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# NAPSNet Daily Report 06 May, 1997

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### **I. United States**

#### **1. US-DPRK Missile Talks Postponed**

The Associated Press ("PYONGYANG POSTPONES MISSILE TALKS," Washington, 5/6/97) reported that the DPRK, citing "technical reasons," has called off talks scheduled for next week that were to deal with US concerns over DPRK missile technology development and export. Agenda items were to include reports that the DPRK is preparing to deploy long-range Rodong I missiles that may be capable of hitting the ROK and much of Japan, and US concerns that the DPRK has sold long-range Scud missiles to Iran and Syria. The talks were due to be held in New York May 12-13. US State Department spokesman John Dinger said that on Monday the DPRK requested a postponement but also requested alternative dates, indicating it was still interested in the talks. "We will recommend dates and hope they will be held soon," Dinger said. In a first round of talks, held last April in Berlin, the US sought a freeze on DPRK missile exports and production, and encouraged the DPRK to join an international agreement to restrict exports of such weapons.

#### **2. DPRK Comments on Food Talks Breakdown**

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA HITS SOUTH FOR TALKS FAILURE," Seoul, 5/6/97) reported that on Tuesday the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) criticized the ROK for the deadlock in Red Cross talks on food aid. "No agreement was reached at the contact due to the South side's eccentric and incomprehensi

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deadlock in Red Cross talks on food aid. "No agreement was reached at the contact due to the South side's eccentric and incomprehensible attitude," KCNA quoted a spokesman for the DPRK Red Cross as saying. "It is empty talk and a sheer waste of time to discuss the procedures and method of the offering with the South side's position remaining unclear." However, the ROK said it was hopeful future contacts would lead to better ties. ROK Deputy Prime Minister Kwon O-kie told parliament the DPRK agreed to resume dialogue through a telephone link in Panmunjom, the only crossing point in the Demilitarized Zone. The talks in Beijing stalled over the exact amount and method of delivery of ROK grain to the DPRK, Red Cross officials said.

### **3. Future Korean War Scenarios Assessed**

Lonnie Henley wrote an opinion article for The Washington Post ("A WAR SCENARIO: KOREAN CATAclysm," C01, 5/4/97) discussing the prospects of military conflict on the Korean peninsula. Henley wrote, "If North Korea attacked the South, the ensuing war would be intense and bloody, with high casualties on both sides and heavy damage to South Korea's economic infrastructure. It is unlikely North Korea would prevail, however, unless it were able to make quick territorial gains and then persuade its opponents to accept a cease-fire." Among the DPRK's advantages are its numerical troop advantage, positioning along the DMZ, and extensive artillery firepower, "including long-range systems that can reach across the entire battlefield and into Seoul itself." However, Henley wrote, the US and ROK advantages, including a strong defensive position, sophisticated air and sea power, better training and extensive economic/industrial resources, "are more important." DPRK success in any conflict would depend deeply upon attacking first and achieving "maximum surprise," Henley wrote. Henley then described various scenarios by which a conflict could transpire over its initial days and weeks. After laying out the DPRK's "best case scenario," Henley wrote, "It is extremely unlikely that the North could achieve this degree of success given the realities of the 1990s." "In the event of war, the most likely outcome by far is that allied forces would stall the North Korean army north of Seoul," and then "sweep north" as far as "political calculations" dictate. Henley then considered two "wild card" variations, determining that the prospect of a PRC intervention would be low, and that a DPRK nuclear strike "would severely damage some aspects of the allies' fighting capability [but] would not alter the outcome of the war ... except to rule out any possibility of a negotiated settlement." Henley concluded that, all factors considered, "The North Koreans have to know that if they start a war, the ultimate outcome is in little doubt." [Ed. note: The Washington Post noted that Lonnie Henley is a career US Army officer and Asian analyst assigned to the Pentagon, and that he views expressed in his article are his own and not those of the US Army or the Department of Defense.]

### **4. US, ROK Policies on Food Aid to DPRK Assessed**

Robert A. Manning wrote in an opinion article in The Los Angeles Times ("FEEDING THE STARVING MASSES DOESN'T MAKE FOR A COHERENT POLICY," 5/4/97) that, facing a DPRK on the verge of "mass starvation" but also still posing "a serious threat" militarily, US policy "lacks the coherence to meet this important challenge." Manning wrote that the food crisis is trenchant rather than transitory, the DPRK is likely to divert aid to the military even if "meticulously monitored," and by spending "millions on shrines and birthday celebrations for its leaders" the DPRK does little to elicit sympathy. Manning concluded, "In such circumstances, the moral response of humanitarian food aid may only entrench the powers that created the disaster in the first place, keeping the Korean Peninsula a dangerous flash point, with the potential for either a military confrontation or implosion of North Korea. Either development would dramatically alter the balance of power in northeast Asia and affect US interests." Yet, Manning noted, despite these stakes the Clinton Administration currently has no "Asia foreign-policy team" in place, producing "what appears to be a confusing jumble of Korea policies, each running on its own track." Manning argued that "North Korea must be

presented with a clear choice," requiring first the appointment of "a special coordinator for Korea" who "would be charged with devising and implementing a comprehensive strategy." Manning added, "The goals of any such strategy are clear: reducing the military threat on the peninsula and advancing North-South reconciliation." Manning ended, "It is entirely possible that no policy can save North Korea from itself. But if Pyongyang refuses to negotiate even when presented with a generous and reasonable offer, Washington will have succeeded in smoking out North Korea's intentions and can alter its policy accordingly, even preparing for the worst." [Ed. note: The Los Angeles Times noted that Robert A. Manning was a State Department Advisor for Asia Policy From 1989-93, is currently Senior Fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute and Progressive Foundation, and recently returned from a visit to Korea.]

Andrew Pollack wrote in the New York Times ("NORTH KOREA'S FAMINE STRAINS QUALITY OF MERCY," A3, 5/6/97) that a growing number of ROK citizens are willing to overlook past attitudes toward the DPRK in order to help save its people from famine. However, for the ROK government, the line between humanitarian concerns and political realities is a difficult one to draw. Balancing these competing imperatives, the ROK has settled into a stance of providing limited aid through the UN World Food Program while discouraging private and corporate donations except, recently, limited amounts funneled through the ROK Red Cross. Other countries are conducting similar balancing acts. Japan has stopped providing aid, despite its stockpile of surplus rice, some of it rotting from age, due to reports, still unconfirmed, that the DPRK kidnapped Japanese citizens. The US, like the ROK, distinguishes between "humanitarian aid" -- small-scale assistance offered through intermediate organizations -- and bilateral aid -- large-scale assistance transferred directly between governments. The two governments say humanitarian aid will not be tied to politics, and have accordingly responded to World Food Program appeals. However, the World Food Program has raised only US\$34 million of the US\$95 million in food aid it is seeking for the DPRK, and even this amount would purchase only ten percent of what it estimates is required to meet the need. Large donations will have to come directly from governments, led by the US and the ROK; but both countries have insisted that the DPRK must first agree to enter negotiations aimed at forging a peace treaty to replace the fragile armistice that ended the Korean War in 1953. Yet, at recent talks in New York, the DPRK balked at taking part in such talks unless it was guaranteed 1.5 million tons of grain in advance. "The North had the wherewithal to open that gate and they just didn't," a US diplomat was quoted as saying. Meanwhile, wholesale famine grows closer. "Time is running out," a World Food Program spokesman said.

## **5. ROK Spy in US**

The Associated Press ("JUSTICE MAY ACCEPT PLEA IN SPY CASE," Washington, 5/6/97) and United Press International ("ALLEGED SPY FOR SOUTH KOREA TO PLEA," Washington, 5/6/97) reported that the US Justice Department said Tuesday it will likely accept a plea offer from former US Navy intelligence analyst Robert C. Kim, who was arrested in September on charges of delivering one confidential and six classified documents to the ROK Embassy. Kim pleaded innocent to formal charges carrying a maximum sentence of life in prison and a US\$250,000 fine, but now wants to plead guilty to lesser charges that carry a maximum 10-year prison sentence, according to Kim's attorney, Jamie Gore. Prosecutors said Kim, over a nine-month period, gave the ROK military information about the PRC and the DPRK. "I think espionage deals with harming the United States government, and that is not what Mr. Kim is pleading guilty to," Gore said Tuesday. "He is pleading guilty to assisting another government ... which is a (U.S.) ally." "He is a patriotic and loyal American. Whatever he did was only to assist the Republic of South Korea in defending itself from possible invasion from the north," Gore said. Justice Department spokesman John Russell said prosecutors are considering the offer, adding, "I think it's a good chance that we will accept it."

## 6. DPRK-Vietnam Relations

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("VIETNAM FOREIGN MINISTER ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO N. KOREA," Hanoi, 5/6/97) reported that Vietnam's foreign ministry issued a statement Tuesday saying that Vietnam's foreign minister, Nguyen Manh Cam, has started an official four-day visit to the DPRK. Cam will hold talks with his DPRK counterpart to discuss a range of bilateral issues, the statement said. Last month, DPRK Deputy Prime Minister Kong Chin-tae visited Vietnam to negotiate rice shipments to alleviate its food shortages, but the two countries, one-time close ideological allies, could not agree on payment terms. Ties between the DPRK and Vietnam remain cordial in public, but have been strained since Hanoi established diplomatic ties with the ROK in 1992. Foreign Minister Cam will also visit Japan after leaving the DPRK on Saturday, the foreign ministry said.

## 7. Chemical Weapons Convention Conference

The Associated Press ("CHEMICAL ARMS BAN CONFERENCE OPENS," The Hague, Netherlands, 5/6/97) reported that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Tuesday told the first gathering of treaty members of the Chemical Weapons Convention that the new chemical weapons ban would eliminate "the most monstrous tools of warfare," and urged them to enforce it. "You have been summoned by history and you have answered its call," he told the 700 delegates. "One of the most monstrous tools of warfare has been ruled intolerable." The ban, which took effect last month, prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons. Delegates at the three-week conference are seeking ways to implement the treaty to make sure it meets its goals. But critics say it remains flawed until countries like Russia and Iraq, which have chemical arsenals, ratify it. Although 165 countries have signed the treaty, only 88 have ratified it. The United States ratified the treaty just two weeks ago. Of greatest concern are countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya and the DPRK, which have yet to even sign the pact. "I urge that all the signatories -- indeed all 185 members of the United Nations -- finish the job that has begun and join the community of ratifying states," Annan said.

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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