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I. United States

1. ROK Support for KEDO Nuclear Project

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA PROVIDES \$45 MLN FOR N. KOREAN NUCLEAR PROJECT," Seoul, 7/31/97) reported that the ROK said Thursday it will provide US\$45 million to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to enable construction to start on the two light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK called for in the 1994 US-DPRK Agreed Framework. The ROK has promised to pay most of the US\$5 billion bill for the nuclear plants, which are being built in exchange for the DPRK's promise to freeze its nuclear program suspected of developing nuclear weapons. The new reactors are safer and produce far less weapons-grade plutonium than the North's outdated Soviet-designed system. The ROK payment to KEDO will enable it to break ground for the reactors in August. Final decisions on allocating the reactors' cost has yet to be decided among KEDO's three main members -- the US, the ROK and Japan. The reactors will be built at an 887-hectare plot in Sinpo, a remote fishing village on the DPRK's east coast, some 400 kilometers from Pyongyang.

2. DPRK Famine

Reuters ("U.N. ASKS FOR MORE BILATERAL AID TO N.KOREA," Washington, 7/31/97) reported that Catherine Bertini, executive director of the UN World Food Program (WFP), at a news conference on Thursday appealed to Western countries to give more aid to the DPRK to meet a shortfall of up to 800,000 tons of food needed to ease a severe famine. "The World Food Program is pleading with donors to make bilateral donations," Bertini said. "There are still millions and millions of people who have no food. ... The whole country is in famine." Bertini said starving North Koreans were harvesting seaweed and several factories were being used to bake cakes from tree parts that have no nutritional value but fill a person's stomach. "If [the cakes] look brown, they are made of tree bark, if they are green they are made of tree leaves," Bertini said. Earlier this month, the WFP launched a new appeal for US\$46 million to ease the plight of about 2.6 million children under 6 years old who are already suffering from critical malnutrition. The US\$46 million would cover about 130,000 metric tons of food. Bertini said donor response has been very generous and about 75 percent of this money has been raised. Bertini said, however, that the WFP estimated there is still a need for between 700,000 and 800,000 metric tons of food, and that direct bilateral donations are needed because the WFP is already stretched ensuring that current donations reach the hungry. [Ed. note: See also "DPRK Famine Seen Widening" in the July 29 Daily Report.]

3. DPRK Drought

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA SAYS "UNPRECEDENTED" DROUGHT CONTINUES," Tokyo, 7/30/97) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Wednesday in an English-language report monitored in Tokyo that the country was still suffering "unprecedentedly high" temperatures and a sustained drought. "The drought from the high temperature is inflicting a serious damage on agriculture and other domains of the national economy," KCNA said. The agency said that temperatures between three and ten degrees above average, which have lasted for weeks, have no precedent in 61 years of weather observation. Hundreds of reservoirs have dried up as well as thousands of rivers and streams, it said, seriously affecting the growth of crops and supply of industrial water through irrigation networks. [Ed. note: See also "DPRK Drought" in the July 28 Daily Report.]

4. PRC Drought

The Associated Press ("DROUGHT THREATENS CHINA'S GRAIN," Beijing, 7/31/97) reported that drought in the PRC's northeast is imperiling autumn crops, according to official reports in the China Daily newspaper. Some rivers in northeastern Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning provinces have completely dried up because of abnormally hot temperatures and low rainfall, and much of the fall harvest will be seriously damaged if there is no rain during the critical growing period over the next few weeks, the report said. The report called the drought the worst for the area since 1982.

5. US ACDA Director on Future Arms Control

Ralph Earle, Deputy Director of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), in an address to the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) on July 31 ("DEPUTY RALPH EARLE OF ARMS CONTROL & DISARMAMENT AGENCY," USIA Transcript, 7/31/97), stated that the CD now "has a window of opportunity to negotiate a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) and a ban on anti-personnel landmines (APL)." "We should act now" while that window "is open," Earle said, adding that, "Without a cutoff treaty, the chances of achieving the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament would be decreased significantly." Earle commended the government of Canada for its initiative on APL. "The Ottawa Process has added strength and momentum to the comprehensive work on landmines that must be undertaken in the CD," he said. Earle then commented that, while the CD's work on a landmine ban "will take longer to accomplish than the Ottawa Process," "the resulting treaty will, unlike the Ottawa Process, extend the reach of an APL ban to the major producers, stockpilers and exporters of APL." Regarding the interaction of efforts to reach accords on both issues, Earle commented, "There is no reason why either one has to interfere with the other." Rather, both efforts "make a contribution and each augments the other," Earle said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks Preliminary Meeting

Working-level officials from the ROK, the DPRK, the US and the PRC met at Columbia University in New York for more than four hours Monday to settle "logistical" details for the four-party peace talks preliminary meeting due to be held August 5. The officials agreed to hold the preliminary meeting at the Institute of International Affairs on the Columbia University campus, where simultaneous interpretation is available, and determined the order in which participants would speak at the preliminary meeting, among other things. A ROK official who participated in the working-level meeting said that the schedule of the preliminary meeting will be decided after the meeting actually begins. The officials from the four nations visited the institute and reviewed any possible problems with holding the meeting there, he said. Attending the working-level meeting were Lee Soo-hyok,

political counselor of the ROK Embassy in Washington, Ri Kun, deputy chief of the DPRK Mission at the UN, Mark Minton, Korea desk chief of the US State Department, and Lu Shu Min, political minister-counselor of the PRC Embassy in Washington. (Korea Times, "OFFICIALS TO MEET AT COLUMBIA UNIV. FOR 4-WAY TALKS," 07/30/97)

The PRC has decided to send a delegation headed by its Assistant Foreign Minister Chinn Zhen to the preliminary meeting for the four-party peace talks, scheduled for August 5 in New York, according to a ROK foreign ministry official. The ROK will send Assistant Foreign Minister Song Yong-shik, the US will send Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman, and the DPRK will send Assistant Foreign Minister Kim Kae-kwan. (Chosun Ilbo, "PRC TO SEND DELEGATION TO FOUR-PARTY TALK LEAD-UP," 07/30/97)

2. ROK Arms Purchase

The ROK Army will purchase tactical missiles and multiple launch rocket systems worth US\$336 million from the US, the ROK Defense Ministry said yesterday. A ministry official said that the ROK will import 110 Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATMS), 279 multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), plus 29 launchers by next year. A contract has yet to be signed, the official added. The weapons will counter the DPRK's artillery and MLRSs, which are serious threats to the Seoul area, the official said. The ATMS, a ground-launched missile system with a range of 165 km, will be used to destroy DPRK artillery, plus command, control, and communications complexes, in case of a surprise attack from the DPRK. The MLRS, with a range of 32 km, is an artillery weapon that supplements cannon artillery fire by delivering a large volume of firepower in a short time against critical, sensitive targets. It will also be used to neutralize enemy artillery. The ROK last year purchased nine sets of AN-TPQ anti-artillery radar systems from the US, and is considering buying more this year, the ministry official said. If imported, these US weapons would increase ROK forces' capability for a reprisal attack against a DPRK artillery strike. DPRK's 170-mm self-propelled artillery with a range of 50 km, and 240-mm MLRS's with a range of 70 km, which can hit targets as far South as Suwon, loom as serious threats to Seoul. (Korea Herald, "SEOUL TO BUY WEAPONS FROM US," 07/31/97)

3. ROK Spy Arrest

The ROK's Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP) Wednesday arrested Yew Yung-bom, an ethnic Korean residing in Japan, under the suspicion of taking money and orders from the DPRK and contacting the DPRK's Workers Party's underground organization in the ROK. He was charged as a spy in violation of national security laws. The ANSP said that Yew entered the ROK ten times between 1991-94 under orders from DPRK agents in Japan, gave 20 million Japanese Yen, and relayed DPRK orders to Ahn Che-kuk, chief of the Save the Nation Front, an underground organization in the ROK. ANSP said Yew's frequent visits to the ROK from 1994 are now under investigation. The underground organization has made few movements since 1994, when Ahn and 23 others of the organization were arrested. Yew is thought to have entered Seoul through Kimp'o Airport on Sunday in order to survey the current situation of the group. (Chosun Ilbo, "KOREAN JAPANESE ARRESTED FOR SPYING FOR THE DPRK," 07/31/97)

4. ROK-Japan Maritime Relations

Japan, which had agreed to resume the prior fishery agreement, notified at the ROK-Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister's meeting Monday that they will breach the present fishery agreement if there is no concrete progress in reforming the agreement by September, according to ROK Foreign Affairs Minister Yoo Jong-ha. According to Japan Foreign Minister Ikeda Yukihiko, "If there is no progress in Korean-Japanese fishery agreement, it will be hard to resist political pressure to breach the agreement." (Joongang Ilbo, "JAPANESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILL BREACH

5. ROK-PRC Maritime Relations

A ROK Cabinet meeting yesterday decided to ban foreign fishing vessels, mostly from the PRC, from entering "designated prohibition zones" in the West Sea starting November 7. The meeting, presided over by ROK Prime Minister Koh Kun, endorsed an enforcement ordinance relating to foreigners' fishing in Korea's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). As the PRC has not yet signed a fishing agreement with the ROK, authorities are expected to crack down on PRC vessels violating the water zones, which is expected to initiate a dispute with the PRC. Japanese fishing boats are not affected by the new enforcement ordinance because it has a fishing agreement with the ROK. Beside the West Sea, the enforcement decree bans foreign vessels from entering some zones in the East Sea and the Korea Straits inside the ROK's EEZ. According to the ordinance, foreigners wishing to engage in fishing inside Korea's EEZ will have to receive an authorization from the Maritime-Fisheries Ministry with regards to their fishing type, the size of fishing vessels, the number of accompanying ships and the anticipated catch. A ROK Foreign Ministry official said that the enforcement ordinance would take effect from August 7, except for the regulations on "designated prohibition zones," which will go into force from November 7. The ROK will not enforce the regulation for PRC vessels for one year because the two countries are in negotiation to sign a fishing agreement, but the regulations on the "designated prohibition zones" will not have a grace period, the official said. (Korea Times, Son Key-young, "CABINET ENDORSES DECREE BANNING FOREIGN BOATS FISHING IN EEZ," 07/30/97)

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