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In today's Report:

[I. United States](#)

- [1. Four-Party Peace Talks](#)
- [2. Kim Jong-il Ascension](#)
- [3. ROK Supports DPRK in IMF and World Bank](#)
- [4. ROK Media and Church Representatives Visit DPRK](#)
- [5. Testimony of US Ambassador to ROK Nominee](#)
- [6. US-Japan Defense Guidelines](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. Four-Party Peace Talks](#)
- [2. ROK Executive Visits DPRK](#)
- [3. ROK Media and Church Representatives Visit DPRK](#)
- [4. New KEDO Head Named](#)
- [5. US-Japan Defense Guidelines](#)
- [6. ROK-Japan Relations](#)

I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

United Press International ("U.S. S. KOREA: BALL IN N. KOREA COURT," New York, 9/24/97) reported that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and her ROK counterpart Yoo Chong-ha, meeting in New York Tuesday, agreed that the Korean peace process will be stalled until the DPRK makes the next move. An unnamed senior Clinton administration official said that the two ministers agreed that "the ball is in North Korea's court." The official added that discussions of US troop withdrawals can be included in the final peace talks, but the agenda cannot be about removing the troops.

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA SAYS U.S. MUST PROVIDE FOOD AID," Seoul, 9/21/97) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), in a report monitored in Tokyo Sunday, quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying that the question of a pullout of US troops from the Korean peninsula has always been on the table at the preliminary Korean peace talks. "We proposed from the beginning to include in the agenda of the talks the US troop pullout from South Korea and its

vicinity, the conclusion of a peace agreement between the DPRK and the US and the discontinuation of North and South Korea's import of military hardware from outside," the statement said. The DPRK statement also said that the US was using food aid as a weapon in the talks, and that the US should now provide food aid as a sign of goodwill. "We intended that if the US clearly promised food supply to the DPRK, we would regard it as goodwill of the US and show flexibility in the debate on the agenda of the 'four-way talks'," the statement said.

2. Kim Jong-il Ascension

Reuters ("N.KOREA MEDIA SAYS KIM'S SUCCESSION BEGINS," Tokyo, 9/25/97) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Thursday that the process to chose Kim Jong-il as the ruling party leader had started. "A wave of jubilation and emotion is now sweeping (North) Korea ... because a process has started to elect the respected comrade Kim Jong-il as General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee," KCNA reported. "In the past three years when top party and state posts remained unoccupied, the Korean people were eagerly looking forward to the day when comrade Kim Jong-il would be officially acclaimed, regarding him as head of party and state. Their wish is being met at last," KCNA said. The statement was the first outright acknowledgment Kim, who has controlled the country as the supreme commander of the military since the 1994 death of his father, Kim Il-sung, is now moving also to take over his father's positions as general secretary of the party and state president. In July, the DPRK declared an end to a three-year mourning period for the elder Kim, paving the way for his son's succession.

3. ROK Supports DPRK in IMF and World Bank

Reuters ("SEOUL SUPPORTS N.KOREA ENTRY TO IMF /WORLD BANK," Hong Kon

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In today's Report:

[I. United States](#)

- [1. Four-Party Peace Talks](#)
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- [4. ROK Media and Church Representatives Visit DPRK](#)
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- [6. US-Japan Defense Guidelines](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. Four-Party Peace Talks](#)
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- [3. ROK Media and Church Representatives Visit DPRK](#)

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- [5. US-Japan Defense Guidelines](#)
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[I. United States](#)

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- [5. Testimony of US Ambassador to ROK Nominee](#)
- [6. US-Japan Defense Guidelines](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

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- [6. ROK-Japan Relations](#)

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3. ROK Supports DPRK in IMF and World Bank

Reuters ("SEOUL SUPPORTS N.KOREA ENTRY TO IMF /WORLD BANK," Hong Kong, 9/24/97) reported that ROK finance minister Kang Kyong-shik, in an address to the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on Wednesday, said that the ROK supports the DPRK's admittance to the institutions. Kang acknowledged the prospect was a "sensitive issue," but said the DPRK's entry "would expedite its integration into the world economy and contribute significantly to the political and economic stability of East Asia." "The Korean government welcomes North Korea's future participation in these institutions and is ready to support and assist North Korea in the process of meeting the prerequisites of accession," Kang said.

4. ROK Media and Church Representatives Visit DPRK

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA JOURNALISTS VISIT N. KOREA," Seoul, 9/24/97) reported that the ROK Ministry of National Unification announced that four journalists from the ROK national daily Joong-ang Ilbo have arrived in the DPRK. It is the first time the ROK has allowed an individual news organization to send journalists to the DPRK. However, the ROK government maintains the right to censor their reports, and approved the journalists' trip on the condition that they report only on cultural affairs and historical relics, omitting any mention of the DPRK's famine or political situation. The ministry also said that two ROK pastors from the Korea National Council of Churches arrived in the DPRK on Tuesday to discuss religious cooperation.

5. Testimony of US Ambassador to ROK Nominee

The Associated Press ("LIKELY JAPAN ENVOY ASSURES CHINA," Washington, 9/24/97) reported that Stephen W. Bosworth, President Clinton's nominee to be the next US ambassador to the ROK, appeared Wednesday at his confirmation hearing before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Bosworth, past ambassador to Tunisia and the Philippines and most recently executive director of the Korean Energy Development Organization, said his work had given him the opportunity to work closely with top officials of both the ROK and the DPRK. However, he stressed there could be no "moral equivalency" between the two governments, and predicted it would be extremely difficult to engage in "sustained diplomatic efforts" with the communist regime in Pyongyang. Referring to the preliminary four-party Korean peace talks that collapsed last week, Bosworth said, "I personally don't believe it is possible to lure them back into the negotiations."

6. US-Japan Defense Guidelines

The Associated Press ("U.S., JAPAN SET NEW MILITARY TIES," New York, 9/23/97) reported that on Tuesday senior US and Japanese Cabinet officials gave final approval a new US-Japan agreement on defense and military cooperation. The deal was celebrated in a photo-op four-way handshake among US Secretary of Defense William Cohen, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi, and Japanese Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma, while military officers of the two countries lining the spacious hotel conference room looked on. Cohen said Japan's new role would include providing support for US military operations, search and rescue efforts, and evacuations. He said the new guidelines also mean the US and Japan "will work together" if Japan is threatened. "The alliance is going to be the cornerstone of peace in the 21st century," Cohen said. However, the PRC is viewing the agreement suspiciously. "If it interferes with a third party, it will disrupt the peaceful situation" in Asia, a PRC spokesman said in Beijing. Albright sought to allay these fears, stating, "there is nothing country-specific or geographically specific" about the new guidelines. "It does not change our one-China policy," she said. However, none of the four officials, speaking at a news conference, identified who might pose a threat to Japan. Obuchi said Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto had explained the agreement to PRC officials on a trip to Beijing, but conceded "some concerns will remain." "We will provide in-depth explanations of the new guidelines to China, (South) Korea and other nations" attending the 52nd U.N. General Assembly session, he said.

The Associated Press ("US TRIES TO SOOTHE CHINA ON JAPAN," Washington, 9/23/97) reported that Kurt Campbell, a US deputy assistant secretary of defense and top official on the Far East, said Thursday that the US is offering the PRC a closer look at its expanded military ties with Japan to assuage Beijing's security worries. Campbell described the US-Japan-China relationship as "virtual trilateralism," and said the PRC will be as closely involved as it wants in discussing the new US-Japanese security arrangement. "To date, the inhibition to engage in that dialogue has come primarily from Beijing, not from the United States and Japan," Campbell said, adding that the US is hopeful that will change because "we believe that it's important for the United States and Japan to give a window into this alliance to China." "We have indicated to them that we would welcome the opportunity to brief them and to engage about the issue of the U.S.-Japan security and political alliance," he said. Japan has invited the PRC and other regional nations to a forum next month to review details of the agreement, Campbell said the US and Japan hope to stage many such gatherings over the next six to eight months as details are worked out. "There's a prospect for a very successful fall, and I think that we could see in the coming months a really significant step forward," he said.

The Associated Press ("JAPAN PM SEES OPPOSITION TO US PACT," Seoul, 9/24/97) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said Wednesday that his government faces strong resistance to the new US-Japan military cooperation agreement, but pledged to overcome any opposition. "The government still has a massive amount of work to do, such as preparing detailed bills and ordinances," Hashimoto told reporters at his residence. "This is not the end, but the beginning." The agreement, announced Tuesday in New York after 18 months of negotiations, will require changes in Japan's laws and possibly its constitution. Many Japanese see the agreement, which expands a 1978 security pact, as a turning point in their postwar defense policy, and fear it will lead to a stronger role for their military than they believe is acceptable. "The new guidelines must not be a mechanism by which Japan automatically takes part in America's war," the liberal newspaper Asahi said in an editorial today.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha and his US counterpart Madeleine Albright reaffirmed the two countries' firm stance on further high-level talks with the DPRK. Yoo and Albright expressed disappointment at the failure of the second round of preparatory peace talks, which he said was caused by the DPRK's excessive demands and miscalculation of US and ROK intentions. Yoo, during his meeting with Albright, also asked for a more active US effort to revise its military agreement with the ROK on jurisdiction over US troops stationed in the ROK, a ministry official said. (Korea Herald, "YOO CHONG-HA, ALBRIGHT CONFIRM STANCE ON NORTH KOREA TALKS," 09/25/97)

Former US National Security Advisor Anthony Lake stressed the need to pursue the policy of creating a "soft-landing" for the DPRK. He said this policy is required in order to avoid unpredictable dangers from the sudden collapse of the regime and to lessen the cost of eventual unification of the two Koreas. Lake also warned that the disintegration of the DPRK's economic and social system could create a humanitarian crisis even greater than its current famine. Lake said a soft-landing strategy should consist of three elements: maintaining deterrence, keeping a freeze on the DPRK's nuclear program, and implementing the 1994 US-DPRK framework agreement along with diplomatic efforts for a permanent peace. Lake commented on the DPRK's reluctance to agree to attend a four-party peace conference, and said that the DPRK should recognize that further delay of the meeting would worsen its position. (Korea Herald, "LAKE STRESSES SOFT-LANDING FOR NORTH; FORMER TOP U.S. SECURITY ADVISER POINTS TO DANGER OF COLLAPSE," Kyung-ho Kim, 09/19/97)

2. ROK Executive Visits DPRK

Daewoo Business Group founder Kim Woo-choong made a secret visit to the DPRK Sept. 14-19 without going through the proper procedures. A ROK National Unification Ministry official confirmed that Kim visited the DPRK, at the invitation of the DPRK's External Economic Commission, to address "urgent" problems at Daewoo's Nampo industrial complex. During his stay in Pyongyang and Nampo, Kim met commission chairman Li Song-dae and Kim Jong-u, chairman of the DPRK's Committee for the Promotion of External Economic Cooperation. The Ministry official said that Daewoo's Nampo Industrial Complex suffered a management crisis that made Kim's visit to Nampo necessary, but would not reveal the exact nature of the problems, fueling speculation regarding the nature of the visit and the reasons that the Unification Ministry granted him "preferential" treatment. (Korea Times, "DAEWOO'S KIM WOO-CHOONG MAKES 'SECRET' VISIT TO NK," 09/25/97)

3. ROK Media and Church Representatives Visit DPRK

A four-man team of the Joong Ang Ilbo will visit the DPRK to observe cultural relics, while two KNCC officials will visit the DPRK to explore ways to promote exchanges and cooperation between the churches of the two Koreas. The newspaper visitors are not allowed to write stories based on their visits as a condition for the authorization of the visit without consultation with government authorities. (Korea Times, "NEWSPAPER AND KNCC OFFICIALS VISITING NK," 09/24/97)

4. New KEDO Head Named

US charge d'affaires to Vietnam Desaix Anderson was designated as executive director of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). Anderson is to replace outgoing director general Stephen Bosworth, who was nominated as US ambassador to Seoul. (Korea Times, "ANDERSON NAMED AS KEDO CHIEF," 09/25/97)

5. US-Japan Defense Guidelines

The US and Japan have agreed on guidelines for improving their response to any military crisis in the Pacific region, the US Defense Department said Friday. Secretary of State Madeline Albright and Defense Secretary William Cohen are expected to put final touches on the agreement in meetings with their Japanese counterparts this week in New York. Kurt Campbell, the Pentagon's deputy assistant secretary for Asian and Pacific affairs, said that the guidelines "provide guidance for our political leadership and for our military planners ... about how the US and Japan would respond in a crisis—a crisis that challenges Japan and surrounding areas." The agreement provides assurances that Japan can work on specific agreements about how its ports, airfields, and other facilities might be used in such a crisis. Lt. Col. Robin Sakoda, a Japanese specialist for the Pentagon, said the agreement provides "political authority" for bureaucrats and military officials that was previously lacking. (Korea Times, "US, JAPAN SET TO SIGN DEFENSE AGREEMENT," 09/23/97)

ROK military leaders are cautiously assessing the new US-Japan defense guidelines that will allow Japanese troops to play a role in regional conflicts. Critics say that there are ample grounds for concern because the new guidelines, which revise a 20-year-old pact, will eventually lead to the strengthening of Japan's military power. Among other things, the new guidelines allow Japan to engage in minesweeping for US troops in international waters, the transport of US personnel and material to US vessels, and the evacuation of Japanese civilians in emergencies. Critics observe that Japan's Self-Defense Force focuses on modernizing its hardware, giving its navy one of the most modern fleets of Aegis warships around, an air force with top of the line F-15 fighters, and its army formidable tanks. And many experts expect that Japan's military buildup will continue. However, officials pointed out that the new arrangement is more aimed at the PRC, which is widely seen to be a source of future trouble, considering its growing economy and military power and its claims on Taiwan. (Korea Times, "ROK MILITARY CAUTIOUS TOWARDS NEW JAPAN-US DEFENSE GUIDELINES," Oh Young-jin, 09/25/97)

6. ROK-Japan Relations

ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha met with his Japanese counterpart Keizo Obuchi in New York Wednesday on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, ROK Foreign Ministry officials said yesterday. Yoo called on Japan to form a bilateral consultation body to prepare for contingencies on the Korean peninsula, and Minister Obuchi promised that Japan would consult closely with the ROK on issues affecting the Korean peninsula when Japan sets up detailed action plans with the US. The two ministers also agreed to convene working-level fishing talks early next month in Tokyo to seek an early conclusion of the current negotiations to revise the 1965 fisheries convention. Yoo also told Obuchi that improvement in ties between Japan and the DPRK should be made in harmony with improvement of inter-Korean ties, and Obuchi replied that Japan had not yet worked out any detailed plan for the resumption of diplomatic normalization talks with the DPRK, although steps are being taken to realize the home visits of Japanese wives in the DPRK in the wake of bilateral talks between deputy director generals. Obuchi said that Tokyo is considering offering grain aid to the DPRK, but has not yet finalized any detailed plans for humanitarian assistance. (Korea Times, "SEOUL CALLS ON TOKYO TO FORM CONSULTING BODY ON CONTINGENCIES," Son Key-young, 09/25/97)

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[Return to the top of this Daily Report](#)

[Go to the Daily Report Archive](#)

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[Return to the top of this Daily Report](#)

[Go to the Daily Report Archive](#)

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