

# NAPSNet Daily Report 06 June, 1997

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## **I. United States**

### **1. DPRK, ROK Ships Exchange Gunfire**

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returned fire with two rounds. The Defense Ministry characterized all five rounds as warning shots, adding that there were no casualties or damage and that the DPRK boats sailed back across the nautical demarcation line after a 40-minute confrontation. Two ROK jet fighters scrambled to the scene and more were placed on alert, Defense Ministry officials said. DPRK patrol ships have violated ROK waters several times in the past year, but Thursday's incident was the first time both sides exchanged fire. The ROK Defense Ministry statement said that the ROK would take up the incident, the most serious DPRK incursion since last September's submarine incident, through the Military Armistice Commission.

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns (STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JUNE 5," USIA Transcript, 6/06/97), in response to a question concerning the DPRK-ROK naval gunfire exchange, stated, "I would just really have to refer you to the South Korean Government on that. They are the ones who will best speak about that. They have the facts. Obviously, you know the United States is an ally of

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The New York Times (Sheryl WuDunn, "NORTH AND SOUTH KOREAN BOATS SWAP FIRE IN SEOUL'S WATERS," Tokyo, 6/06/97) reported that the exchange of gunfire between DPRK and ROK naval vessels on Thursday underscored warnings by some analysts that the DPRK government may become even more unpredictable than usual as it suffers from growing famine. Although DPRK fishing vessels venture from time to time into Yellow Sea waters claimed by the ROK, Thursday's incident was unusual in that it was the first time such fishing boats were accompanied by a DPRK military vessel, according to a spokesman for the ROK Defense Ministry.

## **2. DPRK Famine Situation**

Reuters ("UNICEF: NORTH KOREA AT CRISIS POINT," London, 6/05/97) reported that Peter McDermott, deputy director of emergency programs for UNICEF, said Thursday that the DPRK is teetering on the edge of "a major humanitarian crisis" and needs outside help within weeks. "We have reached the critical juncture," McDermott said hours after returning from a 10-day trip to the DPRK. "Even under the most optimistic scenario, there's going to be a major food problem." The United Nations Children's Fund is one of the few organizations allowed access to remote areas of the DPRK. McDermott said the government is distributing 100 grams -- a handful of rice -- to its citizens each day, but even that ration will run out June 20 as food and fuel dry up. "The big question is what happens after that," McDermott said. "The situation is critical and deteriorating fast but if we act now, we can prevent some of the worst effects." Although the UN launched an appeal for more than US\$200 million in aid just 10 weeks ago, McDermott said more money was already needed. In the short term, he said, more and more of the DPRK's 2.6 million young children were at risk of dying, most from diseases linked to malnutrition. As for the mid-term, he said, "If the crop in September-October is not good, I suspect we will see by the end of the year a major humanitarian crisis." Aside from massive food shortages, the health care system is "on the verge of collapse," fuel is very scarce and infrastructure is breaking down, he said. Children are growing up stunted by chronic hunger, three-year-olds cannot walk, rickets is on the rise and scabies is spreading, he said. At one orphanage he visited, McDermott said 60 children out of 270 had died in the past year.

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns (STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JUNE 5," USIA Transcript, 6/06/97), in response to a question concerning comments by Peter McDermott of UNICEF and other officials on the DPRK famine situation, stated that "we do take seriously some of

what we have heard from international observers. ... We believe the food situation is quite serious in North Korea." Burns added that US shipments worth US\$25 million "is going to be arriving quite soon. We think that there is sufficient international aid to make up some of the shortfall but, in the long term, there is no question that the North Korean economic system is leading to a disaster for the North Korean people and that systemic change is important." However, Burns then added, "In the short term, if you assume that North Korea is not going to change its communist system in the short term -- the next six to twelve months -- we have an obligation, a humanitarian obligation, to help the people who are most affected -- little, small children under the age of five and six."

United Press International ("CANADA PROVIDES AID TO NORTH KOREA," Ottawa, 6/05/97) reported that the Canadian International Development Agency will be sending a new shipment of US\$2 million worth of food aid to the DPRK under the UN World Food Program. The aid is intended for children under the age of six as well as others who are most vulnerable. Canadian International Cooperation Minister Don Boudria said, "Canadians sympathize with the suffering of the North Koreans. We wish to do our part so that they have enough to eat and can build up their food reserves."

### **3. DPRK-Cargill Deal Collapse**

Reuters ("COLLAPSE OF BARTER BOOSTS NORTH KOREA FOOD FEARS," Washington, 6/05/97) reported that the DPRK canceled its zinc-for-food barter deal with US grains giant Cargill Inc., the company said on Thursday. Pyongyang terminated the barter of 4,000 metric tons of zinc for 20,000 tons of US wheat as the ship carrying the grain neared DPRK waters. A Cargill spokeswoman said the DPRK told the company last week that it "had chosen not to perform. Regrettably, under those circumstances, we will not deliver the wheat." Traders in Tokyo said zinc production in the DPRK was plunging because of floods and lack of electricity to refine the ore, and that the DPRK may not have enough zinc on hand. Cargill was given rare permission by the Clinton administration to pursue sales of up to 500,000 tons of wheat and rice to the DPRK, and on April 7, after three months of negotiations, Cargill announced it had reached agreement for the swap. US lawmakers were dismayed by the cancellation. "I suspect North Korea is in even worse shape than we think," said Senator Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat. "Obviously, it complicates the nutrition situation in North Korea further," said Indiana Republican Richard Lugar, a leading Senate voice on farm and foreign policy. "It's clear they don't have any foreign cash reserves." Senator Max Baucus, a Montana Democrat who visited the DPRK last week, called the decision "very unfortunate," adding that when he left Pyongyang on May 28, "it was becoming apparent the (barter) deal was falling through." "I asked why. I got no answer," Baucus said.

Reuters ("CARGILL FINDS BUYER FOR NORTH KOREA-BOUND US WHEAT," Washington, 6/05/97) reported that Cargill has found an alternative buyer for 20,000 ton of US wheat that was en route for the DPRK when the zinc-for-wheat deal collapsed, its spokeswoman said. She declined to name the new buyer.

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns (STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JUNE 5," USIA Transcript, 6/06/97), in response to a question concerning the collapsed DPRK-Cargill zinc-for-food barter deal, stated that the US does not comment on private transactions. "That is up to Cargill to do. ... I know they are in the phone book and I am sure you can call them and see what they have to say about it," Burns said.

### **4. Status of Four-Party Talks Proposal**

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns (STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JUNE 5," USIA Transcript, 6/06/97), in response to a question concerning the status of the four-party Korean peace

talks proposal, stated: "I can confirm that there are trilateral talks taking place today in New York among South Korea, North Korea and the United States. This follows up on the talks that we had, I believe it was late last week, with South Korea and North Korea. As you know, the United States hopes very much that at some point North Korea will accept our invitation to join four-party peace talks. But we are not there yet." Burns added that the meeting was "a joint initiative" between the US and the DPRK. "It was a joint feeling that we ought to get together again and have these trilateral talks."

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. ROK Officials Dismiss DPRK Food Crisis**

The ROK National Unification Ministry said yesterday that the DPRK's food crisis is over, except in some isolated regions where international aid packages cannot reach. According to the ministry's statistics, the amount of grain that has reached the DPRK since last November, combined with its own domestic production, is sufficient to stave off a major famine crisis until early August. The ministry said that the DPRK is expected to receive more than one million tons of additional grain aid from the outside world through the end of August, when the autumn harvest starts, effectively tiding over the looming food crisis. So far, the US has orchestrated international humanitarian aid to the DPRK by pressing its allies as well as international organizations to join the efforts, which are apparently politically-oriented, rather than humanitarian, a ministry official said. "There was a report that 135 North Korean children died of food shortages. It is miserable, but the level is less than 0.05 percent of 2.6 million North Korean children, aged six or less," the official said, adding that the situation in the DPRK, where per capita income reaches US\$1,000, is totally different from famine in some African countries. Some officials also asserted that the DPRK and the PRC signed a secret pact last year that guarantees more than 500,000 tons of grain aid or trade annually at "friendly prices." However, the officials maintained that, whether the DPRK suffers from more floods this year or not, it will continue to face grain shortages in the future. As one senior analyst put it, the DPRK suffers from "chronic and structural problems in improving its agricultural productivity." Unless the DPRK introduces drastic measures, including a significant cut in military spending, and a reduction in the extravagant expenditure in political propaganda, and agricultural reforms, the regime will not escape its current hardship, he said. (Korea Times, "NK FOOD CRISIS OVER: UNIFICATION MINISTRY," 06/05/97)

### **2. ROK Howitzer Sale Fails**

The ROK's plan to sell self-propelled howitzers to Brazil, worth US\$160 million, was thwarted following the failure to revise a memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at opening the way for the ROK's export to a third country of howitzers made under license of a US defense firm. In a briefing to defense correspondents yesterday, Lee Chong-nam, assistant deputy defense minister, said that US and ROK defense officials failed to agree to change the MOU concerning the export of howitzers in a recent Security Cooperation Committee meeting held in Washington May 27. Lee denied earlier reports that the bilateral agreement was to be made in the SCC meeting, aimed to smooth over differences in the lead-up to the ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) between the defense chiefs of the two countries. Lee said, however, that the two sides promised to work toward an agreement, while allowing an increase in production of howitzers for the ROK's military. Hopes were raised following reports about the ROK's imminent export of the howitzers to Brazil, which would be its single largest shipment of weapons, but were dashed when the US could not agree to the ROK's request for a MOU change, citing the need for US Congressional approval for any export of large caliber guns being made in the US or produced with its technologies overseas. Samsung Aerospace has produced the 155mm howitzers under license of the US firm UDLP since 1993. About 40 percent of the parts for the howitzers are supplied by UDLP. In addition, the

procurement chief told correspondents that the two countries also agreed in principle to co-produce multiple rocket launchers and an army tactical missile system. As to improving the existing K-1 main battle tank, the two countries shared the same view to form a task force as soon as possible to work out details for the revision of the concerned MOU. (Korea Times, "KOREA'S PLAN TO SELL HOWITZERS THWARTED DUE TO FAILURE TO REVISE MOU," 06/05/97)

### **3. Kyrgyz-ROK Diplomacy**

Kyrgyz Republic President Askar Akayev, in his summit meeting with ROK President Kim Young-sam Thursday, said that his country fully supports the efforts of the Korean people to achieve permanent peace and eventual non-violent unification of the Korean Peninsula through inter-Korean dialogues and the four party talks. In the meeting, President Kim explained the recent situation surrounding the Korean Peninsula and North East Asia as well as the nation's efforts to ensure permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. Upon hearing Kim's explanation, President Akayev expressed full support for the ROK's efforts. The two leaders also agreed to establish a private sector bilateral economic cooperation committee, as a prelude to creating a government-level economic committee. President Kim said he wants Kyrgyz Republic to help ROK companies move into the country, previously part of the now-collapsed Soviet Union. The two leaders shared the common view that the two countries have ample room for expanding cooperation in the field of trade and investment. Following the summit, the two leaders signed a joint declaration of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries. (Korea Times, "KYRGYZ REPUBLIC SUPPORTS PEACEFUL UNIFICATION OF KOREA," 06/05/97)

## **III. Japan**

### **1. Japan's Theater Missile Defense Policy**

The Nikkei Shimbun ("GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO POSTPONE DECISION ON PARTICIPATION IN US-LED TMD INITIATIVE," 1, 6/3/97) reported that the Japanese government decided June 2 to postpone its decision on whether to participate in the US-led theater missile defense (TMD) initiative, due to the planned domestic financial structural reform that would reduce the budget for Japan-US joint development and deployment of the TMD system. The decision was to be made by this summer, according to the report. The report also quoted Defense Agency head Fumio Kyuma as telling former US Defense Assistant Secretary Richard Armitage during their talks in Tokyo June 2 that Japan will continue studying the Ballistic Missile Defense initiative in cooperation with the US.

The Asahi Shimbun ("US AGREES TO JAPAN'S POSTPONEMENT OF DECISION ON PARTICIPATION IN TMD," 1, 6/5/97) pointed out that the reasons for Japan's postponement of its decision to participate in the TMD initiative may include not only the domestic financial structural reform but also the US request offered by former US Defense Secretary William Perry when he visited Japan last December that Japan participate in the development of a sea-based missile defense system rather than theater high altitude area defense (THAAD), on which Japan had long concentrated its research. In response to the US request, the Japanese government told the new US Defense Secretary William Cohen last April that another three years may be needed before Japan can make a final decision on participation in the TMD initiative. The report also said that Cohen agreed with the Japanese government.

### **2. Japan-US Defense Cooperation**

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("DRAFT OF JAPAN-US DEFENSE COOPERATION GUIDELINES INTERIM REPORT TO BE READY," Evening Edition 1, 6/5/97) reported that the Japanese and US governments decided June 5 that the final draft of a second interim report on Japan-US defense cooperation

guidelines should refer to Japan's revision of related laws to cope with military contingencies in the region surrounding Japan, including the Korean Peninsula. The report said that the draft includes weapons and ammunition in Japan's logistical support for US forces in the event of emergencies around Japan, which will likely spark a debate concerning the Japanese constitution, which renounces the use of force as means of settling international disputes.

### **3. Survey on Japanese Attitude to National Defense**

The Asahi Shimbun ("PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE SURVEY FINDS RISING INTEREST IN KOREAN PENINSULA," 2, 6/1/97) and the Sankei Shimbun ("47% CONCERNED WITH KOREAN PENINSULA SITUATION," 1, 6/1/97) and the Yomiuri Shimbun ("64% SUPPORT JAPANESE PEACE-KEEPING OPERATION (PKO), 1, 6/1/97) reported that the Prime Minister's Office on May 31 released the result of a nation-wide survey on the Japanese attitude to Japan's national defense and security, which shows approximately 47 percent of the respondents are most concerned with the Korean Peninsula and more than 80 percent support the Japanese Self Defense Forces (SDF). According to the reports, the percentage of those concerned with the Korean Peninsula increased by 12.5 percent from the last survey in 1994. The Sankei report pointed out that the DPRK's food shortage, the DPRK's abduction of Japanese citizens and the defection of a DPRK senior official contributed to the increase. Support for the SDF increased by 3.7 percent from the last survey, and the Yomiuri report emphasized that 64.0 percent of the respondents affirmed the SDF's participation in United Nations peace-keeping operations, which is the highest since the first survey in 1991. Of the 3,000 adults throughout the nation surveyed, 70.5 percent responded with valid answers.

### **4. CSCAP Security Conference**

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("COUNCIL FOR SECURITY COOPERATION IN ASIA-PACIFIC (CSCAP) GATHERS 16 NATIONS," Singapore, 6, 6/5/97) reported that the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) began its first general conference June 4 in Singapore, gathering together representatives of sixteen nations, including Northeast Asian nations such as Japan, the PRC, the ROK, the DPRK, and Russia. Taiwan is not an official member of the conference but was admitted for individual participation in working groups, the report noted.

### **5. G-7 to Assist Chernobyl Containment**

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("G-7 TO RESUME ASSISTANCE TO CHERNOBYL POWER PLANT," 3, 6/5/97) reported that the G-7 countries at the Denver Summit slated for June 20 will agree to a plan to boost safety at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine, which is in danger of radioactive leakage. The concrete sarcophagus, built around the No.4 reactor after the explosion in the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, is crumbling, and earthquakes may destroy or further weaken the concrete casing. The G-7 countries will propose some specific measure, such as building a new concrete structure over the existing one, based on the agreement in the summit.

### **5. Russia Says Nuclear Submarine Sunk**

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("RUSSIAN NUCLEAR SUBMARINE SINKS," Evening Edition 2, 5/31/97) reported that according to an Itar-Tass New Agency report, a Russian Navy nuclear submarine sank off Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula. The report said that the reason for the sinking is not yet known, but that the ship's nuclear reactor had already been shut down and its fuel removed from the sub. The report added that there has been no concern for radioactive leakage, according to observers.

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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