

# NAPSNet Daily Report 13 August, 1997

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### **I. United States**

#### **1. US Congressional Representatives Visit to DPRK**

The Associated Press ("US ENVOY: N. KOREA ARMY STOLE FOOD," Seoul, 8/13/97) and Reuters ("U.S. OFFICIALS: FOOD AID GOING TO MILITARY?," Seoul, 8/13/97) reported that members of the US Congressional delegation that visited the DPRK August 9-11 said Wednesday that the DPRK's military and government elite may have siphoned off some of the foreign food aid intended for its starving citizens. Representative Jane Harmon (D- Calif.) was quoted as saying at the delegation's news conference in Seoul, "I believe we would all agree that some food aid has probably ended up in the hands of the military and the other elites in the country and we are concerned about that." No other delegation member contested Harmon's remarks. The representatives said they saw serious food problems and agreed on the need for more aid, and Harmon added that international aid workers had "confirmed that some food is reaching the people." However, representative Nancy

Pelosi (D-Calif.) said, "Despite repeated requests by members of this delegation to visit a distribution center we were not able to do that." Many suspect that the DPRK's 1.1 million-member army -- the world's fifth largest -- is the first to get food because of its role as the backbone of the country's communist regime. The representatives said they would seek measures to ensure that any future US aid to the DPRK would go directly to hunger-stricken people, and Pelosi said she thought any increase in US aid would depend on how well the DPRK allows the distribution system to be monitored. The DPRK has demanded an increase in aid as a condition for its participation in the US-ROK proposed four-party Korean peace talks. The US has rejected this demand.

US Presidential Press Secretary Mike McCurry ("WHITE HOUSE DAILY BRIEFING, AUGUST 13, 1997," USIA Transcript, 8/13/97) on Tuesday replied to a question concerning the DPRK visit by a US Congressional delegation and US concerns over the current situation in the DPRK. McCurry stated, "We will be interested in a report of the congressional delegation and learning more about what they've seen. They've had some access that will be useful I think as we understand more of what's happening in a society that is very difficult at times to penetrate." McCurry also credited the efforts of UN World Food Program relief workers in distribution of food aid. "They do very hard work, sometimes under difficult circumstances, to assure that that assistance goes to those citizens who are suffering. And it would be contrary to the wishes of the international community and the program itself to see any diversion of that to satisfy only one segment of the population -- the military, for example," McCurry said.

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## **2. DPRK Aims in Peace Talks**

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA WANTS IMPROVED TIES WITH US," Seoul, 8/13/97) reported that the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Wednesday that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il wants a peace treaty and improved relations with the United States. "We do not want to regard the U.S. as an inveterate enemy but hope for normalized relations between (North Korea) and the U.S.," Kim wrote in a booklet published last week, KCNA said. "The United States must stop pursuing a policy hostile towards our republic and sign a peace accord with (North Korea)," Kim wrote. Although the DPRK has expressed willingness to join in the US-ROK proposed four-party Korean peace talks, the DPRK has often indicated its preference for a separate peace treaty with the US, excluding the ROK, which it views as a puppet state. Kim also wrote that the ROK must begin trusting the DPRK. "If the South Korean authorities show a positive change in practice, we will sit face to face with them any time, have an open-hearted negotiation with them over the destiny of the nation and make efforts for national reunification hand in hand with them," Kim wrote.

## **3. Editorial View of Four-Party Peace Talks**

The Los Angeles Times carried an editorial ("WAKE UP, N. KOREA--IT'S 1997," 8/12/97) asserting that if the results of the first round of the four-party preliminary talks in New York are indicative, "the second round, scheduled for Sept. 15, might as well be canceled now." The editorial asserted that the DPRK's refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the ROK regime evinces "the same perverse political rationale that sent its invading army crashing into South Korea 47 years ago. The world has changed greatly since then, but North Korean thinking remains frozen in time." The editorial also criticized the DPRK's insistence on linking participation in the four-party talks to increases in food aid, a linkage it said actually makes it harder for the US and the ROK to step up assistance. The editorial concluded: "Is there any hope for change? A more conciliatory stance by Pyongyang in last week's four-party talks surely would have been taken as an encouraging sign of a new realism in North Korea's thinking and rewarded by the international community. But no hint of moderation appeared. Pyongyang remains as inflexible as ever, and the cost to its people is likely to be enormous."

## **4. Media Attention to DPRK Famine**

Tom Plate wrote in The Los Angeles Times ("SHOW US YOUR POWER, TELEVISION," 8/12/97) that now perhaps "only CNN now can save the starving children of North Korea." Plate wrote that the "magnitude of the horror" of current famine conditions in the DPRK "requires a worldwide sense of moral crisis," and that "only television can now bring that about." Yet, Plate wrote, "the kind of continuous visual bombardment that only TV can provide -- and that CNN does best -- has been notably absent." "Western couch potatoes, whose periodic awakenings to political consciousness can strike fear in the hearts of national governments, simply have not been exposed to scenes of black Korean hair turned orange for lack of protein, children stunted and shrunken by malnutrition, skins sagging off bones, eyes sunken in hopelessness. It's time that they were," Plate wrote. However, Plate noted, until recently the DPRK did not even permit international observers to make sure that all aid went to the hungry, rather than the military or the political elite. Plate added, "Eason Jordan, CNN's president of international networks and global news gathering, quietly left for North Korea on

Saturday, his seventh trip there in three years, to try once again to persuade officials to let his cameras in. Other quality electronic and print organizations have been trying hard, too, but Jordan is appealing personally to relationships built up over the years with top officials there." Plate concluded, "Heavy will be the burden on the conscience of the Western media if people like Jordan don't do all they can; and on all the rest of us -- especially the West's well-fed, well-clothed and well-housed -- should we fail to give our best effort to ameliorate one of the bleakest humanitarian catastrophes of our time. ... CNN and other world media organizations offer the last lifeline before [suffering Korean children] sink into the black hole of the failed state of North Korea."

## **5. US, ROK View of Global Landmine Ban**

United Press International ("N.KOREA A THREAT TO GLOBAL LANDMINE BAN," Seoul, 8/13/97) reported that three weeks before a conference seeking a global ban on anti-personnel landmines, the US and the ROK continue to cite the threat posed by the DPRK as a reason to use such weapons. The conference, due to begin September 1 in Oslo, Norway, follows a declaration signed by more than ninety countries calling for a ban on the production, use, storage and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. A statement from the US State Department this week said the US is "committed to negotiating a comprehensive global anti-personnel landmine (APL) ban," but stopped short of saying the US would sign such a ban, and added that the US has not decided whether it will attend the conference. The statement noted that President Bill Clinton has reserved "the right to use APL on the Korean peninsula until alternatives to APL are developed or the risk of aggression there is gone." If the US were to sign the ban to be tabled in Oslo, it would be responsible for removing all the APLs it has buried along the Demilitarized Zone, many of which date back decades. Lee Kyu-hyung, a spokesman for the ROK foreign ministry, said Wednesday that the ROK offers its "moral support" for a ban on APLs but has a "dire need" to keep using them due to the possibility of a "sudden threat from North Korea."

US Defense Department Spokesman Ken Bacon ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR TUESDAY BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 8/13/97) stated that the US Defense Department has not given a final recommendation to President Clinton on whether to support a global ban on anti-personnel landmines. Bacon stated: "President Clinton has made it very clear that he supports the eventual elimination of anti-personnel landmines, and the Joint Chiefs have subscribed to that. We actually have played a leadership role in the world in moving toward that. We are unilaterally destroying our inventory of so-called dumb landmines which are the kind that cause the humanitarian problems that have been highlighted so much recently. We have moved, for our tactical operations -- with the exception of the Korean Peninsula which is a separate situation and so noted -- toward a different type of tactical systems, the so-called smart mine that self-destruct." Asked about a New York Times description of the US exception for smart mines as "narrow and mistaken," Bacon replied, "I think it's a progressive and balanced approach, so I reject that." In response to another question, Bacon did not rule out that the US might reserve exceptions to a ban on "dumb" mines other than in Korea.

## **6. DPRK-ROK Trade**

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA CO. SAID TO HAVE IMPORTED N. KOREAN NAPHTHA IN AUG," Singapore, 8/13/97) reported that the ROK has imported naphtha from the DPRK in a rare deal between a ROK petrochemicals company and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) in the DPRK, according to industry sources. "This is the first time any company from South Korea ever imported naphtha from the North," a Seoul-based feedstocks trader said. Sources indicated that the ROK's LG International Corp. imported 12,000 metric tons of naphtha at a fixed price of US\$200.00/ton.

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. ROK View of Four-Party Peace Talks**

With President Kim Young-sam's term soon ending, chief ROK unification policymakers agreed to take a "cool" approach toward the proposed four-party talks, a spokesman for the ROK Ministry of National Unification said following a meeting of unification-related Cabinet members. Another ministry official said, "It is not appropriate for the government to actively push ahead with the four-party talks, only months away from the end of the Kim Young-sam administration," adding that the ROK's DPRK policies should not be subject to political manipulation. However, Seoul will continue to give humanitarian aid to the DPRK through UN organizations, along with the delivery of Red Cross assistance, the first spokesman said. The shift in attitude towards the four-party talks is likely to cause some trouble for relations with the US, which advocates of an early realization of the four-party talks as a major policy goal. However, some ROK officials raised the possibility that Seoul's cooled approach might actually serve to attract the DPRK to the negotiating table, insofar as the DPRK in the past has backed away when the ROK actively pushed such initiatives. An official of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs also added that hard-liners, who are not very interested in an early realization of the four-party talks, are gaining strength in the government. (Korea Times, Son Key-young, "SEOUL BECOMES 'COOL' TOWARD 4-PARTY TALKS, BUT STILL TO GIVE HUMANITARIAN AID," 08/13/97)

### **2. ROK Food Aid to DPRK**

Chung Won-shik, president of the ROK National Red Cross (KNRC) yesterday said that the KNRC will increase its contribution to the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and Red Crescent Societies to US\$500 thousand, enabling the IFRC to employ six more people to monitor relief work in the DPRK. There are currently two IFRC monitors working in the DPRK. Chung also said that his organization will move to establish a reunion center for the divided families of the two Koreas. Meanwhile, the ROK government yesterday decided to send more food aid to the DPRK through international organizations. The decision came in a ministerial-level meeting attended by twenty-one ministers and vice ministers including Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha, Defense Minister Kim Tong-jin and National Unification Minister Kwon O-ki. However, officials at the Ministry of National Unification yesterday denied that the move to send more food to the DPRK was aimed at expediting the proposed four-party talks. "Our policy continues to be to alleviate the food shortage in the DPRK by contributing to international organizations. The aid was hampered by the recent fire fight in mid-July in the demilitarized zone, and we are only resuming the flow of food aid," a ministry official said. Seoul is expected to send more than US\$10 million in aid. To date, the ROK has funneled US\$19 million into international organizations to aid the DPRK. On a private level, Seoul will have given about 100 thousand tons of grain to the DPRK by the end of September. (Korea Herald, "SEOUL TO CONTINUE AID TO DPRK," 08/13/97)

### **3. DPRK Nuclear Reactor Construction Project**

A ROK ministerial-level meeting attended by twenty-one ministers and vice ministers, including Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha, Defense Minister Kim Tong-jin and National Unification Minister Kwon O-ki, also discussed groundbreaking for the two 1,000-megawatt nuclear reactors to be built in the DPRK. Chang Sun-sop, chief of the ROK Office of Light-Water Nuclear Reactor Project, reported to the meeting that groundbreaking will begin early next week. An entourage of about eighty officials from the ROK, Japan and the US as well as officials from the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and media representatives are expected to attend the ceremony. (Korea Herald, "SEOUL TO CONTINUE AID TO DPRK," 08/13/97)

#### **4. ROK Arms Procurement**

The ROK Ministry of Defense (MOD) has approved budget spending to purchase US-made multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) and Army tactical missile systems (ATACMS) worth US\$336 million, a ministry spokesman said yesterday. The spokesman said that 279 MLRS, 110 ATACMS, 29 launchers and an undisclosed number of ammunition-carrying vehicles will be imported on a gradual basis until the year 2000 from US producer Lockheed Martin. ATACMS, with a 165 km range, can be fired from MLRS launchers. Both the missiles and MLRS rockets, capable of reaching 32 km, are to be predominantly used at striking DPRK artillery, tanks and command and communications complexes in case of a surprise attack from the DPRK, the spokesman explained. Importing the weapons is part of the ministry's defense improvement program, he said. In addition, the MOD will purchase an undisclosed number of advanced armored personnel carriers (APCs) worth 40 billion won (US\$45 million) to defend air bases, and command APCs worth 30 billion won (US\$34 million) for the Army and the Navy from Daewoo Heavy Industries. The ministry will also purchase 24 billion won (US\$27 million) worth of advanced radar systems from ITT in the US, and electronics warfare training equipment worth 7 billion won (US\$7.8 million) from Canada's Omega company during the next several years, the spokesman added. Another seven billion won will be invested for domestic research and development of new advanced targeting devices for the Army's K-1 tanks, he said. (Korea Herald, "DEFENSE MINISTRY TO PURCHASE U.S.-MADE MISSILES, ROCKETS," 08/13/97)

#### **5. US Congressional Representatives Visit to DPRK**

The DPRK re-emphasized that it will not conduct dialogue with ROK President Kim-Young-sam's government, US Congressman Porter Goss said Tuesday. Congressman Goss, Chairman of the US House Intelligence Committee, visited the DPRK last Friday as part of a seven person delegation. At a news conference held at the US Embassy in Japan, Goss explained that the DPRK seemed hold a positive attitude toward holding talks with the ROK, but did not want to partake in direct talks with the current ROK government and will instead wait until the Presidential elections are over. Goss said that a field trip to famine-stricken areas was not allowed but that the DPRK expressed interest in US technology which could be utilized in the DPRK's agricultural industry. (Chosun Ilbo, "DPRK REFUSES TO TALK TO KIM YOUNG-SAM," 08/13/97)

#### **6. US View of Four-Party Peace Talks**

The US State Department rejected on Monday an appeal by the DPRK for more food aid before taking part in a Korea peace conference. "We do not believe that these talks should be conditioned on anything," spokesman James P. Rubin said. "These talks are designed to improve stability on the Korean Peninsula. They're designed to improve the situation for the people in both sides of the divide in Korea. So we don't think they ought to be linked to other issues." With floods and drought threatening to cause a famine, the DPRK said Sunday that it wanted to discuss obtaining more food aid before formal peace negotiations begin during the preliminary discussions last week. Pyongyang's foreign ministry said DPRK negotiators at the discussions were disappointed by a US insistence that food aid could be discussed only after the peace talks open. "With serious food problems, we guard against possible use of food assistance to (the DPRK) as a political weapon at the four-way talks," a DPRK foreign ministry spokesman told the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). While rejecting any links between food and peace talks, Rubin said the US has an excellent record of responding to appeals for food aid from the UN's World Food Program (WFP). He promised a "good hard look" by the US if the WFP issues another appeal for food. The WFP has issued three appeals for food aid this year, and each time the Clinton administration has responded positively. The last such pledge came on July 14 when a commitment of US\$27 million was made for delivery of corn and other items. (Korea Times, "US REJECTS LINKAGE BETWEEN FOOD AID AND PEACE TALKS," 08/13/97) [Ed. note: See "Four-Party Peace Talks Preliminary



Meeting Aftermath" in the US section of the August 11 Daily Report.]

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