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I. United States

1. Four-Party Talks Agreement

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA AGREES TO PEACE TALKS," New York, 6/30/97) and Reuters ("DATE SET TO DECIDE DETAILS OF KOREA TALKS," New York, 6/30/97) reported that the DPRK on Monday agreed to join the US, the ROK and the PRC in talks to prepare for the commencement of the proposed four-party talks aimed at formally ending the Korean War. The preliminary meeting of the four nations was set to be held in New York on August 5, according to the joint statement issued following the meeting of US, ROK and DPRK high-level officials in New York on Monday. According to a statement by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the preliminary meeting will determine the date, venue, agenda and procedures in preparation for the formal start of peace talks. While Monday's agreement falls short of an explicit DPRK commitment to the four-party peace talks themselves, all sides expressed confidence that such talks would eventually take place. Kim Gye-gwan, the DPRK's vice foreign minister and the head of its delegation, told reporters as he left

Monday's meeting that his country believes that the four-party talks "are very conducive to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula." A senior US official close to Monday's bargaining session, who spoke on condition he not be identified, said, "We take this as North Korea's commitment to the four-party peace process." However, the official also cautioned that the talks were not a done deal. An unnamed ROK official said that Monday's talks opened with the DPRK seeking commitments for additional food aid. Previous high-level trilateral talks in April collapsed when the US and the ROK resisted such de

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1. Four-Party Talks Agreement

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Monday's meeting the DPRK received no food aid guarantees but was told the issue could be discussed as part of the peace negotiations. The US delegation at Monday's talks was led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman, who handles East Asian and Pacific affairs. The ROK was represented by Song Young-shik, a deputy foreign minister.

The Associated Press ("KOREA NEGOTIATORS MEETING IN NY," New York, 6/30/97) reported that high-level officials from the US, the ROK and the DPRK began meeting Monday in New York to discuss the proposed four-party talks. The last such meeting, held in April, did not produce the DPRK's agreement to join the talks, as had been hoped at the time. Those talks broke down when the DPRK refused to join the four-party talks without guarantees of more direct food aid, while the US and the ROK refused to provide such a guarantee, saying they would not accept linking the issues of peace talks and food aid. Subsequently, however, lower-level contacts continued. Prior to Monday's meeting, ROK officials in Seoul had said the DPRK was prepared to drop its food aid demand. US officials had reported some progress in the lower-level talks, but disclosed no details.

US Acting State Department Spokesman John Dinger ("STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT, FRIDAY, JUNE 27," USIA Transcript, 6/27/97) stated on Friday that, apart from the US-ROK-DPRK meeting set for Monday, no additional bilateral US-DPRK has been "formally scheduled as of now."

2. US Views on DPRK Prospects

US Defense Department Spokesman Ken Bacon ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 6/27/97) responded to questions concerning a report by the Wall Street Journal that the US military has begun long-term planning for an expected collapse of the DPRK ruling regime. [Ed. note: See "US Prepares for DPRK Collapse" in the US section of the June 27 Daily Report.] Bacon said: "Let me put this in context. The military, obviously, spends a lot of time planning for all sorts of contingencies or eventualities. For most of the time the U.S. military has been stationed in Korea, it has planned for a possible military attack from the North Koreans, and that's what we spent most of our time planning to respond to. In the last year or so, the military in the United States and also in the Republic of Korea has obviously paid a lot of attention to the economic and nutritional conditions in North Korea, and decided that they should begin to look at other contingencies as well, and one might be what would happen if there is, in fact, massive starvation, massive health problems, in North Korea that could lead to perhaps an exodus from North Korea or something else. So yes, they have begun to look at a broader range of contingencies. Now to say that we're planning to do something I think is pushing it a little too far. What we're doing is looking at a range of possible outcomes. We have no evidence that there is significant political instability in North Korea today. We have no evidence of large, imminent problems of disorder at this stage. But we are watching the situation very closely, and we are planning appropriately for what could conceivably happen in the future."

US Acting State Department Spokesman John Dinger ("STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT, FRIDAY, JUNE 27," USIA Transcript, 6/27/97) also responded to questions concerning the Wall Street Journal report that the US military has begun long-term planning for an expected collapse of the DPRK ruling regime. Dinger said, "We do not see signs at the moment of political instability in North Korea. As a general policy, we don't comment on contingency planning. The report I think that you're referring to involved reported DOD contingency planning. I would refer you to the Department of Defense for what they may be planning. I would note that DOD has lots of contingency plans. That is nothing new. That is part of their job and, in fact, it is a part of our job." Asked specifically if he could provide details of talks reported to have taken place with the ROK, Japan and the PRC to coordinate relief efforts in the event of a DPRK government collapse, Dinger replied, "No. I don't have anything for you."

3. DPRK Famine Situation

The Associated Press ("UN: N.KOREA FOOD SHORTAGE WORSENING," Seoul, 6/28/97) and Reuters ("U.N. OFFICIAL CALLS FOR MORE FOOD AID TO N.KOREA," Seoul, 6/28/97) reported that Yasushi Akashi, head of the UN humanitarian affairs office, said Saturday that the DPRK food shortage is increasing despite efforts by DPRK soldiers and children to plant "every piece of arable land." Akashi dismissed arguments that Pyongyang was relying on outside food aid and making no efforts of its own to tackle the crisis. "They are trying to be self-reliant, but they cannot," Akashi said. "All the signs are that the situation is getting worse." Akashi, arriving in Seoul after a five-day visit to the DPRK, said that a shortage of fertilizers and insecticides was hampering efforts, telling of cabbage fields where the plants were so infected with insects that half the crop was destroyed. Akashi said that despite international aid already received, the DPRK still needs 700,000 to 800,000 tons of aid to feed its people. Akashi also said that in many parts of the country, the food distribution system came to a stop by early or mid-June, leaving the people totally dependent on outside aid until at least October, when there will be a new rice harvest. One-fourth of the children in several nurseries he visited were in early stages of malnutrition, Akashi said. On Friday, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency quoted Akashi as saying 60 to 65 percent of children in flood-hit areas were suffering from malnutrition.

Reuters ("CHINA TO GIVE \$2.4 MLN IN AID TO NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 6/27/97) reported that the Xinhua news agency said on Friday that the PRC has agreed to extend 20 million yuan (US\$2.4 million) in aid to the DPRK. PRC Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Liu Shanzai signed a pact on the aid in Pyongyang with the DPRK's Vice Chairman of External Economic Commission Kim Munsong, Xinhua said. It gave no more details. The PRC has so far this year given the DPRK some 70,000 tons of corn.

4. Searches for US MIA Remains

The Associated Press ("SEARCH FOR MIAS RESUMING IN JULY," Washington, 6/28/97) reported that Larry Greer, a spokesman for the US Defense Department office responsible for POW-MIA affairs, said Friday that the DPRK has agreed to allow US investigators to resume searching in mid-July for remains of US servicemen missing from the Korean War. In talks in May, the DPRK agreed in principle to allow three recovery operations this year, and the US agreed to pay US\$316,500 as reimbursement for expenses such as food and fuel. On Friday, US and DPRK officials in closed meetings in New York reached agreement on the dates and other details of the searches, Greer said. The first joint recovery operation will be July 15 to Aug. 3, the second Aug. 23 to Sept. 11 and the third Oct. 4-23. All three will search areas in Unsan County, North Pyongan Province, about 50 miles southeast of the Yalu River, where fierce ground battles were fought during the 1950-53 war, and where there were individual and mass burials of US soldiers. US officials say as many as 4,000 remains eventually could be recovered if the DPRK continues to cooperate. US investigators also will gain access to the DPRK's war museum in early August.

5. US, ROK Leaders Meet

Reuters ("CLINTON CONFERS WITH S. KOREA'S KIM," United Nations, 6/26/97) reported that US President Bill Clinton and ROK President Kim Young-sam met privately for 35 minutes on Thursday night. Presidential spokeswoman Anne Luzzatto said "they discussed the situation in the north ... which President Kim described as being in a very bad way economically."

6. ROK Now Allowing US-Hwang Meetings

US Defense Department Spokesman Ken Bacon ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR

BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 6/27/97) confirmed that US intelligence officials have now received access to DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop, and are involved in ongoing debriefings. Asked if he could provide more details on the issue, Bacon replied, "No."

7. New DPRK Defections

The Associated Press ("N. KOREAN OFFICIAL, OTHERS DEFECT," Seoul, 6/30/97) reported that the ROK Foreign Ministry said Monday that a former DPRK government official and three others had defected from the DPRK and arrived in Seoul. Min Mun-shik, 48, a senior trade official at a joint venture coal firm in an unspecified former Soviet republic, defected with his 47-year-old wife, his 15-year-old daughter, and an interpreter at a separate joint trading firm in the same former Soviet republic, the ministry said. Ministry officials, citing diplomatic reasons, declined to disclose further details, including the name of the former Soviet republic and the date of their defection. About 170 North Koreans have defected to Seoul in the past three years, including 60 this year. The report also noted that ROK government officials said that DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop would hold a news conference next week.

II. Republic of Korea

1. US Optimistic About Four-Party Talks

Upon news that the DPRK will attend a meeting next week in New York to discuss four-party peace talks, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said on Thursday that the US would take a wait-and-see approach. "We'll have to see where those lead," Albright told reporters en route to Vietnam for a two-day visit. "We've looked at this situation before. It looks hopeful but we'll have to see," she added. (Korea Times, "ALBRIGHT CAUTIOUS ABOUT 4-WAY PEACE TALKS," 06/30/97)

2. DPRK to Temporarily Close Borders

The DPRK will reportedly close its borders on July 7 and 8 to commemorate the third anniversary of Kim Il-sung's death. The closure is likely to delay the delivery of 12,000 tons of food aid which the ROK's Korea National Red Cross (KNRC) had hoped to send some time between July 6 and 15. "Our North Korean counterparts have notified us of the closing of their borders, so postponement is inevitable," a KNRC official said. The DPRK also has asked foreigners, except for those invited to the commemorative ceremony, to leave the country temporarily. (Korea Herald, "NORTH TO CLOSE BORDERS JULY 7-8," 06/30/97)

3. DPRK Food Aid

Despite massive international food aid, totaling nearly 1.5 million tons this year, the DPRK still needs more than another half of that amount, a visiting top UN official reported Saturday. In an interview held at Seoul's Kimpo International Airport, Yasushi Akashi, undersecretary-general of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, said "[the] DPRK still faces about a 700,000 to 800,000 ton food shortfall this year." In giving this projection, Akashi said that he disagrees with the ROK government's assessment that the worst of the DPRK food crisis is over for 1997. (Korea Herald, "DPRK STILL NEEDS FOOD AID: U.N. OFFICIAL," 06/30/97)

4. Russia-PRC Trade Talks

On Friday, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin began the official Beijing leg of a PRC visit aimed at boosting trade ties between the two neighbors. Chernomyrdin and his PRC counterpart, Li Peng, are scheduled to meet and sign a framework agreement on trade and economic cooperation following an official welcoming ceremony at 10 a.m. (0200 GMT). It will be the second time the two

premiers have held talks since the PRC and Russia set up a schedule for regular meetings in December. A major agreement on oil and gas extraction and pipeline construction is expected to be signed during Chernomyrdin's visit, along with a deal on railway transportation which will make it possible to use Russian cargo trucks in the PRC. The Russian delegation is also expected to press for several major projects, including a US\$10-billion deal to supply equipment for the Three Gorges hydroelectric dam on the Yangtze River and the construction of a nuclear power plant in the Jiangsu province. Chernomyrdin arrived in the capital late on Thursday after a brief stop in the southern economic zone of Shenzhen, which borders Hong Kong. He is due to depart the PRC on Saturday. (Korea Times, "RUSSIAN PM BEGINS OFFICIAL VISIT TO PRC TO BOOST TRADE TIES," 06/30/97)

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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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