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I. United States

1. DPRK Sought Perot Assistance

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "NKOREA PROPOSES PEROT ROLE IN TALKS," Washington, 9/30/97) reported that last December the DPRK proposed that US billionaire Ross Perot act as an intermediary to address US questions about US citizens living in the DPRK, some of whom may be captured US servicemen from the Korean War. The DPRK, in an unofficial setting in New York in the midst of negotiations about a public apology for the submarine incident, suggested that Perot travel to Pyongyang to discuss the issue. Robert Egan, a New Jersey businessman who has regular contacts with DPRK diplomats in New York, was reported as saying that DPRK officials told him they wanted to open the door to talks on US POWs in exchange for not having to publicly apologize for the submarine incident, and that they wanted to work through Perot. US officials concluded that the offer was an empty gesture that would not help answer questions about US citizens in the DPRK, and persuaded Perot not to get involved. Neither side made the offer public at the time. Contacted Monday, Perot refused comment on the report.

2. Kim Jong-il Ascension

The Washington Post (Kevin Sullivan, "KIM TAKES FIRST STEPS TOWARD POWER," Tokyo, 9/29/97) reported that most outside observers now concur that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's ascension to the official leadership posts left vacant by the 1994 death of his father, "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung, is imminent. Most analysts now believe Kim has scheduled his coronation for on or around October 10, the anniversary of the Korean Worker's Party founding. Among the indications, the DPRK's official news media has said that the country is brimming with celebration. "The whole country is vibrating with a new enthusiasm," and "a wave of jubilation and emotion is now sweeping Korea," it has said. The report stated that many believe the younger Kim has taken so long in becoming the formal head of state because he needed to consolidate military power, and in the past year he has replaced many older military leaders with younger ones believed to be more loyal to him. The report quoted Moon Chung-in, a professor of political science at Seoul's Yonsei University, as saying that "titles are important" in Korean society and so Kim may be a more confident leader when he takes formal control. Moon added that Kim may interact more with ROK President Kim Young-sam's successor, to be elected in December, as the DPRK took deep offense to Kim Young-sam's refusal to send condolences on the death of Kim Il-sung. The report also noted that the DPRK's preparations are taking place even as the country suffers a deepening famine caused by widespread food shortages.

3. DPRK on US Television

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4. Amnesty of ROK Ex-Presidents' Associates

United Press International ("S.KOREA TO PARDON EXECUTIVES FOR GRAFT," Seoul, 9/30/97) reported that the ROK government has announced plans to pardon the chairmen of the Samsung and Daewoo conglomerates and five other corporations, who were convicted in connection with the bribery scandals of former presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo. The ROK ex-presidents have been jailed for accepting bribes in excess of US\$1 billion in the ROK's largest bribery scandal ever. The pardons of the executives is seen as a prelude to much-expected pardons for Chun and Roh.

5. DPRK Refugees Seek Asylum

The Associated Press ("500 NORTH KOREANS SEEK ASYLUM," Seoul, 9/29/97) reported that a ROK government report delivered Monday to the ROK National Assembly says that some five hundred DPRK citizens who have fled the country are now seeking asylum in the ROK. The individuals are among a total of some 1,600 DPRK citizens reportedly hiding in the PRC, Russia and other countries. About 700 DPRK citizens have defected to the ROK since the 1945 division of the Korean peninsula.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Verbal Exchange at UN

The ROK and the DPRK engaged in an unusual verbal battle with each other in the UN General Assembly Monday over human rights and other issues of contention between the two sides. Their argument, conducted in English, was touched off when a DPRK diplomat found fault with a speech by ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha to the General Assembly earlier in the day, according to officials of the ROK Foreign Ministry. Yoo called on the DPRK, among other things, to improve its

human rights situation and join an international convention banning chemical weapons. The DPRK official said the ROK and the US are responsible for introducing chemical arms onto the Korean Peninsula and so are not qualified to talk about banning the weapons. He also blamed the stalemate in the process of four-way peace talks on the ROK's "uncompromising" attitude and charged that the ROK is attempting to obstruct international aid to the DPRK. (Korea Herald, "TWO KOREAS EXCHANGE ACCUSATIONS IN U.N.," 09/30/97)

2. Financing Reunification of Korea

The ROK government said that it is considering various ways to finance a prospective Korean reunification, including issuing reunification bonds, levying a special purpose tax, inducing foreign investment, and diverting military spending. The ROK ministry did not provide its estimate of the cost of reunification. Different organizations and individuals have offered estimates ranging from US\$40 billion to US\$2.2 trillion, depending on the time and manner of reunification. The ROK has been hesitant to present a definitive figure as it leads to accusations by the DPRK that the ROK is attempting a German-type reunification, and also enflames domestic sentiments which fear the financial burden. (Korea Herald, "GOVERNMENT STUDIES HOW TO FINANCE REUNIFICATION WITH NORTH KOREA," 09/30/97)

3. Inter-Korean Railroad Plans

The Korea National Railroad (KNR) next year will begin design work for inter-Korean railroads, including a Seoul-Mt. Kumgang line. For the project, the railroad authority has earmarked 1.32 billion won (US\$1.44 million) for the Seoul-Sinuiju line, and is about to finalize negotiations to purchase land for the reconstruction of the 12-kilometer Musan-Jangdan section of the line. KNR will buy the land for tracks for the Seoul-Mt. Keumkang and Seoul-Wonsan lines as soon as the design work for them is completed. (Korea Times, "S. KOREA TO PREPARE FOR RE-OPENING OF INTER-KOREAN RAILROADS," 09/30/97)

4. Amnesty of ROK Ex-Presidents' Associates

Public officials and politicians now serving jail terms for crimes they committed during the administrations of the ROK's two previous ex-presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, will be pardoned when the ex-presidents themselves are set free. However, the exact timing of the amnesties is uncertain. The three opposition parties, including the National Congress for New Politics, said the Friday amnesty should be an occasion to end decade-old "symbiotic politics-business relationship in which businessmen are coerced into donating funds to politicians in return for favors." (Korean Times, "JAILED OFFICIALS, POLITICIANS TO BE GIVEN AMNESTY WITH CHUN, ROH," 09/30/97)

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of [other NAPSNet resources](#).

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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