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I. United States

1. DPRK Famine

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA'S HUNGRY CHILDREN AFFECTED FOR LIFE: UNICEF," Beijing, 12/06/99) reported that Dilawar Ali Khan of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) mission in the DPRK said Monday that the DPRK famine will have long term effects on the DPRK population.

Khan stated, "we have visited many institutions. Sixteen, 15, 14-year old girls and boys look like 7 or 8. I think they are damaged for life. That is not something that can be corrected or reversed." UNICEF estimates that 62 percent of the country's school children are underweight for their age, and 15 percent are underweight in relation to their height. Khan stated, "So they will suffer that handicap, plus the incidence of iodine deficiency is very high, so it is going to affect the IQ (intelligence quotient). There is very little variety in the food that they take. Protein is very little in the daily intake. It's cereals, largely cereals." UNICEF estimates that iodine deficiency affects nearly 20 percent of all DPRK children. Khan also stated, "There has been some improvement in food security. But the situation of women and children is still vulnerable. These improvements largely depend on the continuation of international assistance. There is a fear that if international assistance in terms of food, health, nutrition and support for the rehabilitation of social infrastructures is withdrawn, we can see a big risk of a reversal in the near future. Deforestation has gone up on a very large scale, so floods, drought, all (these) possibilities are there. This year, the level of water in the reservoirs is very low, it is going to affect the availability of irrigation, as well as the capacity of the nation to produce electricity."

2. DPRK-ROK Relations

The Washington Times (Richard Halloran, "ONE KOREA NO LONGER IS SEEN AS PRIORITY," Seoul, 12/06/99) reported that analysts said that the DPRK is focused on improving its economy, strengthening its military power, and cultivating better relations with the US, rather than on the reunification of Korea. ROK and US officials, said that the DPRK's economic decline has stopped and that Kim Jong-il appears to be in firm command in the DPRK. A US official said, "They'll break even [economically] this year. It will be zero percent growth, but at least it won't be negative." In recent interviews, ROK and US officials, scholars, and specialists on the DPRK offered thesecommon observations: (1) The DPRK economy is not expected to decline further because it has been supported by food and other aid fromthe PRC, Japan, and the West. (2) The deterioration of DPRK armed forces has stopped after about three years of disruption caused by a lack of food, fuel, and supplies. Intelligence reports said that training and readiness in 1999 have been about the same as in 1998 and more weapons, although of aging technology, have been imported. (3) The US offer to normalize political and trade relations with the DPRK would help guarantee the DPRK's survival. [Ed. Note: This article was one of the top stories in the US Defense Department's Early Bird news service for December 6, 1999]

3. Japan-DPRK Relations

The Strait Times ("JAPAN SET TO LIFT N. KOREA SANCTIONS," Tokyo, 12/06/99) and Associated Press ("JAPAN SEEKS TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA ," Tokyo, 12/06/99) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi and Foreign Minister Yohei Kono on December 5 agreed to lift sanctions against the DPRK as a preliminary step to resuming talks on diplomatic ties. Japan Broadcasting Corporation said Obuchi told Kono, "following this visit to North Korea, conditions on the resumption of normalization talks are now well prepared. I would like you to hear from the delegation as quickly as possible and to consider concrete measures." The Jiji Press news agency said the plan to lift the sanctions would be announced on December 7. Hiromu Nonaka, a senior lawmaker of the Liberal Democratic Party, called for diplomatic ties between Japan and the DPRK by the end of 2000. However, the DPRK daily Rodong Sinmun, accused Japan on December 5 of being bent on aggressive militarism in the coming century. It called Japan a "cancer-like entity", and said that the DPRK should take "strong precautions." It also said that an apology and wartime compensation from Japan were prerequisites to normalizing ties.

4. Remains of US Soldiers from Korean War

Associated Press ("U.S., N. KOREA TO DISCUSS REMAINS," Seoul, 12/06/99) reported that the ROK said Monday that the US and the DPRK will meet next week in Germany on December 15 to plan a joint effort to recover the remains of US soldiers and to talk about the number, methods, and schedule of operations for next year. A US foreign ministry official said that a DPRK demand for more money for to help recover the remains would also be discussed. The US Embassy in the ROK declined to comment.

5. PRC Submarine Capabilities

Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "U.S. SECRETS ABOARD LATEST CHINESE SUB," 12/06/99, 1) reported that, according to the US Defense Department and other administration officials with access to intelligence reports, the PRC People's Liberation Navy will start construction in the next several weeks on its first Type-094 missile submarine, which will target US nuclear forces and carry a smaller underwater variant of the DF-31 intercontinental ballistic missile. US spy agencies detected the preparations for the construction and reported it to senior US Defense Department officials in late November. An anonymous official said that the JL-2 submarine-launched missile to be deployed on the Type 094 and the DF-31 are the first strategic systems that will contain allegedly stolen US warhead and missile secrets. According to the intelligence officials, the new Type 094 is being built to provide "a strategic deterrent" against the US. The Type 094 will carry 12 or 16 JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missiles . The JL-2 and the first Type 094 are expected to be deployed around 2005 or 2006. The JL-2, also is known as the Julang-2, has a range of about 7,400 miles. One official said, "these missiles will be able to hit any place in the United States, not just the Western states. That's a significant new capability."

6. US-PRC Military Ties

Associated Press ("CHINESE, U.S. MILITARY TO MEET," Hong Kong, 12/06/99) reported that US Hong Kong consular spokeswoman Barbara Zigli said on Monday that Hong Kong-based PRC military leaders will meet with their US counterparts aboard the USS Blue Ridge, the command ship of the U.S. 7th Fleet, for a reception on December 7. Zigli declined to name the PRC officials, but said they are expected to meet with fleet commander Vice Admiral Walter Doran, the highest-ranking US military official to visit Hong Kong since the PRC cut military ties in May.

7. PRC-RF Relations

Agence France Presse ("YELTSIN TO FLY TO CHINA ON WEDNESDAY," Moscow, 12/06/99) reported that according to Russia's Interfax news agency, Russian foreign policy advisor Sergei Prikhodko said Monday that President Boris Yeltsin will fly to the PRC on December 8 for a state visit.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-US Liaison Office

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "WASHINGTON, PYONGYANG AGREE TO STATION 42 OFFICIALS AT LIAISON OFFICES, REPORT SAYS," Seoul, 12/06/99) reported that a US radio reported on

December 3 that the DPRK and the US recently agreed to station approximately 42 officials at each other's liaison offices. In an interview with People News, an unnamed US expert on the DPRK said that tensions between the DPRK and the US are easing more rapidly than ever. According to the article, the US side had initially sought to dispatch 68 officials to its DPRK office, including 24 diplomatic envoys, 10 agricultural experts, and 34 marines, but backed down in the face of strong DPRK opposition to the stationing of the marines. The US plans to purchase the former East German embassy in the DPRK to use as its liaison office, while the DPRK is considering establishing its office within its UN representative. Some analysts forecast that Kim Jong-il will endorse the establishment of DPRK's liaison office in the DPRK capital around February 16, Kim's birthday, or April 15, the birthday of the late DPRK leader Kim Il-sung.

2. US Visit of Kim Jong-il

The Korea Times ("KIM JONG-IL WANTS TO MEET NEXT US PRESIDENT," Seoul, 12/05/99) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il wants to meet the next US President during a visit to the US following the US Presidential election. According to the Radio Free Asia, an Al Gore victory in the next US Presidential elections would lead to the invitation of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to the US for meetings in the presence of outgoing President Bill Clinton.

3. DPRK-Japan Normalization Talks

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "SOUTH KOREA WELCOMES JAPAN-N. KOREA AGREEMENT TO RESUME NORMALIZATION TALKS," Seoul, 12/04/99) and Chosun Ilbo (Park Jong-hoob, "JAPANESE LAWMAKERS AND NK OFFICIALS ISSUE JOINT DECLARATION," Seoul, 12/03/99) reported that the ROK government on December 3 welcomed the agreement between the DPRK and Japan to resume governmental talks on normalizing relations. "The breakthrough is a positive sign that tensions will be eased on the Korean Peninsula," said Cho Jung-pyo, director-general for Asia-Pacific Affairs Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Cho said he expects that the Japanese government will push for the normalization talks with the DPRK under close coordination among Japan, the ROK, and the US. The agreement to reopen official talks was made between the Japanese multi-party delegation of lawmakers and DPRK's ruling Workers' Party officials. The Japanese delegation, led by former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, visited Pyongyang on Wednesday and returned home Friday. According to news reports in Japan, the Japanese delegation reached an agreement with the DPRK to resume government-level talks to normalize ties as soon as possible. The Japanese delegation said that the DPRK had accepted its proposal for a delegation of the DPRK Workers' Party to visit Japan next year. It also said the DPRK expressed hope that Japan would provide the DPRK with food aid until it achieves self-sufficiency in food.

The Korea Times ("OBUCHI CALLS FOR TALKS THIS WEEK TO NORMALIZE NORTH KOREA TIES: REPORT," Seoul, 12/06/99) and The Korea Times ("JAPAN AIMS FOR NORTH KOREA TALKS THIS MONTH," Seoul, 12/06/99) reported that ROK media reported on Sunday that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi said that the Japanese government should begin negotiations on normalizing ties with the DPRK as early as this week. Obuchi also said that Japan could resume food aid before the end of this week, and that it could start negotiations on lifting all sanctions against the DPRK, Kyodo News agency reported.

4. DPRK-Australia Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Seo Jang-soo, "NK, AUSTRALIA LIKELY TO HOLD TALKS TO NORMALIZE

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS," Seoul, 12/05/99) reported that the DPRK and Australia will likely hold talks aiming to normalize foreign relations between the two countries in Pyongyang in January 2000. A source from diplomatic circles in the ROK said on November 5, "N. Korean Foreign Affairs Minister Paek Nam-sun suggested to Alexander Downer, Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister, in a letter sent by the N. Korean minister to his counterpart at the end of November this year, that they hold talks in Pyongyang." Canberra reportedly holds an affirmative position towards DPRK's proposal, although some high-ranking officials within the Australian government remain hesitant about accepting the proposal. Major issues to be discussed in the talks between the DPRK and Australia would likely include the normalization of diplomatic relations, food aid, and education.

5. DPRK-ROK Economic Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo (Bong Hwa-shik, "SAMSUNG TVS ADVANCE TO PYONGYANG," Seoul, 12/ 03/99) reported that Samsung televisions will be switched on in the DPRK's Korea Hotel in Pyongyang, probably by the middle of this month. Samsung Electronics is to install 100 sets of widescreen TVs and projection TVs in Pyongyang hotel lobbies, publicizing its brand to foreigners in the DPRK. A source from the ROK Ministry of Unification said on Friday, "Samsung Electronics will install 90 sets of 29-inch TVs and 10 sets of 52-inch TVs in some Pyongyang hotel lobbies. Six Samsung technicians will visit Pyongyang next week to check the situation." Samsung shipped the TVs to the DPRK's Nampo port last week.

6. ROK Aid to DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Seo Jang-soo, "KOREA-MADE BLUE JEANS TO BE SHIPPED TO NK," Seoul, 12/02/99) and Chosun Ilbo (Lee Ji-hyung, "NK TO GET JEANS FROM THE SOUTH," Seoul, 12/-5/99) reported that ten thousand pairs of blue jeans made in the ROK will be shipped to the DPRK on November 11. An ROK clothing firm, 'Nix', announced on Thursday that it will deliver 10,000 pairs of blue jeans and 5,000 sweaters, together estimated to be worth 1.5 billion won (US$1.25 million), to the DPRK on November 11. The apparel firm agreed with the DPRK's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee (APPC) to offer the blue jeans . The blue jeans will reportedly be distributed to young people living in the DPRK. They will be allowed to wear these casual clothes every weekend. The DPRK had banned young people in the country from wearing blue jeans because it regarded them as a symbol of capitalism. APPC asked for the firm to offer 30,000 articles of blue jeans to the country on the condition that the clothes were dyed a "dark" color.

7. DPRK Food Shortage

Chosun Ilbo (Park Jeong-hoon, "NK REVEAL FOOD SHORTAGES TO JAPAN," Tokyo, 12/05/99) reported that the Daily Yomiuri reported on Sunday that Kim Yong-sun, secretary of the central committee of the DPRK's Korean Workers' Party (KWP) revealed the food difficulties in the country and appealed for food aid during a meeting last Thursday with a Japanese delegation to the DPRK led by former prime minister Tomiichi Murayama. The article quoted Kim as saying at the meeting, "The North Korean people are suffering due to lack of food as there were continuous floods over the last few years . We can self-support ourselves with food in a couple of years but until that time we are in difficulty." Secretary Kim asked for Japan's aid by stating that the DPRK was "grateful for Japan's food aid in the past" and that "humanitarian aid is something that can be [given] even without diplomatic relations." The Yomiuri stated that "behind North Korea's agreement to start negotiation for normalizing diplomatic relations lay the real intention of gaining food aid [from Japan]." The 17 members of the Diet from both the ruling and opposition parties who participated in

the delegation agreed to reactivate discussions between Japanese and DPRK assemblymen.

8. DPRK-ROK Cultural Exchange

Chosun Ilbo (Choi Bo-shik, "NK CIRCUS TROUPE TO PERFORM IN SEOUL," Seoul, 12/05/99) reported that Hyundai announced on Sunday that about 20 members of a DPRK performance troupe will accompany the DPRK men's and women's basketball teams when the athletes travel to Seoul to take part in a DPRK-ROK basketball tournament from December 22 to 25. The troupe will give circus performances during the half-time intermission breaks on December 23 and 24 of the tournament. A spokesperson from Hyundai said that the business group requested that the performers accompany the basketball teams.

9. DPRK-Russia Border Treaty

Chosun Ilbo (Jung Kwon-hyun, "RUSSIA-NK BORDER REPATRIATION CLAUSE CONFIRMED," Seoul, 12/05/99) reported that it was confirmed on Thursday in clauses 13 and 14 of a copy of the 1990 border treaty between Russia and the DPRK that Russia agreed to send migrant workers such as loggers, defectors and asylum seekers back to the DPRK. Clause 13 defines who is and who is not a defector, while 14 covers their treatment; stating that the two governments agree to inform each other's representative of the arrest of illegal border-crossers immediately, and following any investigation of criminal acts may detain them for the duration of any prison term, before repatriating them to their country of origin.

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.

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