NAPSNet Daily Report 09 July, 1997

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 09 July, 1997", NAPSNet Daily Report, July 09, 1997, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-09-july-1997/

In today's Report:

I. United States

- 1. New DPRK Food Aid
- 2. US Officials Testify on US-DPRK Relations
- 3. DPRK Formal Leadership Succession
- 4. Assessment of Korean Situation
- 5. NATO Expansion and the Russian Response

II. Republic of Korea

- 1. DPRK Ends Three-Year Mourning Period
- 2. Shifting of US Concerns for DPRK
- 3. Japanese Official on Japan's Military Intentions
- 4. ROK-Japan Sea Jurisdiction Dispute

I. United States

1. New DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("U.N. AGENCY TO SEEK TONS OF FOOD FOR N.KOREA," United Nations, 7/09/97) reported that, according to UN sources, the UN World Food Program (WFP) on Wednesday will appeal for 129,000 tons of food new food aid to the DPRK, worth US$45.7 million. The appeal, on behalf of hundreds of thousands of children under six years of age, is to be made in Geneva by Catherine Bertini, WFP executive director. The new program will more than double the amount of food given to children under six, from the 100 grams a day to 250 grams, sources said. The WFP earlier this year asked for 200,000 tons of food, worth about US$95 million, all of which, after a slow start, has now been raised. The US contributed US$25 million to that appeal, and the ROK contributed US$16 million. The UN sources said that the US will announce later this week its contribution to the new appeal, having waited for Bertini to issue it formally. Bertini has said previously that the country requires 1.8 million tons of food aid to avoid large-scale starvation. On Tuesday in Rome, Bertini showed films of children reduced to pitiful, skeletal figures. "The situation in North Korea is getting worse, and we are seeing children who are just skin and bone, who have

had nothing to eat and who cannot even consume the ground-up corn that we have available for them," Bertini said. "We are having to find increased amounts of special baby food that is highly nutritious to be able to feed malnourished children," Bertini said. UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, has estimated that malnutrition is affecting 800,000 children under 5 years of age, or 37 percent of that age group. Ole Gronning, the Py

For information or application instructions for the Nautilus Security Program Assistant position opening, please see the Security Program Assistant Position Description.

In today's Report:

I. United States

1. New DPRK Food Aid
2. US Officials Testify on US-DPRK Relations
3. DPRK Formal Leadership Succession
4. Assessment of Korean Situation
5. NATO Expansion and the Russian Response

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Ends Three-Year Mourning Period
2. Shifting of US Concerns for DPRK
3. Japanese Official on Japan's Military Intentions
4. ROK-Japan Sea Jurisdiction Dispute

I. United States

1. New DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("U.N. AGENCY TO SEEK TONS OF FOOD FOR N.KOREA," United Nations, 7/09/97) reported that, according to UN sources, the UN World Food Program (WFP) on Wednesday will appeal for 129,000 tons of food new food aid to the DPRK, worth US$45.7 million. The appeal, on behalf of hundreds of thousands of children under six years of age, is to be made in Geneva by Catherine Bertini, WFP executive director. The new program will more than double the amount of food given to children under six, from the 100 grams a day to 250 grams, sources said. The WFP earlier this year asked for 200,000 tons of food, worth about US$95 million, all of which, after a slow start, has now been raised.

In today's Report:

I. United States

1. New DPRK Food Aid
2. US Officials Testify on US-DPRK Relations
3. DPRK Formal Leadership Succession
4. Assessment of Korean Situation
5. NATO Expansion and the Russian Response

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Ends Three-Year Mourning Period
2. Shifting of US Concerns for DPRK

3. Japanese Official on Japan's Military Intentions
4. ROK-Japan Sea Jurisdiction Dispute

I. United States

1. New DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("U.N. AGENCY TO SEEK TONS OF FOOD FOR N.KOREA," United Nations, 7/09/97) reported that, according to UN sources, the UN World Food Program (WFP) on Wednesday will appeal for 129,000 tons of food new food aid to the DPRK, worth US$45.7 million. The appeal, on behalf of hundreds of thousands of children under six years of age, is to be made in Geneva by Catherine Bertini, WFP executive director. The new program will more than double the amount of food given to children under six, from the 100 grams a day to 250 grams, sources said. The WFP earlier this year asked for 200,000 tons of food, worth about US$95 million, all of which, after a slow start, has now been raised. The US contributed US$25 million to that appeal, and the ROK contributed US$16 million. The UN sources said that the US will announce later this week its contribution to the new appeal, having waited for Bertini to issue it formally. Bertini has said previously that the country requires 1.8 million tons of food aid to avoid large-scale starvation. On Tuesday in Rome, Bertini showed films of children reduced to pitiful, skeletal figures. "The situation in North Korea is getting worse, and we are seeing children who are just skin and bone, who have had nothing to eat and who cannot even consume the ground-up corn that we have available for them," Bertini said. "We are having to find increased amounts of special baby food that is highly nutritious to be able to feed malnourished children," Bertini said. UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, has estimated that malnutrition is affecting 800,000 children under 5 years of age, or 37 percent of that age group. Ole Gronning, the Py

I. United States

1. New DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("U.N. AGENCY TO SEEK TONS OF FOOD FOR N.KOREA," United Nations, 7/09/97) reported that, according to UN sources, the UN World Food Program (WFP) on Wednesday will appeal for 129,000 tons of food new food aid to the DPRK, worth US$45.7 million. The appeal, on behalf of hundreds of thousands of children under six years of age, is to be made in Geneva by Catherine Bertini, WFP executive director. The new program will more than double the amount of food given to children under six, from the 100 grams a day to 250 grams, sources said. The WFP earlier this year asked for 200,000 tons of food, worth about US$95 million, all of which, after a slow start, has now been raised. The US contributed US$25 million to that appeal, and the ROK contributed US$16 million. The UN sources said that the US will announce later this week its contribution to the new appeal, having waited for Bertini to issue it formally. Bertini has said previously that the country requires 1.8 million tons of food aid to avoid large-scale starvation. On Tuesday in Rome, Bertini showed films of children reduced to pitiful, skeletal figures. "The situation in North Korea is getting worse, and we are seeing children who are just skin and bone, who have had nothing to eat and who cannot even consume the ground-up corn that we have available for them," Bertini said. "We are having to find increased amounts of special baby food that is highly nutritious to be able to feed malnourished children," Bertini said. UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, has estimated that malnutrition is affecting 800,000 children under 5 years of age, or 37 percent of that age group. Ole Gronning, the Pyongyang representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said last month that government food stocks throughout the country had virtually been exhausted, and that more than 5 million North Koreans were near starvation and could die in coming months.

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREANS OFFERED FOOD AID," Seoul, 7/09/97) reported that the ROK Red Cross said Wednesday that it will offer more food aid to the DPRK, but will demand in return that millions of separated families be reunited. The ROK will propose talks between the two countries' Red Cross organizations, probably later this month, to discuss giving more food aid. Lee Byong-woong of the ROK Red Cross Society said the South will raise the issue of separated families when it makes the new offer. An estimated 10 million people are believed to have been separated from their families in the mass migrations triggered by the 1950-53 Korean War. There are no direct phone or mail links between the two Koreas, and most efforts by the Red Cross to reunite families have failed because of the enduring political rivalry. Under an agreement struck in May, the ROK Red Cross already is delivering 50,000 tons of food, mostly corn, to the DPRK.

2. US Officials Testify on US-DPRK Relations

The Associated Press ("U.S. AIDE: KOREA SIDES STILL MISTRUSTFUL," Washington, 7/09/97) and Reuters ("U.S. ENCOURAGED BY N.KOREA'S DECISION TO TALK," Washington, 7/09/97) reported that on Tuesday Charles Kartman, acting assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in testimony to US Senate Foreign Relations Committee's subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific affairs, said that the DPRK's agreement in principle to join the proposed four-party peace talks is encouraging, but that the US and DPRK governments still mistrust one another as much as ever. Kartman was the lead US negotiator in the meetings with ROK and DPRK officials that culminated in late June with the DPRK's agreement to meet August 5, along with PRC representatives, to discuss the agenda and other details for beginning talks on a Korean peninsula peace treaty. Kartman told the subcommittee that he hoped peace talks could be held as soon as September and that he was "cautiously optimistic" they could succeed. However, Kartman acknowledged, "We really don't know what's going on with North Korea. We really don't know why they make the decisions they make." Kartman described the DPRK as "clearly reluctant, but driven by necessity" to engage the US and the rest of the world, adding that the food crisis created "both opportunities for progress and the danger of greater instability." Kurt Campbell, deputy assistant secretary of defense for the region, also testified before the subcommittee, saying that a shrinking economy, highly centralized government, failed crops, floods and a heavily supported military have contributed to food shortages. However, Campbell noted that the DPRK's large army, unlike last year, engaged in four months of rigorous exercises this winter, adding that he remains convinced the nation's leaders are only posing at diplomacy as a short-term fix for their food problems. "My personal view is the North Koreans have not made the fundamental decision that they want reform," Campbell said. "I think they still want to tough it out." Both Campbell and Kartman said there were many theories about the delay in DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's assumption of all the titles of his late father, "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung, but that no one outside the DPRK could be sure about the exact reasons for it. But Kartman said he has been assured in discussions with officials from both Koreas that the son is firmly running things. "They have consistently said that titles don't matter, that Kim is in charge," he said.

3. DPRK Formal Leadership Succession

The New York Times (Andrew Pollack, "MOURNING FOR NORTH KOREA LEADER ENDS; SON IS NOT ANOINTED," Tokyo, 7/08/87) reported that on Tuesday the DPRK declared an end to the official three-year mourning period for its late leader, Kim Il-sung, clearing the way for his son, Kim Jong-il, to assume full power, although it remained unclear as to when Kim Jong-il will assume his father's titles as president of the country and head of the Communist Party. While DPRK diplomats have insisted that Kim Jong-il, who holds the title of supreme commander of the military, has been fully in charge of the country since his father died, some analysts predict that Kim will delay assuming the formal posts for several months at least, in deference to the famine conditions gripping

the country. The report said that DPRK watchers in Seoul and Tokyo feel Kim might formally assume power on September 9, the anniversary of the establishment of the DPRK government, or on October 10, the anniversary of the founding of the party. But these observers also said the inauguration might be delayed until next year if the famine worsened, the economy continued to deteriorate, or efforts to improve relations with the US did not bear fruit. Yu Suk-ryul, a professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security in Seoul, affiliated with the ROK Foreign Ministry, speculated that Kim might become party chief but not the head of state, because the latter job involves too many public appearances for the notoriously reclusive man. "He doesn't want to appear to the public," Yu said. "He doesn't want to talk to foreigners." The report also quoted an unnamed Western expert as saying, "If nothing has happened by the end of October, that's significant. It means that they've really got problems and he doesn't feel confident that he could take them on."

4. Assessment of Korean Situation

Tom Plate wrote in a column in The Los Angeles Times ("KOREA'S POSITIVE PORTENTS FOR PEACE," 7/08/97) that the DPRK's recent agreements with the US and ROK to participate in four-party talks, and with the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to clear the way for construction of the light-water nuclear power reactors, indicate that the intense rivalry that has characterized the Korean peninsula since the 1950-53 Korean War may be relaxing. Plate wrote that US officials are now hopeful, quoting KEDO executive director Stephen Bosworth as saying, "There's no denying that as the North inched closer to four-party talks, it made our job at KEDO easier. For the moment, the lights on the Korean political front are flashing, if not green, then at least amber. On the whole, everything is slightly upbeat." Plate also noted that last week the UN announced that the DPRK had agreed to allow UN staff unlimited access in the country to distribute food aid, a difficult decision for the intentionally hermetic country that may help elicit greater sympathy for its widespread food shortages. However, Plate wrote, Koreans "on either side of the Pacific" remain cautious, quoting Charles Kim, the executive director of the Korean American Coalition, as saying that to con the US into complacency, "North Korea will do whatever it can--bluff, cheat, lie." Plate also cautioned that the PRC is watching Korean developments warily, and that there are interests in the US Congress that would like to foment tension with the PRC that could cast long shadows over Korean affairs. Plate concluded: "Clinton, who tends to have the international attention span of a gnat, needs to focus like a laser on Korea. Though only about the size of Utah, it's the big testing field where the next major war might break out. Or the next major peace."

5. NATO Expansion and the Russian Response

US Defense Department Spokesman Mike Doubleday ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 7/09/97) on Tuesday replied to a question as to whether the Defense Department was concerned by a media report that earlier in the year Russia practiced an exercise which simulated an invasion by NATO, Lithuanian, and Polish forces, and envisioned a nuclear counterattack. [Ed. note: See the last excerpt in "NATO Expansion and the Russian Response" in the July 8 Daily Report.] Doubleday stated: "I think that you're aware, first of all, we're not going to comment on information from intelligence sources. I can tell you, though, that some of the reporting that was in your paper this morning regarding the Russians was accurate in that we are very much focused on engaging the Russians in the whole process of NATO. We, through many visits over there, through our contacts with the Russians, we certainly are aware of the fact that there are some Russians, probably many Russians, who view NATO as a potential hostile alliance. So we have taken many steps to overcome that perception. We have developed the Founding Act, which NATO and the Russians have signed, and we anticipate that this is going to go a long way to alleviate and correct those perceptions. ... So we really expect that the evolving partnership between NATO and the

Russians and between the U.S. and the Russians will continue to grow, and will continue to correct the misperception that NATO is an alliance that has any kind of negative impact on the Russians.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Ends Three-Year Mourning Period

On Tuesday, the DPRK declared an end to a three-year period of mourning for the late President Kim Il-sung, paving the way for his eldest son to take absolute power. At a national meeting in Pyongyang for the third anniversary of his father's death, Kim Jong-il was identified only by his present titles, Chairman of the National Defense Commission and Supreme Commander of the People's Armed Forces, indicating he has yet to officially succeed his father. DPRK officials have hinted the younger Kim, 55, would assume the top state posts vacated by his father -- state president and general secretary of the all-powerful Workers Party -- after the mourning period ended. Memorial addresses at the meeting vowed to defend the younger Kim, the military commander-in-chief since late 1991, as the only rightful successor. DPRK Foreign Minister Kim Yong-nam, in an address carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), stressed that the late president solved "the question of inheritance of the leadership with a high sense of responsibility for socialism and the future of the people." He said that the revolution was now going along "under the guidance of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Jong-il, the most faithful heir to the cause of Comrade Kim Il-sung." The vice premier also confirmed that the secretive country remained in a state of heightened vigilance while its acute food shortages and other economic woes have forced it to appeal for international aid. Speculation has been rife among Pyongyang watchers that the junior Kim might become president on September 9, the anniversary of the founding of the DPRK, and party chief on October 10, the Workers Party's birthday. (Korea Times, "NK ENDS MOURNING FOR KIM IL-SUNG," 07/09/97)

2. Shifting of US Concerns for DPRK

US concerns regarding the DPRK are shifting from nuclear and food issues to economic and unification matters. Such a trend is noteworthy because it can be seen as a result of a mainstream opinion within Washington that the DPRK has already started to disintegrate. During a recent conference, US Assistant Secretary of Defense Curt Campbell proposed an "expansion in the economic relations with the DPRK" to alleviate political and military tensions. He emphasized that not only the US and its allies, but also international economic organizations should prepare for a situation which the ROK could not handle on its own once the two Koreas are unified. Kim Ki-hwan, ROK External Economic Cooperation Ambassador, also said that a political, military, and economic matters concerning the DPRK were particularly emphasized during his June meeting in Washington with Assistant Secretary Campbell. (Joong-ang Ilbo, Kim Su-gil and Kil Jung-woo, "US SHIFTS ITS CONCERNS IN DPRK FROM NUCLEAR AND FOOD ISSUES TO ECONOMIC AND UNIFICATION COST ISSUES," Washington DC, 07/09/97)

3. Japanese Official on Japan's Military Intentions

Shintaro Yamashita, Japan's ambassador to the ROK, reaffirmed that the revision of the 1978 US-Japan defense guidelines will not go beyond Japan's current peace constitution. He also rebuffed as groundless the growing worries that Japan is following the road towards military buildup and nuclear armament. Japan has no need to invite concerns from other countries when its prosperity is based on the import of resources and export of manufactured goods, Yamashita said. Concerns have been mounting over the possibility of Japanese military intervention in an emergency on the Korean Peninsula since the release in June of a US-Japan interim report on the review of defense guidelines. Asking Japan to stick to its "defense-only" principle, the ROK has made it clear it will never accept the engagement of Japan's self-defense forces in combat on ROK territory. Yamashita said Japan

supports the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula, which he said will help bring about permanent peace in Northeast Asia. "The suspicion among Koreans that Japan might be passive on the subject of Korean unification is groundless," said the ambassador. He said the goals of Japan's policy toward the Korean Peninsula are to normalize ties with the DPRK and to help to secure peace and stability on the peninsula. Yamashita said that Tokyo will continue to improve relations with Pyongyang in harmony with progress in inter-Korean ties under close consultation with Seoul. He also emphasized the need for ROK and Japan to overcome bilateral issues and strengthen their partnerships on regional and global matters. (Korea Herald, "FEAR OF JAPAN'S MILITARY GROUNDLESS," 07/09/97)

4. ROK-Japan Sea Jurisdiction Dispute

The ROK government yesterday strongly warned that Japan's repeated seizures of ROK fishing boats will cause grave consequences to bilateral relations. The warning came after Japanese maritime police captured another ROK fishing boat for violating Japan's unilaterally-drawn straight water baseline earlier in the day in waters near Japan's western port city of Niigata. The ROK Foreign Ministry summoned the deputy chief of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul to demand the immediate release of the ROK vessel. "When Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha meets his Japanese counterpart Yukihiko Ikeda late this month in Kuala Lumpur, he will strongly protest Japan's actions," a ministry official said. The official said the confrontation over the straight baseline would strain the atmosphere of the foreign ministers meeting, tentatively slated in the Malaysian capital late this month on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Shin Jung-seung, Deputy Director General of the ROK Foreign Ministry's Asia-Pacific Affairs Bureau, delivered the government's stern position to Akira Takamasu, Minister for Economic Affairs at the Japanese Embassy. "We took note of the press conference held Monday by the two skippers upon arrival at Kimpo International Airport from detention in Japan," he said, adding that he called the need for the Japanese government to take appropriate measures against those involved in the maltreatment. Japan has unilaterally declared a straight territorial baseline in January and started enforcing it last month by seizing ROK vessels violating the newly expanded territorial waters. Seoul views Tokyo's action as an initial step to nullify a bilateral fishing agreement signed in 1965 simultaneously with diplomatic normalization between the two countries. "The enforcement of a straight baseline means the virtual revision of the fishing agreement because it inevitably alters the allowable fishing zones under the current fishing agreement," Ryu Kwang-sok, Director General of the Foreign Ministry's Asia-Pacific Affairs Bureau said. "Under the current circumstances, we are not in the position to resume bilateral talks to revise a fishing agreement," another ministry official stated. Earlier, the two countries agreed to hold another round of fishing talks in mid-July to narrow their differences prior to July 20, a target date for the conclusion of fishing talks set unilaterally by Japan to mark the anniversary of its declaration of the 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). (Korea Times, Son Key-young, "SEOUL WARNS TOKYO OF GRAVE CONSEQUENCES IN BILATERAL TIES OVER FISHING DISPUTES," 07/09/97)

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.

Wade Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Choi Chung-moon: cily@star.elim.net
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Return to the top of this Daily Report

Go to the Daily Report Archive

Return to the Nautilus Institute Home Page

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.

Wade Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Choi Chung-moon: cily@star.elim.net
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Return to the top of this Daily Report

Go to the Daily Report Archive

Return to the Nautilus Institute Home Page

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-0--july-1997/

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org