NAPSNet Daily Report 05 January, 1999

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 05 January, 1999", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 05, 1999, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-05-january-1999/

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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Relations

The New York Times (Nicholas D. Kristof, "NORTH KOREA'S HARDENING LINE RAISES FEARS OF

NEW CRISIS," Tokyo, 01/03/99) reported that some analysts fear that a major security crisis may be developing on the Korean Peninsula. Han S. Park, a political scientist and DPRK specialist at the University of Georgia, stated, "The situation will be very, very dangerous in the next few months." Former ROK Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo stated, "Even if there's a one-time access to the underground site, that may mean that the temporary crisis is over, but it doesn't resolve the longer-term issue." Kim Myong-chol, a pro-DPRK resident of Japan, warned that if the Agreed Framework were to break down, "Our only option will be to go nuclear and do it publicly. North Korea will fabricate nuclear warheads to target Japan and America as major targets and will sell nuclear weapons to any country, to the highest bidder." Kim added, "Maybe there will be a new war. Maybe you and I will all die in Tokyo!" Stephen W. Bosworth, US Ambassador to the ROK, said in a speech a few days ago that if the Agreed Framework falls apart, the DPRK "could uncan and reprocess the fuel rods, producing enough plutonium in a matter of months to build several nuclear weapons. If they refueled the reactor at Yongbyon, they could have an ongoing capability to produce plutonium and build nuclear weapons." Kongdan Oh, a DPRK specialist at the Institute for Defense Analyses in Washington, stated, "There is a very strong frustration among a lot of people that North Korea is acting very strangely. It's like North Korea and the U.S. are trying to dance together, and North Korea is trying to break the legs of its partner." Regarding US special coordinator William Perry's review of US policy toward the DPRK, former US ambassador to James T. Laney stated, "I have modest hope. It's modest not because of him, but because of 45 years of troubles we've been having with North Korea." [Ed. note: This article appeared in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 4.]

The Christian Science Monitor carried an editorial ("KOREAN POSSIBILITIES," 01/05/98, 10) which said that the US should agree to provide increased food aid to the DPRK in exchange for inspections of an underground construction site. The article stated, "The prospect of getting the [Agreed Framework] under way again justifies the often frustrating task of attempting reasoned talks with the North Koreans." It argued that "the alternative to trying to work with the North could be an even more desperate Pyongyang, obsessed with nuclear capabilities." It concluded, "Constructive international diplomacy - stimulated by a fulfilled '94 accord - can strengthen the context for lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula." [Ed. note: This article appeared in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 5.]

2. DPRK Defector

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREAN ACTRESS DEFECTS," Seoul, 01/04/99) reported that ROK officials revealed Tuesday that Kim Hae-young, a DPRK actress, and her family have been living in the ROK since defecting five months ago. The defection came to light when Kim was contacted by a local television network for casting in a planned drama. Government intelligence officials said that Kim arrived in Seoul in August with her parents and two younger sisters and sought asylum, but their defection was not publicized for security reasons. They said that Kim was a senior at a Pyongyang film college and had played leading roles in seven DPRK movies.

3. ROK Intelligence Scandal

The New York Times (Nicholas D. Kristof, "A LOCKED DOOR IS BROKEN, AND SEOUL LAWMAKERS HAVE A SPY FUROR," Tokyo, 01/04/99) and the Associated Press ("PARTY SEEKS APOLOGY FROM S. KOREA," Seoul, 01/04/99) reported that Lee Shin-bom, an opposition member of the National Assembly, announced last Wednesday that he had information from an unnamed source that the ROK Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP) was conducting surveillance on assembly members. On New Year's Eve, opposition legislators broke into a locked room in the

National Assembly building and seized 59 documents that they say show that the room was used by the ANSP to monitor politicians in the national legislature and the political process. Opposition party chief Lee Hoi-chang stated, "Kim Dae-jung's administration should kneel down and apologize to the people." Park Jie-won, chief spokesman for ROK President Kim Dae-jung, said that some of the documents were actually just summaries of news articles. He add that the break-in was "a totally illegal act." The ANSP has filed a complaint with prosecutors accusing dozens of opposition members of the National Assembly of breaking and entering. Yoon Ho-joong, spokesman for the ruling National Congress for New Politics, said Sunday, "Under no circumstances can we accept an act of breaking and entering a place that houses national secrets."

4. ROK Intelligence Agency Renamed

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA OKS NEW NAME FOR SPIES," Seoul, 12/29/98) reported that the ROK National Assembly on December 29 approved changing the name for the ROK's main intelligence agency from the Agency for National Security Planning to the National Intelligence Service, effective in mid-January.

5. ROK Economy

The Associated Press ("S.KOREA TO REPAY $1 BILLION TO IMF," Seoul, 01/04/99) reported that the ROK Ministry of Finance and Economy said Monday that the country would repay US$1 billion more in loans from the International Monetary Fund on Friday. It will be the ROK's second repayment to the IMF, following a payment of US$2.8 billion in December.

6. US-PRC Relations

The White House Press Secretary released a statement ("CLINTON LETTER TO CHINESE PRESIDENT ON U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS," Washington, USIA Text, 01/04/99) which said that US President Bill Clinton and PRC President Jiang Zemin exchanged letters on the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the US and the PRC. Clinton's letter stated, "I am personally committed to building a constructive strategic partnership with China that will benefit our two peoples and promote a stable and prosperous Asia-Pacific region." It added, "Today, as we celebrate our achievements over the past twenty years, we should reflect on ways to strengthen our ties for future generations. We must work together to meet the common challenges of the 21st century while frankly addressing differences."

Reuters (Christiaan Virant, "CHINA, U.S. TIES STILL SEESAW AFTER 20 YRS," Beijing, 04/01/98) reported that the PRC's Xinhua news agency quoted PRC President Jiang Zemin as praising the development of US-PRC relations in a letter to US President Bill Clinton.

7. Spratly Islands Dispute

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "CHINA MAKES MOVE ON SPRATLYS," 01/04/99) reported that US Representative Dana Rohrabacher, R-California, accused the PRC of building military facilities on the Spratly islands to gain control over undersea energy resources and strategic waterways. Rohrabacher stated, "The U.S. government must end its silence about the Chinese military buildup in the Spratlys. It is dangerous for the administration to continue to hide this issue from the Congress and the American people. Now is the time to impress upon the Chinese the need to end their aggression toward their neighbors." He argued, "There's obviously a strategy here. By claiming

territory at Mischief Reef, the Communist Chinese are not only going to be able to control one of the most important waterways in the world, but they are also in a position to grab huge energy resources." Rohrabacher urged Representative Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, to hold hearings on the Mischief Reef dispute. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi accused Rohrabacher of "meddling" in the dispute. Sun stated, "We're opposed to the threat of force and the result of force to resolve the differences. In resolving divergences ... we hope to seek a resolution through friendly consultations in a peaceful way." An unnamed congressional staff member said that officials at the US Embassy in Manila tried to prevent Rohrabacher's visit to the area on several occasions. The article quoted a November 25 embassy cable to the State Department as saying, "We do not believe it would be in the U.S. interest for the [congressional delegation] to travel to Palawan, since the presence of a highly visible senior U.S. government official on the island at this time would be taken as signifying more U.S. involvement in the current dispute between the Philippines and China over Mischief Reef than U.S. policy supports." [Ed. note: This article was one of the top stories in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 4.]

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, JANUARY 4, 1999," USIA Transcript, 01/04/99) said that the US has been closely monitoring activities in the South China Sea. He stated, "We have repeatedly spoken out both publicly and through diplomatic channels against unilateral actions that increase tensions in the region. Again, we call for all claimants of the Spratlys to resolve their differences in a peaceful manner consistent with the international law." Regarding Representative Dana Rohrabacher's visit, Rubin stated, "We did seek to discourage his travel to the Mischief Reef area in view of security concerns, since this hadn't been done in this way before. However, in view of his decision to proceed and at his request, the State Department communicated to Philippine authorities his interest in flying and visiting to that area. His flight was subsequently arranged by the government of the Philippines." He added, "While we take no position on the legal merits of competing claims to sovereignty in the area, maintaining freedom of navigation is a fundamental interest of the United States. Unhindered navigation by all ships and aircraft in the South China Sea is essential for the peace and prosperity of the entire Asia-Pacific region, including the United States." He also stated, "With respect to any specific actions, we are hopeful that the Chinese activities on Mischief Reef came up during the recent meetings between the Philippines and China in their discussions on this. We urge China, specifically, and all claimants to use all appropriate diplomatic channels to resolve the dispute."

8. PRC Satellite Development

The Asian Wall Street Journal carried an analytical article by Richard D. Fisher Jr., director of the Asian Studies Center of the Heritage Foundation, ("CHINA ROCKETS INTO MILITARY SPACE," 12/29/98) which said that the PRC is developing a satellite reconnaissance network. It reported that, beginning next year, the PRC will launch four imaging satellites and two radar satellites, which will be controlled by the People's Liberation Army. The article stated, "China's satellite and anti-satellite efforts ... are the manifestation of a broader developing information warfare doctrine that seeks to protect and exploit its sources of electronic information while denying or attacking enemy information systems." It argued, "Over the next decade, it is likely that China will use its new military-space power to pursue its regional goals, such as subduing Taiwan or consolidating its claims to most of the South China Sea." It concluded, "It is high time that the Clinton administration views the U.S. commercial space relationship with China as the Chinese themselves do, as a crucial element for China's developing military-space power." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 29.]

9. US Policy toward Taiwan

The Los Angeles Times (Norman Kempster, "NIXON PLAYED CHINA CARD IN VIETNAM WAR," Washington, 01/04/99) reported that according to "About Face," a new book on US-PRC relations by James Mann, US President Richard Nixon during his trip to the PRC in 1972 offered to oppose Taiwanese independence in exchange for the PRC's help in ending the Vietnam War. The author noted that the PRC provided little overt help in ending the Vietnam War, although it refrained from doing anything to make the task more difficult. However, Nixon's assurances on Taiwan established a US policy that has remained in force ever since.

10. Taiwan Waste Exports

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN ENTERS CAMBODIA WASTE SCAM," Taipei, 12/28/98) reported that the Taiwan Environmental Protection Bureau on December 28 ordered Formosa Plastics to take back 3,000 tons of mercury-laced waste that the company had dumped in Cambodia. The Bureau said that tests of the waste samples show a mercury level of 0.284 parts per million, compared with the 0.2 parts per million safety standard set by the government. The samples were taken from the dumpsite on Saturday by the environmental group Green Formosa Front. Formosa Plastics questioned the sampling method used by the Green Formosa Front, saying that earlier government analyses showed that the waste met the safety standards. It added, "We will take full responsibility for this unfortunate incident, which has caused jitters among the Cambodian government and its people."

The Associated Press (Annie Huang, "TAIWAN IN SPOTLIGHT AFTER SCANDAL BY WRITER," Taipei, 01/05/99) reported that environmental groups accused Taiwanese companies of using poor nations for dumping unsafe chemical byproducts. Wu Tung-chieh, chairman of the environmental group Green Formosa Front, stated, "This is the first Taiwanese firm caught secretly dumping its waste abroad. But who knows? A can of worms may have just been opened." A government report showed that about 1 million tons of toxic waste generated by Taiwanese companies in 1997 went unaccounted for. Ting San-lung, head of the Environmental Protection Bureau in southern Kaohsiung city, said that he could not tell how much of the waste has been exported. Ting stated, "While pursuing rapid economic development, we have never come up with effective measures to handle industrial waste. Our biggest problem is we can't find any places to store the industrial waste." He added that plans to build incinerators or landfills have met with strong objections by residents, partly because of a lack of confidence in the standards of public projects, which have been marred by corruption and shoddy work. Taiwanese Foreign Minister Jason Hu said recently, "We must have the concept of being a part of the global village and respect its environmental laws. We cannot suffer more blows in our efforts to win international support."

11. Taiwanese Weapons Purchases

The Washington Times ("CASH-STRAPPED TAIWAN REFUSES MORE STINGERS," Taipei, 12/25/98, 13) reported that Taiwan's China Times said that the military had dropped plans to acquire more US-made Stinger missiles and may buy locally developed air-defense weapons instead. The report said the army had bought some 1,300 Stinger missiles, 74 launchers, and 96 vehicles, about half what it originally planned to buy. The newspaper said General Tang Fei, chief of the General Staff, notified the US of the decision last month. It added that the change of plan could save the military hundreds of millions of US dollars, which would be used to finance Taiwan's role in a theater missile defense system.

12. US Forces on Okinawa

The Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "OKINAWANS MAY BE READY FOR TRUCE," Camp Gonsalves, 01/05/99) reported that the recent defeat of incumbent Okinawa Governor Masahide Ota may lead to a resolution of the issue of US bases on the island. The new governor, Keiichi Inamine, said that he would like to see a gradual reduction in US troop levels, but called Ota's withdrawal plan unreasonable. Inamine noted that military-related spending accounted for a fifth of the local economy 25 years ago, but is now down to roughly 5 percent. He added, "Yes, people would like to see fewer bases. But it's not enough for the bases to just vanish. We must do something to improve our infrastructure and industry." Brigadier General John Castellaw, deputy commander of the Marines on Okinawa, said that the troops "provide a constant, an element of stability." However, Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, a Washington think tank, argued, "Okinawans have proved to be an incredibly patient people. For half a century they have borne the brunt of U.S. force deployments in Japan. It is time to allow Okinawans to take control of their own destiny."

The Dallas Morning News (Gregg Jones, "U.S. BASES AT OKINAWA TEETER ON POLITICAL EDGE," Naha, 12/29/98) reported that the US last year spent US$3.02 billion, while Japan paid US$3.72 billion, to maintain US troops in Japan. A survey last March by the US Information Agency found that 74 percent of Japanese supported security ties with the US, but only 51 percent support US bases in Japan, and 70 percent favor base reductions. Lieutenant Colonel David E. Hunter-Chester, spokesman for US forces on Okinawa, stated, "We've been under a microscope since the 1995 rape incident. We want to be good guests. We're trying really hard. What's frustrating to us is our behavior has improved." He said that serious crimes by US personnel are declining, and the overall crime rate among US personnel stationed on Okinawa is lower than that of the local population. However, Yoshikazu Nakasone, director of the Okinawa Peace Center, argued, "I think the U.S. military people have a feeling that they can do what they want toward Okinawa people because they're protecting Okinawa and Japan." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 30.]

13. Indian Nuclear Development

Reuters ("U.S. URGES INDIA TO SPELL OUT NUCLEAR PLANS-REPORT," New Delhi, 01/05/98) reported that Press Trust of India quoted US Ambassador to India Richard Celeste as saying on Tuesday that the US would like India to spell out its plans for a minimum nuclear deterrent. Celeste asked, "How many missile systems and warheads does India need to have a minimum nuclear deterrent?" He said that progress had been made in US-Indian nuclear talks but there was "still substantial work to be done." He added that India's commitment to a no-first-use of nuclear weapons and not to start an arms race were "encouraging but positive general statements." He stated, "The challenge we have is one of how do we fit together legitimate security interests on both sides and legitimate concerns about nuclear non-proliferation on both sides."

14. Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty

The Associated Press ("PAKISTAN REJECTS NUKE MORATORIUM," Islamabad, 12/26/98) reported that Pakistan Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz said on December 26 that Pakistan would not sign a pact to end production of fissile material. Aziz stated, "Given our genuine security concerns, we cannot agree to any demand for a moratorium on the production of fissile materials unilaterally or multilaterally." He said that Pakistan has concerns about India's stockpile of fissile material, as well as stockpiles worldwide.

15. Russian Ratification of START II

Reuters ("RUSSIAN DEPUTY PM URGES START-2 RATIFICATION," Moscow, 12/29/98) reported that Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov on December 29 reiterated his support for prompt ratification of the START-II strategic arms reduction pact with the US. Maslyukov stated, "I have been and remain a supporter of such talks and I am sure our country, its economy and its people would benefit from the ratification." He added, "We have no real chance of even trying to match the nuclear and missile potential of the United States. The ratification of START-2 and later START-3 pacts would in principle rule out the need for any such competition for years." He also argued, "The start of rearming Russia's strategic rocket forces with Topol-Ms gives parliamentary deputies good reason to return to the ratification of START-2 without sacrificing national security. The current rearmament process restores a necessary dynamism to the process of work on START-2 ratification."

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-ROK FISHERY COOPERATION

Joongang Ilbo ("COOPERATIVE FISHERY BETWEEN DPRK AND ROK," 01/04/99) reported that DPRK-ROK fishery cooperation is being crystallized, fueled by lucrative fishery resources and abundant labor in the DPRK. Park Jong-sik, chairman of the ROK Fisheries Cooperative, said on January 4, "Our staff has negotiated with the DPRK on a joint fisheries program since last year. Once we exchange an agreement document with the DPRK, we will immediately dispatch a delegation to the DPRK." He added, "We are currently formulating ideas for a distribution system in preparation for importing DPRK marine products." The DPRK is reported to have requested some form of fees in the likely event of the ROK fishermen fishing in main fishing areas in the DPRK.

2. DPRK Agricultural Markets

Korea Herald ("DPRK HAS HUNDREDS OF FARM MARKETS, MINISTRY REPORT SAYS," 01/05/99) reported that it is presumed that there are about 300-350 agricultural markets across the DPRK. The number of agricultural markets in the DPRK has sharply increased since the mid-1990s, according to a report released by the ROK Ministry of Unification. The ministry attributed the increase in the number of markets to shortages of food and other daily necessities. "The DPRK authorities allow agricultural markets as an inevitable choice to support its seriously ailing state-controlled distribution system," said an official at the ministry. The report also said the DPRK has one to two agricultural markets per county and three to five in a city. The markets open every day. The ministry drafted the report on the basis of interviews with some 500 DPRK defectors and ROK nationals who visited the DPRK. Most DPRK nationals have purchased 60 percent of their grain and 70 percent of their daily necessities in agricultural markets, the report said. It said that goods in the markets change hands at far higher prices than those set by the government authorities. For example, the price of 1 kg of rice in a market stands at 80 won in DPRK currency, which amounts to the monthly wage of an average DPRK worker.

3. ROK-Japan Defense Talks

Korea Herald ("ROK-JAPAN DEFENSE MINISTERS TO MEET THURSDAY," 01/05/99) reported that Defense Minister Chun Yong-taek and his Japanese counterpart, Hosei Norota, will hold talks Thursday in the ROK on security issues of mutual concern. High on the agenda in the talks between

Chun and Norota are the DPRK's nuclear and missile issues. Norota will make a three-day visit to the ROK from the 6th to the 8th of January. Chun and Norota will also discuss ways to strengthen bilateral military cooperation and exchanges between the two countries, and also consolidate plans for joint naval exercises that were agreed upon when ROK President Kim Dae-jung visited Japan. The ROK and Japan will open dialogue channels between their navies and Joint Chiefs of Staffs, as the recent infiltration of a DPRK spy vessel in the South Sea has created a need for such discussions. Chun and Norota will have separate meetings with U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen this month.

4. Y2K Bug

Joongang Ilbo ("MILITARY JUSTIFIABLY WORRIED ABOUT Y2K," 01/05/99) reported that missiles in both the ROK and the DPRK may be accidentally fired or the early warning system may fail due to computer errors caused by the "Y2K" bug. A high-ranking official in the ROK Ministry of Information and Communications (MOIC) said on January 5 that the ROK government plans to devise countermeasures to avoid such potential disasters. He added, "We proposed to the Ministry of National Defense (MOND) to form a system in conjunction with the DPRK in order to establish a hot line for contingent situations." The most serious problem is that the early warning system may recognize a "missile attack" which in reality is not occurring. Regarding this, a source at the MOND said, "We are not sure what will actually happen. But, for emergencies, it is necessary to form a hot line." This is more so, because most of the equipment in the DPRK is old Russian and Chinese equipment. Recently, a high-ranking official in the Russian Duma said, "It is presumed that 80 percent of defense equipment made in Russia will be affected by the Y2K." Last September, the US and Russia signed an agreement to establish "a hot line which can confirm the ongoing situation by conventional means."

5. ROK Economy

Korea Times ("IMF LOAN REPAYMENT SCHEDULE TO BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED," 01/05/99) reported that an unnamed senior member of the ROK ruling party said Monday that the repayment schedule of the loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) needs more deliberation. He warned that the nation's foreign reserves may be easily depleted due to excessive spending of US dollars. The senior policymaker of the ruling National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) said that government officials should take more time to carefully review the economic situation and come up with the most appropriate repayment plans. This argument is expected to stir up another controversy, as it may run counter to the policy of the Finance and Economy Ministry. The ROK received US$19 billion from the IMF out of the total US$21 billion agreed to on November 1997. Last year US$2.8 billion was paid back to the Fund. According to the terms and conditions signed by the ROK government and the IMF Fund, US$2.1 billion and US$3.8 billion are expected to be paid back by the first the second quarters of 1999, respectively. In the third and fourth quarters, the ROK is supposed to repay the Fund US$2.6 billion and US$1.5 billion respectively. However, the agreed terms also state that the two sides will discuss the final schedule for each repayment and, should any delay be necessary, the ROK government can refer the matter to the executive board of the IMF.

Chosun Ilbo ("S and P RAISES RATE TO 'POSITIVE'," 01/05/99) reported that Standard and Poors (S and P), the US credit evaluation firm, announced Tuesday that it had raised the sovereign rating of the ROK one level from "stable" to "positive." The upgrade, however, still does not make the country eligible for foreign investment according to S and P's criteria; the "positive" level is still one step short of "BBB," which stands for eligibility for investment. S and P also raised the rate of the Korea Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of Korea to "positive." Another US investors' service

firm, Moody's, said on December 19 that it would start reviewing its sovereign rating of the ROK for possible upgrading. S and P stated that its revision was attributed to the trade surplus, the accumulation of US$49 billion as usable foreign exchange, and Newbridge-GE Capital's commitment to purchase Korea First Bank. S and P also said the most critical issues of the ROK economy are heavy borrowing, excessive capital investments, and poor profitability. S and P concluded that when the ROK makes improvements on these issues, its sovereign rating could be revised to the level of eligibility for investment.

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Produced by the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development in partnership with:
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