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I. United States

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Reuters ("S. KOREA-CHINA TALKS ON DEFECTOR BOGGED DOWN," Beijing, 2/27/97) reported that ROK-PRC discussions Thursday over the fate of DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop produced no progress. "It's still going on," ROK Embassy spokesman Chang Moon-ik said. When asked when Hwang might be able to leave the PRC, Chang said, "Not this month." Chang declined to say what issues, if any, were holding up negotiations on Hwang. "It's very hard to say when this case will be over," he said. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Tang Guoqiang called for calm and said Beijing did not wish to see new tension on the Korean peninsula. "We hope that all sides concerned seek with a calm and objective attitude a solution to appropriately resolve the matter to maintain peace and

stability in the Korean peninsula," Tang told a news briefing. "We do not wish to see this matter giving rise to new tensions in the Korean peninsula. Whether the problem is resolved fast or slow hinges completely on when and under what circumstances (the) concerned sides find a way to appropriately resolve it," he said.

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3. Views on Prospects for Korean Peace

Jessica Mathews wrote in The Washington Post ("SCORE ONE FOR DIPLOMACY," 2/24/97, A19) that despite long-standing tension on the Korean peninsula and a series of serious crises in recent years, "this year suddenly and surprisingly appears to offer the first real opportunity to begin to end the Korean War." Mathews observed that peace is not "remotely a sure thing, and it won't be easy." However, Mathews noted, the numerous obstacles of late have made it "all the more remarkable that the 1994 nuclear agreement has not just survived, but thrived" Mathews discussed extensively the role of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), arguing that its role has expanded beyond implementation of the nuclear agreement into a perhaps "major tool" of "political reconciliation between the two Koreas." After describing the progress attributable to KEDO's successes, Mathews observed: "All this is a long way from early 1994, when the rival merits of sanctions and air strikes against Pyongyang were being debated. Mathews then observed that, ironically, this progress is now threatened most seriously by "what should have been its easiest provision," the US guarantee to provide interim fuel oil supplies. Mathews pointed at both the Republican-led US Congress and oil-rich Persian Gulf allies as chiefly negligent in upholding this end of the agreement. Mathews concluded: "Relations between the two Koreas could still explode in any number of awful ways, but never has there been as much reason to expect progress as there is now. Rarely does so much in international affairs depend on so little."

Steve Glain wrote in The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition ("NORTH KOREA COULD END

WITH BANG, WHIMPER, OR HANDSHAKE," 2/27/97) that recent events have raised awareness in Asia of the rising pressures inside the DPRK's ruling regime, and that "East Asia's eternal flash point could be closer to igniting than many believed." The problem, Glain observed, is that "the only sure thing about North Korea is how ill-prepared the region is to deal with its demise." Glain argued that "the countries with the most to lose from a convulsive reckoning on the peninsula, Japan and especially South Korea," excessively expect the DPRK to make diplomatic concessions in exchange for food aid and investment, and are insufficiently prepared for the possibilities of a DPRK "economic and political implosion" or a "last-ditch bid by Pyongyang to unify the peninsula by force." Glain discussed extensively the implications of the submarine incursion, arguing that it demonstrated just how unprepared the ROK is for a potential massive attack by the DPRK, and quoting Brig. Gen. Cha Young-koo, deputy director-general of the ROK Defense Ministry, as saying that the incursion "was a good thing" because it "awakened people's concern over the nature of the North Korean threat." Glain also noted that, although the ROK has a plan to deal with a massive refugee influx following a DPRK implosion, the plan has no budget. Glain concluded that most analysts anticipate gradual diplomatic accommodation by the DPRK at least in part because envisioning the alternative scenarios is "so unappetizing."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Sent Secret Food to DPRK

The weekly news magazine Sisa Journal reported that the ROK secretly sent approximately 3,400 tons of flour worth US\$986,000 to the DPRK last summer, probably under the initiative of the Presidential Secretariat, despite the government's policy at the time to suspend food aid to the DPRK. An additional US\$4 million worth of food aid was given to the DPRK later in 1996 with the financial support of several big business groups, according to the March 6 issue of the journal. Hyundai Group financed the first shipment, which was delivered to the DPRK's Choson Kwangmyongsong General Corporation. The later shipments were made mainly through Pak Myong-ae, an adopted daughter of Hwang Jang-yop, the DPRK Workers' Party ideologue who is seeking political asylum to the ROK in Beijing. Pak runs a trading company in Shenyang, PRC. The magazine further said the Presidential Secretariat set up a secret food aid plan for the DPRK amounting to a total of US\$5 million in 1995, which was carried out by Korean-American businessmen. However, the actual shipment was made in June and July 1996 because of several procedural problems. The magazine also claimed that US\$4 million worth of flour, salt and textile had been shipped to the DPRK through Pak Myong-ae from April through November last year. This indicates that the ROK was providing aid to the DPRK even after the September 18, 1996 submarine incursion of the DPRK into ROK waters, the journal said. The sponsors were again ROK business groups. The magazine alleged that the secret aid deal must have derived from the ROK's ambition to host the 2002 World Cup soccer games and perhaps to induce inter-Korean summit talks. The Seoul government declared a suspension of food aid to the DPRK right after the failure of the third round of talks with the DPRK in Beijing in 1995 and set three preconditions for additional food aid to the DPRK at the time: 1) a halt to the slandering of the Southern government, 2) resumption of government-level talks between the two Koreas and 3) formal requests by the Pyongyang government for food aid. (Korea Herald, "SEOUL SENT FOOD TO NORTH KOREA DESPITE BAN, WEEKLY SAYS," Seoul, 02/27/97)

2. Hwang Defection: ROK-PRC Talks

Seoul and Beijing made no significant progress in their talks Wednesday on how to deal with a top DPRK defector, holed up in the ROK consulate in Beijing since seeking asylum on February 12. ROK Minister Moon Bong-ju at the ROK Embassy in Beijing met a deputy director official at the PRC Foreign Ministry to resume the talks on the defection of Hwang Jang-yop. A top ROK official said he believes that the PRC wants to avoid upsetting the DPRK but finds it difficult to clearly figure out the

DPRK's position because Pyongyang still sends mixed signals. In a statement issued on February 17, the DPRK hinted that it could allow Hwang to defect to Seoul if he were a "traitor." At the same time, however, the DPRK did not drop its original position that the ROK had kidnapped him. The official said that the PRC does not require the DPRK's full consent in deciding Hwang's destination, adding that it only wants to minimize any possible hysterical reaction from the DPRK. With regards to a press report that Hwang would be transferred to the US Embassy in Beijing, the official ruled out that possibility. (Korea Times, "SEOUL, BEIJING MAKE NO HEADWAY IN HWANG'S DEFECTION," 02/27/97)

3. DPRK Woman Defects to ROK

The ROK Defense Ministry reported that a 26-year-old DPRK woman crossed the eastern part of the Demilitarized Zone and defected to the ROK yesterday morning. According to the ministry spokesman, the woman defector, identified as Li Kyu-son, wore a black jumper and was barefoot when she revealed herself and her intention to defect at 10:20 a.m. He said that ROK Army soldiers on duty at a guard post near the DMZ took her in after clarifying her intention to defect. "The defector is under the protection of authorities undergoing debriefing as to her motive for defection and the route she took to the South," he said. He also said that the ministry is planning not to reveal her hometown and family under a new government guideline set up following the presumed assassination of Lee Han-yong, a noted defector and nephew of a former wife of the communist leader Kim Jong-il, by unidentified gunmen. He said that there will likely be no press conference after her debriefing, previously a usual practice by ROK authorities. (Korea Herald, "BAREFOOT NK WOMAN DEFECTS TO SOUTH," 02/27/97)

4. Cause of Kim Il-sung's Death

The lingering doubt over the actual cause of death of the DPRK's late leader Kim Il-sung has been rekindled by the defector, Hwang Jang-yop, who reportedly said Kim died from a heart attack while arguing with his son. Hwang reportedly has said that the argument stemmed from the junior Kim's fierce opposition to his father's instructions to prepare a mass welcoming ceremony for ROK President Kim Young-sam for the inter-Korean summit. The DPRK announced at the time that Kim Il-sung had been receiving treatment for arteriosclerosis before his death and that the cause of death was a heart attack with cardiac infarction. Meanwhile, the local businessman in Seoul who helped arrange Hwang's defection said that the argument actually was about DPRK citizens' living conditions. DPRK watchers say if the argument with Kim Jong-il did indeed cause Kim Il-sung's death, it may explain why the son's formal succession to power has yet to take place. (Korea Times, "KIM IL SUNG DIED OF HEART ATTACK IN ARGUMENT WITH SON: DAILY," 02/27/97)

III. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK Attendance of Four-Party Talks Briefing

Jie Fang Daily ("`FOUR-WAY TALKS' BRIEFING TO BE HELD NEXT MONTH," Pyongyang, A5, 2/24/97) reported the DPRK's February 21 announcement that it would attend a briefing on the four-party Korean peace talks proposal in New York on March 5. A DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman said a high-level DPRK-US talk will follow the preparatory briefing. On February 22, ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha and visiting US Secretary of State Madeline Albright expressed their welcome of the DPRK's attendance to the four-party talks briefing, the report said.

2. DPRK Opinion of US Human Rights Report

Recently, the DPRK's Rodong Sinmun and Minju Choson respectively published articles refuting US

"Human Rights Reports," People's Daily ("DPRK NEWSPAPERS REFUTE US `HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT'," Pyongyang, A6, 2/23/97) reported. The report said, Minju Choson emphatically exposed the human rights situation in the US, while Rodong Sinmun pointed out that the US was infringing upon human rights under the name of safeguarding human rights. The Rodong Sinmun article said the real intention of US flaunting of the human rights issue is to impose its political system and life style on other countries. By repeatedly talking about human rights elsewhere, the US can cover up its own miserable human rights condition and prepare to interfere militarily in other countries, the article said.

3. US Secretary of State Visit to PRC

PRC President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng and Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen respectively met with visiting US Secretary of State Madeline Albright in Beijing on February 24. Jiang said that despite global changes, the PRC and the US share a wide range of common interests, especially in developing mutually beneficial economic cooperation, safeguarding world and regional peace, and promoting the development and prosperity of a world economy. Regarding disputes, Jiang said that both countries should approach them from a higher perspective and consider the prosperity and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the world. During the meeting with Albright, Li expressed his anticipation to meet Vice President Al Gore in March, and said he is willing to discuss cooperation in environmental protection and in energy and sustainable development to open new areas for bilateral economic exchanges. At the official talks between Qian and Albright, the two ministers had a "friendly" exchange of views on the PRC's entry into the World Trade Organization, non-proliferation of arms, its resumption of exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, and the "one China" policy in relation to Taiwan. Albright also conveyed a letter of condolence from President Bill Clinton to Jiang on the death of Deng Xiaoping. Wen Hui Daily ("JIANG, LI MEET WITH US STATE SECRETARY," Beijing, A6, 2/25/97).

4. Economic Effect of Deng's Death

The PRC economy will not be shaken by the death of veteran leader Deng Xiaoping, PRC economists said on February 20. Qiu Xiaohua, a top economist at the State Statistics Bureau said he is fully confident that the country's gross domestic product will grow "at least eight per cent" in 1997. In addition, Xu Hongyuan, a senior economist at the State Information Center said there will be no immediate adverse impacts on the national economy because of Deng's passing. To ensure the successful implementation of Deng's concept of "One Country, Two Systems," the government will work for a prosperous economy in the mainland as well as in Hong Kong this year, Xu said. China Daily ("ECONOMY TO REMAIN STABLE AFTER DENG," A5, 2/21/97)

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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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