

NAPSNet Daily Report 07 April, 1997

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 07 April, 1997", NAPSNet Daily Report, April 07, 1997,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-07-april-1997/>

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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Meetings

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("TRANSCRIPT: STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 7," USIA Transcript, 4/7/97) stated that at a meeting of US, DPRK, and ROK officials in New York on April 4, DPRK representatives said that they would provide a formal response "soon" to the joint US-ROK proposal for four party Korean peace talks. "The North Koreans indicated that they will be prepared soon to give the United States and the Republic of Korea a formal response to our joint briefing. Our hope, of course, is that the North Koreans will agree very soon to the Four-Party Proposal themselves, and that those talks can be begun," Burns said. In response to a question regarding what the DPRK meant by "soon," Burns said, "'Soon' is 'soon.' In diplomatic parlance, 'soon' means 'soon' ... Sometimes 'soon' is a couple of hours; sometimes it's a couple of days. It's very seldom more than a couple of weeks. I would think between several hours and several weeks." Burns added that at the meeting the US "did not make any additional commitments of food aid. I just don't know how big an issue that was and how it was discussed." Burns would not confirm reports that the US and the DPRK would sometime this month resume talks on missile developments.

2. US Secretary of Defense Supports Missiles in Japan

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I. United States

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2. US Secretary of Defense Supports Missiles in Japan

The Associated Press ("COHEN MULLS WEAPONS WITH JAPAN," Tokyo, 4/7/97) reported that US Secretary of Defense William Cohen, arriving on his first trip to Asia as defense secretary, urged Japan to join the US in developing new anti-missile weapons to defend against such potential aggressors as the DPRK. "That's going to be a decision that they're going to have to make," Cohen said Monday in Tokyo, where he is to have two days of talks with government and military officials and visits to American troops. "We feel that there is a theater missile threat that certainly has an impact upon Japan as well," he said. "I think that Japanese defense officials are aware that North Korea has certainly been developing capabilities which would place them at risk," he added, referring to longer-range ballistic missiles the DPRK reportedly is trying to produce. "So we think it would be in the interest of the people, the Japanese government to participate" with the US in building new anti-missile systems, he said. Senior aides traveling with Cohen, speaking anonymously, said that Japan had financial and other reservations about the need for missile defense, but that advanced Japanese technology in missile detection sensors would be a boon to the program, and that it seemed likely Japan would make at least a tentative decision this summer on whether to collaborate. Ballistic missile defense is an increasingly sensitive issue in East Asia, where

the ROK and Japan are both alarmed at efforts by the DPRK to produce a missile capable of striking their territory, and Taiwan was upset last March when the PRC lobbed several ballistic missiles near its coastline, which stirred fears of war. "We think this is going to be a serious threat to our troops and to our people in the future," Cohen said, referring to the overall problem of missiles in Asia.

3. US Secretary of Defense Seeks Japanese Troop Support

Reuters ("U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY VISITS JAPAN," Tokyo, 4/7/97) and the Associated Press ("COHEN MULLS WEAPONS WITH JAPAN," Tokyo, 4/7/97) reported that US Secretary of Defense William Cohen on Monday sought assurances of "non-combat" support from Japanese forces in a Korean conflict, and sought to dampen down opposition to US forces in Japan. On his flight from Hawaii to Asia, Cohen told reporters, "We will discuss regional security issues and the role that Japan and the United States will play," but stressed that he was aware of the sensitivity needed because of Japan's constitution, which forbids the use of military force except to defend itself. The two countries are negotiating an update of their 1978 joint "defense guidelines" for security cooperation, a matter which will also be discussed by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and US President Bill Clinton at a Washington meeting later this month. The United States wants firm assurances that US forces could use bases in Japan for operations or transportation in case of a new war in Korea. Cohen also praised Hashimoto's efforts to maintain Japanese public support for the presence of 47,000 US troops in Japan, more than half of whom are on the island of Okinawa, and said he was not worried by signs of growing unease among the Japanese public about the size of U.S. military forces on their territory. "You always find public opinion can be divided," he said. "I don't find that to be troublesome. I think that's something to expect." Last week about 2,000 people marched in central Tokyo to protest the American military bases on Okinawa. Cohen said he would assure the prime minister of Washington's determination to keep 100,000 American troops in the western Pacific indefinitely. "We do intend to maintain a robust presence," he said.

4. US Secretary of Defense Discourages ROK Missile Purchase

Reuters ("COHEN URGES SOUTH KOREA NOT TO BUY RUSSIAN MISSILES," Honolulu, 4/6/97) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen Saturday urged the ROK not to buy Russian SA-12 anti-aircraft missiles, suggesting they might accidentally threaten friendly US jets in the confusion of any new Korean war. Cohen warned that it would be a political and military mistake for Seoul to opt for Russia's SA-12s instead of buying American Patriot air defense missiles. "It would not play well in (the U.S.) Congress at all," Cohen told reporters flying with him from Washington to Hawaii for an overnight stop on the way to Japan and the ROK. "It would not be a good deal, I think, overall ultimately for our relationship. It's important that they stay with US equipment," the secretary said in a pointed response to questions on the controversy. Cohen and other US officials voiced concern about "inter-operability" of the SA-12, one of the world's most advanced air defense weapons, with US F-15 and other warplanes based in the ROK to deter any new war with the DPRK.

5. Officials to Visit DPRK

The Associated Press ("U.S. OFFICIALS TO VISIT N. KOREA," Seoul, 4/4/97) reported that 54 US, ROK, and Japanese officials will visit the DPRK this week to advance provision of two light-water nuclear reactors to the DPRK as stipulated under the Agreed Framework. To symbolize improvement in relations between the ROK and the DPRK, the officials will cross the North-South border by sea, rather than traveling by air via a third country as previously has been done. The group plans to examine the reactor site in Sinpo, on the DPRK's east coast, and negotiate construction protocols, according to a statement from the ROK Unification Ministry. They will join a 29-member international technical team that has been working since last month on a geological survey of the site. The officials are scheduled to leave an eastern ROK port Tuesday aboard a ROK ship and stay in

the DPRK until April 15.

6. DPRK Famine Situation

The Associated Press ("U.N. ALARMED OVER N. KOREA FAMINE," United Nations, 4/7/97) reported that the United Nations on Monday appealed for an additional US\$126 million in emergency aid for the DPRK, reflecting its alarm over the growing specter of famine. World Food Program (WFP) head Catherine Bertini said that the figure includes US\$95.5 million needed to feed the DPRK's 2.4 million children under age 6 for the next year. The amount sought for food for children is twice what the agency said was needed in February. In addition, the director of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Yasushi Akashi, said the DPRK needs US\$20.9 million to help restore food production and US\$9 million for basic health services. Bertini, a former US assistant secretary of agriculture, told reporters in Seoul on Friday that unless large-scale aid arrives by the summer, North Koreans face "malnutrition and possibly death by starvation." Akashi said the latest appeal was issued "in view of the severe food shortage and magnitude" of devastating floods in the past two years.

7. Last Minute US Push To Ratify CWC

The USIA (Wendy S. Ross, "CLINTON LAUNCHES MAJOR DRIVE FOR SENATE RATIFICATION OF CWC," 4/4/97) reported that at a ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House April 4, US President Bill Clinton inaugurated a last-minute push for US Senate ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). At the ceremony, Clinton said that it is "monumentally important" for the US and the world that US ratification of the treaty take place before it goes into force April 29. Clinton urged the Senate "to act in the highest traditions of bipartisanship and in the deepest of our national interest." Ratification of the treaty "says America is committed to protecting our troops, to fighting terror, to stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction, to setting and enforcing standards for international behavior and to leading the world in meeting the challenges of the 21st Century," Clinton said. Attending the ceremony was a distinguished gathering of former and present US officials, military officers, arms control negotiators and scientists, including Vice President Al Gore, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Defense Secretary William Cohen, former Secretary of State James Baker, former Republican Senators David Boren and Nancy Kassenbaum-Baker and General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Bush administration and in the first year of the Clinton administration. Clinton warned that if the Senate fails to ratify the Convention before the April 29 deadline "our national security and, I might add, our economic security will suffer. We will be denied use of the treaty's tools against rogue states and terrorists. We will lose the chance to help to enforce the rules we helped to write or to have Americans serve as international inspectors -- something that is especially important for those who have raised concerns about the inspection provisions of the treaty. Ironically, if we are outside this agreement rather than inside, it is our chemical companies, our leading exporters, which will face mandatory trade restrictions that could cost them hundreds of millions of dollars in sales. In short order, America will go from leading the world to joining the company of pariah nations that the Chemical Weapons Convention seeks to isolate. We cannot allow this to happen."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

Seeing the DPRK's proposal to hold tripartite assistant minister-level talks as being one step nearer the proposed four-party talks, the ROK government is responding favorably. The DPRK last Friday made the proposal in a three-way working-level meeting with the ROK and the US, saying it will clarify its position on the proposed talks for a permanent peace settlement on the Korean Peninsula.

"We perceive the North's proposal to have come from its realistic assessment that without attending the talks they would not be able to receive substantial food aid," an official at the ROK Foreign Ministry said Saturday. "Nevertheless, it is a positive sign on their part on attending the talks," the official said. The DPRK reportedly expressed gratitude at Friday's New York working-level meeting for the ROK/US decision to provide food aid. Officials of the three nations will meet in New York to discuss the place, timing and the scope of the tripartite talks, the official said. The talks would bring together ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Song Young-shik, acting US Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman and DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan. At the earliest, the talks will take place around April 15, the official said. ROK officials said that they will not limit the three-way talks to a forum where DPRK expresses only its intent to take part. The Seoul government is holding on to its uncompromising policy not to grant food aid any time before the start of the four-party talks, reiterating that additional aid can be discussed at the talks. (Korea Herald, "SEOUL SAYS NORTH KOREAN PROPOSAL ON TALKS A 'POSITIVE SIGN', 04/07/97)

2. ROK-DPRK Unification

Recent developments in the DPRK indicate crisis, unpredictability and serious change in the country, shedding new light on the discussion in the ROK of possible future unification. One major growing component of this discussion is the issue of cost. ROK Deputy Prime Minister Kwon O-kie last month called for more serious discussion of the cost of unification and possible establishment of a unification fund on the governmental level. The Seoul government, although having made various contingency plans regarding the North, has been loath to publicly discuss this question. Officials say a public discussion of a possible German-style unification may provoke the North with implications of an impending collapse of the North and an eventual absorption by the South. In the South, such a discussion could raise public worries over the shouldering of the financial burden. A National Unification Ministry official said that officials have been studying various scenarios of unification and working out their respective price tags. Estimates vary widely, from as low as US\$40 billion to as high as US\$2.5 trillion. The difference hinges on the timing of reunification and which costs are covered. The leading factor in calculating the cost of unification is the question of how to raise the living standards in the North. The Korea Development Institute (KDI), a government economic think tank, estimates that if the two Koreas are united by 2000, the ROK will have to spend US\$372.2 billion in the next decade to reduce per capita income gap between the two Koreas. The Research Institute of National Unification (RINU), a research arm of the Unification Ministry, estimates that around US\$438.2 billion will be needed to close the gap in the decade following unification. The 21st Century Committee, a presidential advisory committee, puts the bill at US\$440 to US\$1.2 trillion. To answer how (and whether) these mammoth costs should be met, academics and policymakers alike are turning the focus of the discussions to the "opportunity cost" the South has to pay for maintaining two not only separate but hostile Koreas. Heading the opportunity costs are the enormous military expenditures by the two Koreas, about US\$21 billion a year all together. There are also huge security-related budgets, including those for running defense and intelligence-related ministries and even riot police. Diverting this "defense and security money" into unification fund will help alleviate fears amongst the taxpayers in the South who are apprehensive about shouldering the burden of unification costs. For the Seoul government, the case of Germany is a model for its unification studies. Some academics call for an increase in income tax, akin to the 7.5 percent increase in Germany. The issuing of Unification Bonds and international borrowing are the other main options being discussed. Officials said their work on these complex set of policy initiatives continues to be updated and supplemented by reviewing contingency plans regarding the North. (Korea Herald, "NORTH KOREAN SITUATION CAUSES CONCERNS ABOUT SOUTH'S READINESS", Kim Ji-soo, 04/07/97)

3. ROK, US Holds Defense Talks

The ROK government wants to project strongly its view on the DPRK, which a senior defense official says is "perceptibly" different than that of the US, in an upcoming meeting of the two countries' defense chiefs. Defining the April 10 meeting as a mini-SCM (annual ROK-U.S. Security Consultative Meeting), the official said that it is important to recognize the differences and iron them out before they develop and cause disruptions in the joint defense posture dealing with the North. "We live next door to the North, which never bothers to conceal its aim of unifying the peninsula by force," he said. "In contrast, the Korean issue is figured in the U.S. big picture of world politics." "Perhaps these different views are attributed to the fact that we see the North staggering on despite its economic crisis, while the US tends to think that its fall is more imminent, although the two allies agree that the Stalinist country is very much doomed." In that context, Defense Minister Kim Dong-jin and his US counterpart William Cohen agreed to have their first face-to-face meeting as soon as possible, even before the 1997 SCM, scheduled for this fall. "Particularly considering the latter is quite new on the job, we want to convey our views to him at an early stage of his office so as to minimize hiccups in the two countries' military alliance later on," he said. As to reports that Cohen and Gen. Shalikashvili, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, are planning to pressure Korea to buy certain American weapons the ministry said that because it will be a formal meeting, it would be very unusual for one defense minister to plug certain weapons to another minister. The US JCS chairman is scheduled to visit Korea on April 8 at the invitation of his Korean counterpart Gen. Yoon Yong-nam. Korea is trying to buy a new and sophisticated missile system with weapons made by the US and Russia on the short list of candidates. Korean procurement officials are trying to cool the already heated competition between the two countries, both important allies of Korea, by slowing the selection process. (Korea Times, "ROK, US TO COORDINATE OUTLOOK ON NK IN DEFENSE CHIEF'S MEETING," 04/05/97)

4. US, ROK Consults on Defense

The US Defense Department reportedly requested the ROK not to respond independently if the DPRK engages in local aggression including the infiltration of its armed agents. Such a request could appear on the surface merely a call for consultation with the United Nations commander to maintain the armistice agreement if the North should engage in local aggression. However, there are criticisms it is virtually a violation of the ROK Army's control over peacetime operations as the U.N. commander is also the commander of the Combined ROK-U.S. Forces in Korea(USFK). According to a military source yesterday, the US asked the ROK after the DPRK's submarine incident in last September to decide on its military response with the commander of the Combined ROK-USFK if the DPRK commits further acts of local aggression. The ROK's Defense Ministry discussed the issue on March 21 at a working-level policy meeting among the ROK, the US and Japan. The ministry will also reportedly discuss the matter again with the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the US who will visit the South tomorrow. If the South decides to accept the US request, the ROK's joint chief of staff chairman has to obtain approval from the Combined ROK-USFK commander before deploying military units during armed infiltration by the North. The official said, "The recent request from the US appears to be based on a judgment that a unilateral response by the South against local aggression from the North could escalate into an all-out war" (Joong Ang Ilbo, "U.S. REQUEST PRIOR CONSULTATION BEFORE RESPONDING TO LOCAL AGRESSION FROM THE NORTH, 04/07/97)

5. DPRK Vice Marshal Arrested

A top DPRK military official was arrested for his alleged involvement in an attempted coup last summer, the Tokyo Shimbun reported Friday in a dispatch from Vladivostok, Russia. Quoting an informed source in the Russian Far East, the Japanese daily said vice marshal Ri Ha-il was arrested for suspected involvement in a coup plot by an intelligence agency led by marshal Ri Ul-sol. Ri Ha-il

and officers and men in the 7th corps based in Hamhung, south Hamgyong province, attempted to overthrow the government last summer out of their dissatisfaction with the Kim Jong-il regime over the food shortage and other problems, the source said. Vice marshal Ri was a member of the Workers' Party's central military commission and national defense committee. He accompanied Kim Jong-il in his inspections of military units during the first half of last year, but has not been mentioned in official reports since he attended events commemorating the second anniversary of the death of Kim Il-sung on July 8 last year, the report added. (Korea Times, "NK VICE MARSHAL RI HAIL ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTED COUP," 04/04/97)

6. KEDO Visits DPRK

A large-scale delegation, led by ROK officials and experts, will make a week-long visit to the DPRK from April 9 for working-level talks on the construction of two light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK. The 54-member delegation, comprising government officials from Seoul, Tokyo and Washington and representatives from the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), will take a sea route for the first time to reach the DPRK port of Yanghwa, said Chang Sun-sup, commissioner of the Planning Office for the Light-Water Reactor (LWR) Project. The destination port is located in the vicinity of Sinpo, selected as a candidate site for a nuclear power plant. Construction will begin by possibly late this year and the port will become crowded with ROK engineers and constructed equipment ferried to the reactor construction site. Until now, KEDO delegations have traveled to North Korea only by plane via Beijing. The delegation, including KEDO's deputy executive director, Choi Young-jin, will leave the ROK port of Tonghae at 6 p.m. on April 9 and arrive in the Yanghwa port at 2 p.m. the next day. The 3,640-ton vessel "Hannara," owned by the Korea Maritime University, will make a voyage as far as 193 miles to reach the DPRK port. Chang said that his delegation will negotiate with the DPRK to shorten the detour route. One of the delegation's missions includes a visit to the Sondok airport which is about 90 kilometers away from Sinpo. Since KEDO plans to use the airport to transport personnel from Beijing, it is very important to check the airport's facilities, Chang said. The delegation will also seek ways to secure a direct communication channel between the ROK and the DPRK, he said, adding that there is a direct phone line between the DPRK and the KEDO headquarters in New York. (Korea Times, "54-MEMBER KEO TEAM TO VISIT NK VIA SEA ROUTE FOR TALKS ON N-REACTORS," 04/04/97)

7. DPRK May Join ADB

The DPRK is highly likely to join the Asia Development Bank(ADB) within the year. ROK Deputy Prime Minister Kang Kyung-shik who also heads the Ministry of Finance and Economy held a meeting with reporters yesterday in the Philippines where he is attending the 4th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation(APEC) meeting of finance ministers. Minister Kang said, "I met the ADB president and revealed the government's official position that South Korea will welcome the North's joining of ADB with no pre-conditions." He also explained, "The government decided to support the North's bid to become a member of ADB with the judgment it will help to relieve the nation's economic difficulties and further open up the nation. It could also lead to expanded economic cooperation between the two Koreas and contribute to establishing peace on the Korean peninsula." This is the first time that the ROK has revealed such a positive support for the DPRK's bid to join the ADB, which greatly increases the DPRK's chances for becoming a member. The DPRK has been actively pursuing its entry into the ADB since the second half of last year. A member nation with per capital income of less than 700 dollars is eligible for long-term loans at low interest rates from the Asia Development Fund. Accordingly, the DPRK can receive US\$100-200 million annually in fund subsidies if it becomes a member, the official said. (Joong Ang Ilbo, "NORTH KOREA LIKELY TO JOIN ADB," 04/07/97)

III. Japan

1. Suspected DPRK Abduction of Japanese Civilian

The Sankei Shimbun ("EIGHT FAMILIES OF SUSPECTED DPRK ABDUCTEES URGE GOVERNMENT ACTION," 1, 3/27/97) reported that a group of eight families of Japanese civilians reportedly abducted by the DPRK held a press conference March 26 to call for Japanese government action to push the DPRK for the return of their abducted family members. Shigeru Yokota, head of the group and father of Megumi Yokota, who was reportedly abducted by DPRK agents in Niigata twenty years ago, said that he hopes the group can facilitate gradual progress in the cases. He also said that the Japanese government should investigate the abduction cases and strongly demand that those abducted be returned by the DPRK. The report added that the group will consider sending an investigative team to the ROK and filing law suits to the international court.

2. Japan-Russia Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN-RUSSIA WORKING-LEVEL MEETING," Moscow, 2, 3/30/97) reported that the Japan-Russia Working Group on a Japan-Russia Peace Treaty agreed March 29 that Russia will help Japan investigate unidentified Japanese cemeteries and that Russia will allow Japanese experts on agriculture, education and medicine who have no visa to travel to Russia.

3. Japan-PRC Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN AND PRC AGREE TO EXCHANGE NOTES ON JAPAN'S UNTIED FINANCIAL AID TO PRC," Beijing, 3, 3/30/97) reported that the Japanese and PRC governments agreed in Beijing March 29 on Japan's resumption of untied financial aid to the PRC, which had been frozen by Japan due to PRC nuclear testing. Both sides agreed that the total aid of 28 million yen will be used for medical equipment in Nanjing.

The Nikkei Shimbun ("JAPAN AND PRC AGREE ON JIANG VISIT TO JAPAN WITHIN THE YEAR," Beijing, 1, 3/31/97) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda, PRC leader Jiang Zemin and PRC Prime Minister Li Peng agreed March 30 in Beijing on a visit by Jiang to Japan within the year in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of normalization of Japan-PRC relations. With regard to the Taiwan issue, Jiang said that the policy of "two systems in one state," currently applied to Hong Kong, was originally meant for Taiwan. He also said that the PRC can invite someone from Taiwan to take an important position in the PRC, and that the PRC does not need to send military troops to Taiwan. In response to Ikeda's emphasis on the importance of Japan-US-PRC relations in the Asia-Pacific's development, Jiang stressed that the PRC especially values Japan-PRC relations. With regard to international reactions to the post-Deng PRC, Li said that he finds it difficult to see why some in the international community see the PRC as a threat. Ikeda, in turn, said that it is necessary for the PRC to keep in touch with the international community and that Japan will support the PRC's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO).

4. DPRK Food Situation

World Food Program (WFP) Executive Director Catherine Bertini told the Yomiuri Shimbun ("WFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR URGES JAPANESE FOOD AID TO DPRK," 8, 4/2/97) on April 1 that she strongly hopes that Japan will provide more generous food aid to the DPRK. With regard to her four-day survey in the DPRK, she stated that DPRK citizens get 100 grams of rice a day and that according to WFP estimates, food supplies will be depleted in June. She also told the Daily Yomiuri ("WFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR URGES JAPAN'S FOOD AID TO N. KOREA," 1, 4/2/97) that the WFP is very pleased that Japan has already contributed to the program. She added that the WFP's

US\$41 million donation will be part of interagency aid appeal to the DPRK by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), whose food aid is expected to amount to \$86 million.

5. DPRK-Taiwan Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("TAIWAN-DPRK ECONOMIC TIES STRENGTHENING: SECRET EXCHANGES OF ECONOMIC DELEGATION INCREASE," Hong Kong, 7, 4/4/97) reported that agricultural experts from Taipei visited the DPRK last month and supplied it with advanced technologies. A Kuomingto delegation will also visit Pyongyang this month for talks with their DPRK counterparts on a Taiwan-DPRK liaison office exchange. The report pointed out that despite the lack of diplomatic ties, Taiwan and the DPRK have already increased economic exchange. The DPRK opened a travel agency in Taipei last spring, and the DPRK and Taiwan's Kuomingto officials had talks in Taipei last June on Taiwan's technological and economic aid to the DPRK. Taiwan also sent a delegate of business leaders to the Rajin-Sonbong Economic Free Trade Zone for a site survey last September. The report added that Taiwan-DPRK trade amounted to approximately 1 billion Taiwan dollars last year, and that the Pyongyang-Macao aviation route, established last fall, is interesting Taiwanese business circles.

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

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