NAPSNet Daily Report 12 March, 1999

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 12 March, 1999", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 12, 1999, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-12-march-1999/

IN TODAY'S REPORT:

I. United States

- 1. US-DPRK Talks
- 2. Alleged DPRK Enrichment Technology Acquisition
- 3. DPRK Nuclear Freeze
- 4. DPRK Missile Development
- 5. US Policy toward DPRK
- 6. DPRK Diplomat's Defection
- 7. ROK-Japan DPRK Policy Talks
- 8. ROK-Japan Fisheries Talks
- 9. ROK Weapons Production
- 10. PRC Visits to US Laboratories
- 11. US Satellite Exports to PRC
- 12. US-PRC Relations
- 13. US Missile Defense
- 14. Pakistan Nuclear Status

II. Republic of Korea

- 1. US Policy to DPRK
- 2. ROK Policy on DPRK
- 3. Defection of DPRK Diplomat
- 4. Alleged DPRK Drug Operation
- 5. ROK-DPRK Scholars Exchange

III. Correction

- 1. Possibility of Japanese Airstrikes on DPRK

I. United States

1. US-DPRK Talks

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 11, 1999," USIA Transcript, 03/11/99) said that there was no US-DPRK meeting on Wednesday to discuss the underground construction site in the DPRK because both sides were consulting with their capitals. Rubin added, "we think there will be additional contact between the two sides." He stated, "There has been some progress, some headway in the discussions. But the talks are now continuing [Thursday], and I won't be able to say more about the specifics while such talks are going on." Rubin said that the US has "a long-standing policy to provide food aid based on humanitarian need" and will not respond to DPRK attempts to link food aid to the underground construction issue. He added, however, "If the North Koreans decide to provide us access to the site that we need access to based on our long-standing policy of providing humanitarian relief, that's fine with us."

2. Alleged DPRK Enrichment Technology Acquisition

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 11, 1999," USIA Transcript, 03/11/99) refused to comment on alleged intelligence information that the DPRK has been attempting to acquire uranium enrichment technology. Rubin added, "We do pursue every report concerning possible transfers of sensitive technologies, and we work closely with other responsible governments to prevent transfers of such technology that may contribute to weapons proliferation or regional tensions. We remain concerned about North Korea's intentions regarding nuclear weapons, including the possibility that North Korea may be seeking uranium enrichment technology."

3. DPRK Nuclear Freeze

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 11, 1999," USIA Transcript, 03/11/99) said that the US has no basis at this point to conclude that the DPRK has violated the 1994 Agreed Framework. Rubin said that, back in 1994, the DPRK had the prospect of "moving rapidly to a major nuclear weapons program with many, many nuclear bombs for themselves and possibly sold to others." He argued, "Through the freeze that was instituted by the 1994 agreement, all that capability was frozen. So that danger has been prevented." Rubin pointed out that the current US concerns on the underground site are about what could happen in the future. He added, "We have taken the position that whether or not something is explicitly referred to in the agreement, the whole object and purpose of the agreement was to prevent them from developing a nuclear program. If we develop evidence and suspicion, we act on it.... That is called a rigorous compliance policy, a rigorous assurance that we're going to meet the objective that was the basic object and purpose of the 1994 accord." He concluded, "So we have made the Korean Peninsula safer, temporarily, but it requires being ever vigilant about the North Koreans' intentions and capabilities because we have no illusions about the regime and what they might do in the absence of vigilance.... I think all the reasonable evidence that was generated in 1994 that hasn't come to fruition after five long years is pretty convincing proof of that case."

US Department of Defense Deputy Spokesman Mike Doubleday ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR BRIEFING MARCH 11," USIA Transcript, 03/11/99) said that the US has nothing to indicate that the DPRK is not abiding by the 1994 Agreed Framework. He added, "But we would like to see firsthand to assure ourselves what is going on at some of these sites."

The New York Times (Elizabeth Becker, "CLINTON ADVISER SAYS NORTH KOREA IS ADVANCING ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM," Washington, 03/12/99) reported that former US Secretary of Defense

William Perry said that the DPRK appears to be working on its nuclear program. Perry stated, "What they're doing is moving forward on their nuclear weapons. They seem to have other programs under way that are part of a nuclear effort." He added, "We believe this is very serious. The long-rang--missile program itself suggests in parallel the development of a nuclear weapons program." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 12.]

4. DPRK Missile Development

Reuters ("N.KOREA SAYS NO CONCESSIONS OVER MISSILE ISSUE," Tokyo, 03/12/99) and the Associated Press ("N KOREA SAYS WILL CONTINUE WITH MISSILE DEVELOPMENT - REPORT," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that an unidentified spokesman for the DPRK Foreign Ministry said Friday that the DPRK would make no concessions on its missile program. The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted the official as saying, "The 'missile issue' of Korea is a make-or-break matter of principle which allows no concession." He added, "The US is mistaken if it thinks that it can 'check' the DPRK missile development through 'cooperation' with other countries, and it should not dream the kind of dream." He stated, "The DPRK is not a country which makes missiles or stops its development on orders of others. So the US acts of slandering it over this issue and peddling it cannot be construed otherwise than an interference in the internal affairs of the DPRK."

5. US Policy toward DPRK

The International Herald Tribune carried an opinion article ("WASHINGTON SHOULD TRY ENGAGEMENT WITH PYONGYANG," New York, 03/12/99) by Donald P. Gregg, president of the Korea Society and former US ambassador to the ROK, and Mitchell B. Reiss, senior policy advisor at the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. The authors argued that the US needs to change its approach to engage the "reclusive and difficult regime" in the DPRK. They said that, contrary to some perceptions, the DPRK has been cooperating with the US in various fora. They called for "presenting a comprehensive package of proposals that address not only Washington's concerns but also Pyongyang's. This package should aim to eliminate the North's ballistic missile program, resolve any doubts about its nuclear weapons program, remove the threat to Seoul posed by the North's military deployed close to the demilitarized zone, especially its artillery, and institutionalize greater North-South dialogue and economic engagement. America should be prepared to extend formal diplomatic recognition to Pyongyang, end economic sanctions, support the North's application to join international financial institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, formalize a peace agreement to end the Korean War, and increase humanitarian assistance. Washington should start talks with Pyongyang on confidence-building measures regarding troop deployments on the peninsula." They concluded, "Delay is not in Washington's interest, nor in the interest of peace and security in Northeast Asia. The United States has clear diplomatic, economic and military superiority over North Korea. After testing the North's willingness to forge a new and more stable relationship with the outside world, the United States must be prepared to take 'no' for an answer and walk away from the table." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 12.]

6. DPRK Diplomat's Defection

The Associated Press ("THAILAND CRITICIZES NORTH KOREA," Bangkok, 03/12/99) reported that Thailand Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan on Friday delivered an official protest to the DPRK Embassy over the attempted abduction of DPRK diplomat Hong Sun-kyong. Surin said that Thailand

was demanding an immediate official apology. He also demanded the immediate release of Hong's son, whom he said evidence indicated was still being held in Thailand. Surin said he had received no immediate response to his protest. He stated, "We hope for the apology. Otherwise it will affect very badly our existing relationship, which has now been put under pressure." Meanwhile, ROK Embassy spokesman Yul Chul-jun said that the ROK will consider giving asylum to Hong and his wife if requested by the Thai government or the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

7. ROK-Japan DPRK Policy Talks

The Associated Press ("JAPAN, S.KOREA TO DISCUSS N. KOREA," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that Cho Se-hyong, an ROK Foreign Ministry official, said that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi and ROK President Kim Dae- jung will discuss the DPRK's nuclear and missile capabilities. Obuchi will visit the ROK for a three-day trip.

8. ROK-Japan Fisheries Talks

Dow Jones Newswires ("JAPAN, S KOREA TO MODIFY TERMS OF FISHING PACT - KYODO," Tokyo, 03/12/99) reported that officials of the Japan Fisheries Agency said that Japanese Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shoichi Nakagawa accepted a request by ROK Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Kim Sun-kil to reopen talks on modifying the terms of January's fisheries treaty. The officials said that the terms to be modified will include catch quotas, the locations of waters where each country's fishing boats will be allowed to operate, the periods when they would be allowed to operate, and the number of fishing boats to be allowed to enter each other's exclusive economic zones. The officials said that Japan agreed to modify the terms of the pact on condition that the ROK will not demand cuts in Japanese catch quotas inside the ROK exclusive economic zone stipulated under the pact. Another condition is that the ROK scale down its demand that a total of 300 ROK fishing boats be allowed to catch swellfish and scabbard fish inside Japan's exclusive economic zone or engage in certain "undesirable" fishing techniques.

9. ROK Weapons Production

Reuters ("SEOUL SAYS NO PLANS TO RAISE F-16 JET PRODUCTION," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that Cha Young-koo, chief spokesman at the ROK defense ministry, on Friday denied a report in the Korea Times that the ROK planned to produce more F-16 Fighting Falcons than earlier announced. Cha stated, "It's groundless. The ministry has no such plan." The newspaper had reported that the ROK had decided to locally build more F- 16 jets designed by Lockheed Martin Corporation than in the original plan under which the ROK would buy 12, assemble 36, and produce locally 72 others jointly with Lockheed by 1999.

10. PRC Visits to US Laboratories

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "CHINA SPY CASE WON'T STOP PLA VISIT TO LAB," Washington, 03/12/99) reported that US Defense Department spokesman Captain Michael Doubleday said Thursday that allegations about PRC spying at a US nuclear laboratory will not alter plans to bring a group of People's Liberation Army officers to a similar laboratory in New Mexico this year. Doubleday stated, "At this point, I know of no plan to cut back on our military-to-military contacts." He said it is to the US advantage to maintain contacts with the PRC military "even in the face of some of these alleged incidents." He stated, "I think that although there may be some benefits to the Chinese, our overall view is that any information that we share with the Chinese is

information that is not detrimental to the United States." [Ed. note: This article was one of the top stories in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 12.]

11. US Satellite Exports to PRC

Reuters ("CHINA ASKS U.S. TO RECONSIDER SATELLITE BAN," Beijing, 03/12/99) reported that PRC Foreign Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng urged the US on Friday to reconsider its "mistaken" decision to ban a US$450 million Hughes satellite sale to a Chinese-led consortium. Shi stated, "I was shocked and strongly dissatisfied because the decision to block the export of a normal commercial satellite on security grounds was a mistake." He added, "On the surface it looks like a control against China, but in reality it is a measure against US interests. US firms will suffer the most from such measures."

12. US-PRC Relations

The Wall Street Journal carried an analytical article (Craig S. Smith, Matt Forney, and Eduardo Lachica, "U.S. ALLEGATIONS ABOUT CHINA SPRING UP LIKE CLOCKWORK," Shanghai, 03/12/99) which said that US criticisms of the PRC increase every year when the PRC's most-favored-nation trading status comes up for review in June. Robert Kapp, head of the US-China Business Council, stated, "Those of us who live and work in the world of US-China relations understand that every spring, something serious is likely to arise." He added that, if the past pattern holds true, the current round of allegations against the PRC will be followed by "signs of a more complex, nuanced reality." Zi Zhongyun, a former director of the PRC's Institute of American Studies who is now writing a book on the rise of the US as a superpower, stated, "China is a rising power and the U.S. is accustomed to being way ahead of everybody, so the relationship will always be uneasy." She added, "The time bomb is Taiwan," noting that the US and the PRC remain far apart on this issue. Michael Declercq, president of Transcontinental Trade & Finance Corp., argued, "It makes the Congressmen in the US look good to heap upon China once in a while and it makes Chinese politicians look good to yell bloody murder about the US now and then."

13. US Missile Defense

The Associated Press (David Briscoe, "SENATE TO DEBATE MISSILE DEFENSE," Washington, 03/12/99) reported that US Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Mississippi, on Thursday night announced an agreement with the Democrats to let the debate on a missile defense deployment bill go forward with a vote as early as Tuesday. The bill would state, "It is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as is technologically possible an effective national missile defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack, whether accidental, unauthorized or delivered." US President Bill Clinton has threatened a veto of the measure on the grounds that it would hinder negotiations with Russia over changes in the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

14. Pakistan Nuclear Status

The Associated Press (Kathy Gannon, "PAKISTAN PRES. TOUTS NUCLEAR STATUS," Islamabad, 03/11/99) reported that Pakistan President Rafiq Tarar praised the country's nuclear status in an annual address on Thursday. Tarar stated, "I pay tribute to the scientists, the architects of the atomic program, whose genius, hard labor and perseverance made this feat possible. The decision constitutes a golden page in our history." He added, "Those who harbor aggressive designs against

Pakistan would do well to keep this awareness in mind."

II. Republic of Korea

1. US Policy to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("PERRY RECOMMENDS 'STERNER MEASURES' AGAINST NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that former US Defense Secretary William Perry said he would recommend that the US administration take sterner measures against the DPRK if the DPRK does not cooperate with US efforts to halt its development of nuclear missile armaments. Perry, who returned from a 3-nation trip to the ROK, Japan, and the PRC on Thursday, made the remarks the following day at a ceremony in Washington, DC marking the publication of his recent book, "Preventive Defense." He said that his book deals with two different cases: one is the DPRK showing an affirmative response to the US DPRK policy; and the second is a negative response from the country. Although, he stopped short of elaborating exactly what the sterner measures may be, Perry added that the US, the ROK, and Japan must, if needed, take a coordinated stance in the necessity of these sterner measures and their implementation. A wire report also quoted Perry as saying that the US government must consider across-the-board economic blockades and military actions against the reclusive country if the DPRK continues to rebuff American demands to clear suspicions of the construction site in Kumchangri and the production of missiles in the DPRK.

Chosun Ilbo ("MINISTRY EMBARRASSED BY PERRY'S WARNING," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that officials of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) were embarrassed to learn that US DPRK Policy Coordinator William Perry had issued a stern warning to the DPRK, and hastily convened a press conference to limit "side effects." An official said that the statement was Perry's private comment and that he did not think it would be included in his recommendation to Congress. He added that if the DPRK acts provocatively then the ROK government agreed with the US that some pressure needed to be applied, saying that "military action can have many meanings, so it is best not to respond too quickly." Embarrassed MOFAT officials first learned of Perry's statement, which include the phrases "military action" and "full economic blockade," this morning. They said that he did not mention these in Seoul and they were completely unexpected. An official who attended Perry's meetings in Seoul said that agreement had been reached on "applying pressure" if the DPRK proved uncooperative, and that while "military action" was not ruled out, nothing that resembled "stern measures" was brought up.

2. ROK Policy on DPRK

Korea Herald ("PRESIDENT SAYS ENGAGEMENT POLICY TRANSFORMING INTER-KOREAN TIES," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung said Thursday that the ROK government's policy of engaging the DPRK is inducing change in inter-Korean relations. "Inter-Korean relations are changing because our North Korea policy pushes security in parallel with reconciliation and cooperation," Kim said at the commencement of the Korea Naval Academy. He said that positive changes include the DPRK's opening of Mt. Kumgang to ROK tourists, progress in the four-party Korean peace talks and the US-DPRK dialogue, and the resumption of the general-level conference between the UN Command and the DPRK military. "If North Korea shows a positive and constructive attitude, I will embrace it actively so that the North will be able to take the path to openness and economic recovery," Kim said.

3. Defection of DPRK Diplomat

Chosun Ilbo ("CONFLICT FORCES NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMAT TO DEFECT," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that Hong Soon-kyong, a former member of the DPRK diplomatic mission to Thailand, is seeking political asylum following mounting tension due to a conflict with his government regarding his mission, and not because he has embezzled funds, as alleged by the DPRK. A source at the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Friday that following increasing pressure from his government to return to the DPRK, Hong felt that he was facing serious trouble back home. Deciding to defect instead, Hong covertly contacted the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to notify them of his situation. Meanwhile, the UNHCR has granted Hong and his family refugee status and there has been speculation that they could arrive in the ROK as early as next week. One high-ranking ROK government official said that Hong would be free to enter the ROK as soon as he expresses an intention to seek political asylum in the ROK.

Korea Times ("SEOUL READY TO ACCEPT NK DIPLOMAT," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that the ROK is ready to accept a DPRK diplomat and his wife who defected and are now in the custody of Thai authorities in Bangkok, according to an ROK Foreign Affairs-Trade Ministry official. The government's position was revealed after the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) decided to grant Hong Sun-kyong, counselor at the DPRK Embassy in Bangkok, and his wife "refugee" status Thursday. "We are set to accept him, but the final decision will be made when his intentions are confirmed," the official said. He noted that the ROK government still has no information on whether the DPRK diplomat wants to defect to the ROK, adding that it would take time because the diplomat is now "extremely tired physically and mentally." Some sources report that the DPRK diplomat wants to defect to the ROK. With the UNHCR granting them refugee status, the official stressed that the Thai government is unlikely to make a decision on his fate which runs against his own wishes. The DPRK has dispatched Vice Foreign Minister Park Dong-chun to Bangkok to handle the case, the official said.

4. Alleged DPRK Drug Operation

JoongAng Ilbo ("NK'S ILLEGAL DRUG OPERATION," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that the DPRK's habit of exporting drugs to raise badly-needed foreign currency may be posing a serious problem between the ROK and the US, the National Intelligence Service (NIS) stated on March 12. The ROK government reportedly will discuss with the US about implementing a prevention program for the DPRK's government-sponsored drug smuggling. According to the NIS report entitled "The Recent Drug Situation in the United States," US intelligence is now scrutinizing the DPRK's conduct, especially its exporting of drugs. This will add to the list of the DPRK's problems, though it is not as serious as the international condemnation of its missile development and suspected nuclear facilities. The NIS also added that leaders of the US House of Representatives sent a letter to William Perry, the former secretary of defense and current special envoy on DPRK issues, urging that Perry's upcoming report should include details of the DPRK's illegal drug activities. It is estimated that the DPRK grows up to 50 tons of opium annually and it obtains US$71 million through sales to other countries.

5. ROK-DPRK Scholars Exchange

JoongAng Ilbo ("TWO NK SCHOLARS MAY ATTEND SNU SCIENCE CONFERENCE," Seoul, 03/12/99) reported that two DPRK scholars are likely to enter the ROK to take part in a science conference. This will mark the first time for such a visit. The Social Science College of Seoul National University (SNU) announced on March 12 that it had decided to invite two DPRK scholars

to attend the "Second Conference of Social Science" on May 6 and 7th, and an application for the DPRK visit was submitted to the Ministry of Unification last week. It is the first time that SNU officially applied for a scholarly exchange with DPRK scientists. Shin Yong-ha, dean of social sciences, stated that SNU had decided to invite DPRK scholars in order to study the position of the DPRK on the unification of the Korean Peninsula.

III. Correction

1. Possibility of Japanese Airstrikes on DPRK

An article in the China Daily summarized in the PRC section of the Daily Report for March 11 attributed remarks to Taichi Sakaiya, whom it identified as Director-General of the Japanese Defense Agency, that Japan might consider airstrikes against the DPRK if threatened. Sakaiya is actually Director-General of the Economic Planning agency, not the Defense Agency. The remarks in question were made not by Sakaiya but by Defense Agency chief Hosei Norota.

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 in partnership with:
International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
The Center for Global Communications, Tokyo, Japan
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

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

Lee Dong-young: UNPOL@netsgo.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

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

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

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

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

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-12-march-1999/

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