

NAPSNet Daily Report 09 January, 1998

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 09 January, 1998", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 09, 1998,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-09-january-1998/>

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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Development

US Defense Department spokesman Ken Bacon ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR THURSDAY BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 01/09/98) said that the US is aware that the DPRK is working to develop longer range ballistic missiles. He stated, "There's been no secret about this. They've been working on this program for some time." He added that the DPRK "would be much wiser to spend their money helping their people, feeding their people, caring for their people, than building new weaponry that could be destabilizing in an area that's already looking at economic instability."

2. DPRK Chemical Weapons Production

The Washington Post carried an excerpt from an article by Kim Sang-beom in the Winter 1997 edition of East Asian Review ("FOR THE RECORD," 01/09/98, A20) which argued that "keen attention" should be paid to the DPRK's chemical warfare capabilities. The article pointed out that, since chemical weapons can be manufactured using comparatively low technology and at a low cost, "these weapons are sometimes called the 'nuclear weapons of poor countries.'" The author noted that the DPRK has not signed the Chemical Weapons Convention. He pointed to recent writings by DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop as evidence that the DPRK "currently possesses about 5,000 tons of chemical weapons and is also capable of producing 5,000 tons of such weapons annually."

3. Interview with Kim Dae-jung

The Washington Post (Kevin Sullivan, "S. KOREA'S KIM BLAMES 'LIES' FOR TURMOIL," Ilsan, 01/09/98, A01) reported that ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung on Friday said that much of Asia's financial crisis can be attributed to governments that lie to their people and authoritarian leaders who place economic growth ahead of democratic freedoms. Kim stated, "I believe that the fundamental cause of the financial crisis, including here in Korea, is because of placing economic development ahead of democracy." Kim reaffirmed his "100 percent commitment" to the US\$57 billion bailout by the International Monetary Fund, and said he believes he can negotiate a deal to avert massive strikes. He described the ROK's relationship with the US as "mutually beneficial," adding that he supports the continued presence of US troops in the ROK. Kim stated, "Good cooperation with the United States is not only necessary to deter North Korean aggression, but also to maintain the balance of power in the region." He said that he will move "aggressively" to provide emergency food aid to the DPRK. He stated that his hopes to engage the DPRK government more openly were well known to the DPRK, adding "we are just waiting for their response."

4. ROK Financial Crisis

The Associated Press (Andrew Fraser, "NO SOLUTION YET ON S. KOREAN DEBT," New York, 01/08/98) reported that a meeting between ROK officials and international bankers ended Thursday without an agreement to postpone payments on US\$35 billion in short-term ROK debt.

5. PRC-Taiwan Relations

Reuters (Benjamin Kang Lim, "CHINA SENDS FRIENDLY SIGNAL TO TAIWANESE OPPOSITION," Beijing, 01/09/98) reported that PRC state media said Friday that the PRC has invited newly elected Taiwanese politicians to visit the PRC. Political analysts said that the PRC move was an acknowledgment of new political realities on the island, where the opposition Democratic Progressive Party made substantial gains against the ruling Nationalist Party in recent local elections.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Prospects for DPRK Collapse

Jane's Defense Weekly on January 7 quoted a US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report to the Senate that the DPRK may collapse within the next three years. Indicating facts about DPRK's economic strife and famine, the report concluded that the DPRK will not be able to survive without external support and internal reform. However, the report added that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) disputed the DIA's claims, although it agreed with the severity of the situation in the DPRK. (ROK Ministry of Information Web, "DPRK MAY COLLAPSE IN THREE YEARS," 01/09/98) [<http://allim.moi.go.kr/bin/fnews/text2.html?fun=list&bd=0>]

2. DPRK Criticism of ROK President-Elect

The DPRK has stepped up its criticism of ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung for turning to the US in a plea for help. The National Democratic Front for South Korea (NDFSK), an anti-ROK propaganda organ, said on January 8, "Independence, democracy and unification are the three principles of our people. It is against the principle of independence for the President-elect to look toward the US." On Tuesday the DPRK began public accusations against the President-elect through loudspeakers in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The NDFSK also called for the elimination of the ROK's National Security Law, abolition of the Agency for National Security Planning, release of political prisoners, and removal of corruption. The propaganda body urged the ROK people to fight against unemployment and reductions in income and for workers' rights. (Korea Herald, "NORTH KOREA STEPS UP CRITICISM OF KIM DAE-JUNG," 01/09/98)

III. Japan

1. Japan-DPRK Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("SECOND DELEGATION OF JAPANESE WIVES DELAYED," 01/08/98) reported that it was revealed January 7 that the visit to Japan of a second delegation of Japanese women married to DPRK citizens will be delayed for a week. The schedule for the second delegation was decided at a meeting between the Japanese and DPRK Red Cross last December. According to an unnamed source, the reason for the delay is that there are no wives in the group who hold Japanese nationality. In addition, the article said that the DPRK is reportedly having difficulty in selecting between those Japanese wives who came to the DPRK before World War II and those who came after the war.

2. DPRK Criticism of ROK President-Elect

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("DPRK BLAMES KIM DAE-JUNG," Seoul, 01/08/98) reported that ROK Defense Ministry revealed that the DPRK officially broadcast its first criticism against ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung through a loud speaker placed near the demilitarized zone. According to the Defense Ministry, the announcement lasted for five minutes, stating, "The President of South Korea is deceiving his people by saying that he will realize democracy and early unification. People should not put their expectation in him."

3. Kim Dae-jung to Visit Japan, US

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("KIM DAE-JUNG TO VISIT JAPAN AND US BY APRIL," Seoul, 01/09/98) reported that a source from the ROK National Assembly revealed that Kim Dae-jung has begun working on a schedule for his visit to Japan and the US by April. The succession committee, which consists of pro-Kim staff, asked the ROK Foreign Ministry to prepare for Kim's visit, and the Foreign

Ministry already began informal discussions on the visit with Japanese and US officials, according to the report. The report added that Kim's visit is targeted for around April 2 to 4, when this year's Asia-Europe Meeting will be held.

4. Japan-ROK Maritime Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("ROK CRITICIZES JAPANESE MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY PATROL BOAT FOR VIOLATION OF TERRITORIAL WATERS," Seoul, 01/09/98) reported that the ROK government summoned a Japanese diplomat from the Japanese Embassy to Seoul, and criticized a Japanese Maritime Safety Agency patrol boat for violation of territorial waters. The nature of the ROK's criticism was that the patrol boat on January 7 entered the ROK sea around the Tokdo/Takeshima islets for the purpose of rescuing an unidentified drifting ship, ignoring an ROK military vessel's warning. In response to the criticism, the Japanese Embassy announced that the patrol boat's action was based on humanitarian grounds. The report added that the drifting boat was found unmanned.

5. Japanese Security Policy

The Asahi Shimbun ("GOVERNMENT DECIDED NOT TO ASK FOR DIET APPROVAL ON RESPONSES TO 'SITUATIONS IN AREAS SURROUNDING JAPAN,'" 01/09/98) reported that the Japanese government decided on January 8 not to ask for the Diet's approval for its response to "situations in areas surrounding Japan," which was spelled out in the New Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation. Instead, the Japanese government reaffirmed its commitment to work out possible responses through its discussions at security and ministerial meetings and minimize legal changes related to the review of the Guidelines. The reasons for the decision include the need for an immediate response to possible "situations" and the difficulty of achieving agreement among the political parties in the Diet. The report pointed out that the decision will likely face opposition not only from opposition parties, who insist on the need for the Diet's approval, but also some in the Defense Agency who are against cancellation of a new law regarding recognition of "situations in areas surrounding Japan." The report added that the Foreign Ministry, the Defense Agency, and other related bodies want to finalize their discussions on the matter before an ordinary Diet session slated for January 12 and US Secretary of Defense William Cohen's visit to Japan, slated for January 20.

IV. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK-US Relations

People's Daily ("DPRK URGES US TO GIVE UP HOSTILE POLICY," 01/07/98, p. 6) reported that DPRK's official newspaper Rodong Shinmun published a commentary on January 6 which said that the US must give up its policy of distrust and hostility toward the DPRK, if the US wants to improve its relationship with the DPRK. According to the commentary, the DPRK-US relationship in the past year has been aimed toward improving bilateral ties. The two sides held talks and made contacts through different channels last year, but it is regretful that there were no achievements reached primarily because the US distrusts and is hostile toward the DPRK. The DPRK has repeatedly stated that it hopes to realize normalization of DPRK-US relations as early as possible, the commentary said. DPRK has made a lot of efforts in this direction, but the resolution of the problem depends on the US side.

2. ROK-DPRK Relations

China Daily ("ROK LIKELY TO ENHANCE FOOD SUPPORT," 01/07/98, p. 1) reported that the ROK is suggesting it will likely provide food aid to the DPRK, despite its own financial crisis. An ROK

government official said on January 6, "when the international community makes its appeal, we expect to respond. It is true we are faced with a financial crisis, but we hope it won't deter humanitarian aid to the North." According to China Daily, meanwhile, a date has been set for a procedural peace-talks meeting in Beijing next month.

3. ROK Defense Cuts

China Daily ("ROK SHELIVING DEFENSE PROJECTS AMID WON WOES," 01/09/98, p. 11) reported that the ROK, in the midst of financial woes, is shelving three major defense projects -- an early warning air-craft (AWACS) system, construction of 1,500-ton submarines, and an airforce trainer program. On January 8, the ROK Defense Ministry refused comment on media reports for security reasons, but a spokesman confirmed "cuts in its force improvement program in 1998, especially planned dollar purchases, are inevitable." China Daily said that the reports of defense cuts are two weeks ahead of a scheduled two-day visit to Seoul by US Defense Secretary William Cohen, beginning on January 21. In a climate of austerity, burden-sharing issues are more likely to bubble to the surface, not only in the ROK, but also in Japan, the newspaper said.

4. DPRK's Attitude on Sanctions

According to People's Daily ("DPRK SUPPORTS UN STATEMENT ON SANCTIONS," 01/08/98, p. 3), the DPRK published a commentary in January 7's Rodong Shinmun, supporting the recent statement by the Third Commission of the UN, which condemns the international economic sanctions in effect. The commentary emphasizes that no power can abuse international sanctions. Sanctions especially cannot become a means abused by a few powers for their self-interest. The DPRK suggested establishing a special agency to conduct the necessary supervision of sanctions.

5. Russian-Japanese Relations

Taking advantage of the readjustment of major power relations at the turn of the century, Russia and Japan are endeavoring to improve their relations, according to the monthly Contemporary International Relations ("RUSSIAN- JAPANESE RELATIONS STRATEGIC READJUSTMENT ORIENTED TOWARD THE 21ST CENTURY," No. 12, 1997, pp. 29-33). During their recent informal meeting, the heads of the two countries decided to strive for the conclusion of a peace treaty before the year 2000 so as to solve the territorial dispute or at least find an option for the settlement, thus making a turnaround in the long-stalemated and cooled relations of the two countries in the post-World War. On the part of Russia, its intentions are: (1) to speed up the process of entering into the Asia-Pacific circle in a bid to secure its status as a major Eurasian power; (2) to make use of the relationship with the East to push ahead that with the West so as to alter the unfavorable position in its diplomacy with the West; (3) to facilitate the rejuvenation of the Russian economy by attracting Japanese capital and technology. From the Japanese point of view, it has the following aspirations: (1) to be accepted as a permanent member of UN security council with Russian support; (2) to define its new diplomatic agenda oriented to the Asia-Pacific region in the 21st century through improving the relations with Russia; (3) to rely on Russia's help in the need of energy resources in the years ahead. However, the development of Russian-Japanese relations is restricted by the territorial disputes and the relationship of major powers, such as the US.

6. Russia and Northeast Asia

Zhou Xincheng, a professor at People's University, concluded in the Bimonthly International Survey that Russia will not become an important threat to Northeast Asian security for at least ten to twenty years. ("RUSSIA AND NORTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY," No. 6, 1997, pp. 20-22). According to Zhou, the weakened economic and military strength of Russia makes it impossible for Russia to master and

interfere with the Northeast Asian situation while it has to concentrate most of its energy to deal with the larger challenge of the eastern expansion of NATO. As there is no clash on fundamental interest between Russia and Northeast Asian countries, Russia is not and will not become a threat to Northeast Asian security in the near future. However, the author pointed out that threats to Northeast Asian security do exist. He argued that the new defense cooperation guidelines between Japan and the US is the most serious hidden peril to Northeast Asian security.

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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