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I. United States

1. DPRK Defense Official Dies

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA DEFENSE OFFICIAL DIES," Seoul, 2/28/97) and United Press International ("N.KOREA DEFENSE LEADER CANDIDATE DIES," Seoul, 2/28/97) reported that DPRK radio monitored in the ROK and Japan said on Friday that Army Vice-Marshall Kim Kwang-jin, 78, vice minister of the People's Armed Forces and a leading candidate for the vacant post of defense minister, has died from an undisclosed illness. The defense ministry leadership opened less than a week ago with the February 21 death of Defense Minister Choe Kwang, who was considered

to be the DPRK's second ranking military official. Like the late defense minister, the 69-year-old Kim was part of the so-called "revolution generation" of old guard leaders who rose to power under DPRK founder Kim Il-sung. ROK analysts have said that Choe's death provides Kim Jong-il the opportunity to shore up his power base by naming younger replacements loyal to him. The funeral arrangements for Choe, particularly the decisions to include some officials on the planning committee and not others, have suggested that just such a shake-up is in progress.

2. Implications of DPRK Defense Officials Deaths

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA MILITARY LEADERS CHANGE," Seoul, 2/28/97) reported that the deaths of the DPRK's two top army generals in less than a week are expected to accelerate a generational change in the country's aging m

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2. Implications of DPRK Defense Officials Deaths

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA MILITARY LEADERS CHANGE," Seoul, 2/28/97) reported that the deaths of the DPRK's two top army generals in less than a week are expected to accelerate a generational change in the country's aging military leadership. Analysts said it appears almost certain that the two vacated posts will be filled by younger generals rather than by members of the old guard who came to power under late leader Kim Il-sung. "What is looming is a generational change," said Kwon Kyong-bok, an analyst at Naewoe Press, a semiofficial ROK news agency specializing in DPRK affairs. Kwon predicted that Army Chief of Staff Kim Yong-chun, believed to be in his early 60s, may be a likely choice for the top military post. Some analysts have suggested that, as his impoverished country struggles to overcome a political and economic crisis, Kim Jong-il appears to be relying increasingly on the military. "What is happening in North Korea is reminiscent of the late 1960s when the military was at the forefront of power," said Yoon Duk-min, a ROK government analyst. "That process would be highlighted by the emergence of younger generals."

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, FEB. 27," USIA Transcript, 2/28/97), asked if the US saw signs of leadership change in the DPRK following the deaths of two top military officials, said: "There's clearly a lot going on in North Korea these days. It's clearly a time of turbulence in North Korean society -- no question about it -- with the events that you mentioned and also the terrible food shortages that are affecting the civilian population. We can't do much to affect the North Korean political structure or to affect who's in what job. But we can do two things that are important. We can deliver the food aid that we promised, and we'll do that, ... and second we can work at the Four-Party briefing talks that will commence on March [5] in New York to see if we can convince the North Koreans to go to peace negotiations with the South Koreans and the Chinese and ourselves, and we can make sure that the Agreed Framework is being

implemented, which it is. These are our interests in North Korea, and we're going to pursue all of those interests."

3. Hwang Defection

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, FEB. 27," USIA Transcript, 2/28/97), asked if the US had any new information on the status of DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop, still in refuge in the ROK consulate in Beijing, said: "I do not. I'm not aware of any new developments. The Chinese Government and the South Korean Government are working together on this, and we just hope that this situation can be resolved peacefully and quickly and according to normal international norms, international practices in these kinds of cases. We had a very good briefing from the Chinese the other day about the status of Mr. Hwang and from the South Korean leadership two days prior to that."

4. ROK Leadership Shake-up

Reuters ("S. KOREAN LEADER SACKS AIDES TO DEFUSE CRISIS," Seoul, 2/28/97) reported that on Friday ROK President Kim Young-sam began a sweeping administration reshuffle by replacing his chief secretary and three other top advisers responsible for political, economic and general affairs, according to a presidential spokesman. "This is the start of a major reshuffle in the government and the ruling party," the spokesman said. "The cabinet reshuffle is expected early next week." All members of Kim Young-sam's Blue House inner circle, the entire cabinet and ruling New Korea Party leaders had offered to step down after the president Tuesday apologized on national television for the loans scandal involving the failed Hanbo Steel Co. Separately, Kim dismissed Kim Ki-sup, deputy chief of the Agency for National Security Planning and the country's second ranking intelligence officer. Although the government gave no reason for the dismissal, opposition politicians have alleged that Kim Ki-sup was close to the president's second son, Hyun-chul, who Kim Young-sam banished from public life after he was questioned by state prosecutors in connection with the loans scandal.

5. Viewpoint on Korean Security Situation

Tom Plate wrote in the Los Angeles Times ("THE PAYOFF IN CARING ABOUT KOREA," 2/25/97) that the current situation on the Korean Peninsula offers a prime opportunity for the Clinton administration to pull off a "diplomatic triumph." With the recent announcement by the DPRK that it will attend a briefing on the four-party peace talks proposal, the chance for a denuclearization of the DPRK and a normalization of relations on the Korean Peninsula increases, Plate wrote. He then discussed how several parties have an important interest in Korean affairs, including Korean Americans who have familial and emotional ties to both the ROK and the DPRK. Also, ROK President Kim Young-sam knows that any improvement of US-DPRK relations at the expense of the ROK would further weaken his already precarious position. The PRC also has an interest, Plate argued, because it is weary of the DPRK's erratic behavior and because the ROK has become an important trading partner. Plate wrote that the potential in Korea is great: a united Korea could prove to be a powerful ally of the US and a great democratic success, but a renewed authoritarian ROK and a starving DPRK could be "a recipe for Asian disaster."

6. Indonesia to Build Nuclear Reactors

The Sydney Morning Herald (Louise Williams, "DISASTER FEARS AS INDONESIA CLEARS WAY FOR 12 NUCLEAR PLANTS," Jakarta, 2/27/97) reported that the Indonesian Parliament has passed a controversial nuclear energy bill, clearing the way for the construction of up to 12 nuclear power plants, the first to be built alongside the dormant Muria volcano in Java. Critics of the nuclear

program fear a potential disaster because of the high level of volcanic and earthquake activity throughout Indonesia, with fallout reaching Australia within days, according to estimates. Indonesia's Science and Technology Minister tried to assuage demonstrators' fears by saying, "We have found other energy sources such as geothermal, so I'll do my best not to use this nuclear plan." However, energy analysts believe that the 12-site reactor program is inevitable considering Indonesia's rapid economic growth and the limited oil and natural gas supplies, which it is estimated will be exhausted within 20 and 38 years, respectively. The Indonesian National Atomic Energy Agency has assured the Australian government that the reactors' five-barrier sealing system will contain all contamination in an accident.

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("INDONESIA NUCLEAR ACCIDENT COULD BE 'WORSE THAN CHERNOBYL,'" Melbourne, 2/27/97) reported that the environmental group Friends of the Earth said Thursday that a nuclear power plant accident in Indonesia would make the 1986 Chernobyl meltdown "look like a teddy bears' picnic." "Indonesia's cavalier approach shows no concern for the hazards that nuclear power presents," spokesman Daniel Voronoff said. The comments follow a decision by the Indonesian Parliament on Wednesday to approve construction of at least 12 nuclear power plants in Indonesia. The Indonesian government plans to build the first reactor by the year 2000 in the foothills of a dormant volcanic mountain in central Java, 400 kilometers east of Jakarta. "Java is located in one of the most seismically active areas of this planet," Voronoff said. An accident caused by volcanic activity in the summer months "would liberally dump radioactive fallout all over the top end of Australia," he said. Voronoff said the Indonesian government was disregarding the safety of the surrounding region and the hundreds of millions of people populating it.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Calls for Nuclear Waste Export Ban

The ROK, denouncing Taiwan's plan to ship nuclear waste to the DPRK, has called for the establishment of a regional pact to prohibit the export of radioactive waste to developing countries. Ham Myung-chul, the ROK deputy permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, made remarks to that effect in a meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. Ham made it clear that any trans-border movement of radioactive waste that has potential environmental hazards for neighboring countries should only take place "if those countries have been given prior notification and have granted their prior consent." He urged that an "arrangement be adopted in other regions with environmental concerns over radioactive waste," according to his speech text distributed by the Foreign Ministry. He was quoted as saying that the deal between Pyongyang and Taipei, if left unchecked, will be a most serious threat to the environment of the Korean peninsula and its neighboring countries. (Korea Times, "SEOUL CALLS FOR REGIONAL PACT TO BAN N-WASTE EXPORT," 02/28/97)

2. ROK Delegation Leaves for Joint Briefing

ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Song Young-shik will fly to New York Saturday to meet DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman at the March 5 briefing that is an effort to elicit Pyongyang's participation in the proposed four-party peace talks. In the briefing, slated for next Wednesday, Song and Kartman will give the DPRK delegation explanations on the agenda, background and purpose of the four-party meeting involving the ROK, the DPRK, the US, and the PRC. Song reaffirmed that Seoul will not offer large-scale food assistance to the DPRK simply in exchange for the DPRK's participation in the joint briefing, and said that issues such as Hwang Jang-yop's defection and Taiwan's nuclear waste shipment to the DPRK will not be discussed. A day before the joint briefing, representatives from the ROK and the US will meet in New York to coordinate the two countries' positions, Song said. Meanwhile, the DPRK and the US

will hold a senior-level meeting Friday to discuss pending issues such as the exchange of liaison offices, the repatriation of the remains of U.S. servicemen killed in the Korean War and missile non-proliferation. (Korea Times, "S.KOREAN DELEGATION TO LEAVE FOR NEW YORK FOR JOINT BRIEFING," 02/28/97)

3. ROK Defense Ministry Sues US Helicopter Maker

The ROK Defense Ministry has filed a suit against Sikorsky Co., a US helicopter manufacturing firm, at an international arbitration committee, seeking compensation of 20 billion won. The ministry claimed that the US chopper manufacturer sold three Blackhawk choppers to the ROK at the price of US\$15.3 million apiece, almost double the price the Sikorsky Co. received from the sale of the same type of helicopters to Australia. The UH-60 Blackhawk is a multi-purpose military helicopter which can be used as gunship or troop transport. "By our estimates, Sikorsky has pocketed over 20 billion won in unearned profits in its sale of the three choppers," a ministry official said. The US helicopter maker has sold some 80 Blackhawks so far at the total price of over US\$500 million to the ROK since 1990. (Korea Times, "DEFENSE MINISTRY SUES US CHOPPER MAKER, SIKORSKY, FOR W20 BILLION," 02/28/97)

4. University Boycott Scheduled

Hanchongnyon, or the Korean Federation of University Student Councils, is planning to call a two-day class boycott by affiliated student councils on March 28 to "avert the government's scheme to divert public attention from its mishandling of state affairs to matters of national security." Police said Thursday that they had acquired minutes of a recent meeting attended by the pro-DPRK activists' organization, in which the call for the two-day class boycott was decided upon. Authorities said that Hanchongnyon cadres hold the government responsible for the Hanbo scandal and claim that the administration is trying to hold on to power by spreading fear among the general public through talks of war and by the supposed engineering of the assassination of Lee Han-yong, a noted defector from the DPRK. The upcoming boycott will likely be one of the biggest since the last mass action staged by Hanchongnyon last year, urging the enactment of a special law that will punish those responsible for the May 18, 1980 violent suppression of the Kwangju uprising. (Korea Times, "HANCHONGNYON TO CALL 2-DAY BOYCOTT MARCH," 02/28/97)

III. Japan

1. Japan's Stance on DPRK Food Aid

The Sankei Shimbun ("CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY OPEN TO FOOD AID WHILE ATTENTIVE TO DOMESTIC PUBLIC OPINION," 4, 2/25/97) reported that Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama said to reporters on February 24 that the Japanese government may reconsider food aid to the DPRK if ROK-DPRK relations improve. The report said that this suggests that Kajiyama wants to monitor carefully Japanese public opinion about Japan's relations with the US, the ROK and the DPRK. In addition, Japan's Foreign Ministry saw the UN World Food Program's (WFP) call for food aid as compensation for the failed deal between the DPRK and Cargill. The report also said that despite the Foreign Ministry's harsh stance on the DPRK's suspected abduction of a Japanese high school girl, Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda's talks with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright compelled him to provide food aid to maintain security in the Korean Peninsula.

2. Japan-US Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("US PLEDGES TO DEAL SENSITIVELY WITH OKINAWA ISSUE," 1, 2/24/97) reported that during her talks with Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on February 24,

visiting US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright emphasized the importance of the Japan-US security arrangement and said that the US would deal sensitively with various issues related to the US military presence in Okinawa, including the firing of uranium bullets on Okinawa by US military aircraft. Prime Minister Hashimoto also asked the US to establish a system of early reporting to Japan if similar accidents occur, and insisted on reviewing the scale of US forces and other issues related to last year's Japan-US joint security declaration. With regard to Japan-US policy toward the PRC, the pair agreed to maintain a policy of engagement as the PRC's constructive partners.

3. Japanese Emergency Law

The Nikkei Shimbun ("CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY SAYS JAPAN SHOULD PROCEED EMERGENCY LAW," Evening Edition 2, 2/24/97) reported that Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama said on February 24 during a Lower House Budget Committee meeting that Japan should prepare for contingencies by enacting an emergency law based on the right to self-defense. Kajiyama made the proposal in response to a question concerning Japan's ability to deal with emergencies in the Korean Peninsula.

4. Japan's Defense Build-Up Plan

The Nikkei Shimbun ("CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY SAYS JAPAN WILL REDUCE BUDGET FOR MID-TERM DEFENSE BUILD-UP PLAN DUE TO PREDICTED NATIONAL BUDGET CUTS," 1, 2/28/97) reported that Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama told reporters on February 27 that the present budget of 25.15 trillion yen for the Mid-Term Defense Build-Up Plan for 1996-2000 will be reduced due to predicted national budget cuts resulting from the upcoming national financial review. The build-up plan was slated to be reviewed three years after its cabinet approval in 1995, but Kajiyama announced that the review will come one year earlier.

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("MID-TERM DEFENSE PLAN TO BE REVIEWED," 2, 2/28/97) reported that cuts in the Mid-Term Defense Build-Up Plan likely to occur after the upcoming national financial review are questionable because some Liberal Democratic Party members closely related to defense policy are sure to oppose any cuts. The report added that the previous Mid-Term Defense Build-Up Plan (for 1991-1995) was reviewed due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and related international changes.

5. Japan-Mongolia Relations

Mongolian Prime Minister Mendsaikhon Enkhsaikhon, who is visiting Japan in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Japan-Mongolia diplomatic relations, said on February 23 during his interview with the Yomiuri Shimbun ("MONGOLIAN PREMIER LINKS DOMESTIC ECONOMIC REFORM AND JAPANESE ECONOMIC AID," 5, 2/24/97) that Mongolia's economic development owes greatly to Japanese aid and also expressed his support of Japan's proposed permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Despite ongoing transitional problems such as price increases, rising unemployment and a widening gap between the rich and the poor, Enkhsaikhon expressed his intention to achieve an annual growth rate of five percent this year and privatization of 60 percent of the state-owned lands by 2000. He also expressed his hope in strengthening Mongolia's ties with the Association of East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and joining the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

In his interview with the Asahi Shimbun ("MONGOLIAN PRIME MINISTER EXPECTS BROAD JAPANESE COOPERATION," 7, 2/24/97), Mongolian Prime Minister Mendsaikhon Enkhsaikhon said that he wants to see the Mongolia-Japan partnership not only in economic but also international affairs, and that he will promote democratization and human rights protection.

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN TO CONTRIBUTE 8 BILLION YEN IN ECONOMIC AID TO MONGOLIA," 2, 2/26/97) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda met on February 25 in Tokyo with the visiting Mongolian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and signed a document stating Japan's resumption of yen loans and unconditional financial aid (eight billion yen in total) in support of Mongolia's promotion of democratization and market mechanisms.

6. Indonesia To Build Nuclear Reactors

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("INDONESIAN PARLIAMENT APPROVES INTRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANT," Jakarta, 5, 2/27/97) reported that the Indonesian House of Representatives approved, on February 26, the introduction of the country's first nuclear power plant. Construction will begin next year in the Java-Muria Peninsula. Indonesia plans to build eight to twelve nuclear power plants by 2015. Japanese, US and Canadian construction companies are now conducting site surveys.

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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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