA wish both "to hamper the emerging Moscow-Beijing strategic" and to slow down RF arms exports world-wide. Thus, RF weapons' "quality is not enough to be a leader in global arms markets. One should learn to thwart political and economic pressure means so frequently used by Washington in purely commercial matters."

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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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