

NAPSNet Daily Report 14 April, 1997

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 14 April, 1997", NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 1997,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-14-april-1997/>

In today's Report:

[I. United States](#)

- [1. Four-Party Peace Talks](#)
- [2. DPRK Famine Situation](#)
- [3. DPRK-PRC Relations](#)
- [4. Hwang Defection](#)
- [5. US-ROK Relations](#)
- [6. DPRK-Taiwan Relations](#)
- [7. Japanese Missile Concerns](#)
- [8. DPRK Military Promotions](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. DPRK Prospects Assessed](#)
- [2. ROK-Taiwan Relations](#)
- [3. DPRK Food Aid](#)
- [4. DPRK Blames US for Slow Denuclearization](#)

I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA TO ACCEPT PROPOSED PEACE TALKS THIS WEEK - REPORT," Seoul, 4/14/97) reported that the ROK's national MBC television said Monday that the DPRK has abandoned its demand for huge aid as a precondition for joining peace talks with the ROK and the US. The television station quoted government sources as saying that the DPRK will withdraw the key condition for accepting peace talks when its representatives meet with US and ROK officials in New York on Wednesday. The ROK Foreign Ministry said it was unable to confirm the report. On Saturday, the DPRK Foreign Ministry accused Washington and Seoul of using food aid as a political weapon, but added that food aid and the peace talks are "different things." [Ed. note: Please see the following related item.] Such a decision by the DPRK would clear the way for talks on a permanent peace settlement for the divided Korean Peninsula to take place for the first time in 24 years. At the

meeting this coming Wednesday, the US and the ROK expect the DPRK to respond formally to the joint US-ROK proposal for four-party peace talks, which would also include the PRC.

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA KNOCKS US, S.KOREA ON FOOD," Seoul, 4/12/97) reported that on Saturday the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency quoted a DPRK foreign ministry spokesman as acknowledging that the country's food shortage is "very serious," but adding t

In today's Report:

[I. United States](#)

- [1. Four-Party Peace Talks](#)
- [2. DPRK Famine Situation](#)
- [3. DPRK-PRC Relations](#)
- [4. Hwang Defection](#)
- [5. US-ROK Relations](#)
- [6. DPRK-Taiwan Relations](#)
- [7. Japanese Missile Concerns](#)
- [8. DPRK Military Promotions](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. DPRK Prospects Assessed](#)
- [2. ROK-Taiwan Relations](#)
- [3. DPRK Food Aid](#)
- [4. DPRK Blames US for Slow Denuclearization](#)

I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA TO ACCEPT PROPOSED PEACE TALKS THIS WEEK - REPORT," Seoul, 4/14/97) reported that the ROK's national MBC television said Monday that the DPRK has abandoned its demand for huge aid as a precondition for joining peace talks with the ROK and the US. The television station quoted government sources as saying that the DPRK will withdraw the key condition for accepting peace talks when its representatives meet with US and ROK officials in New York on Wednesday. The ROK Foreign Ministry said it was unable to confirm the report. On Saturday, the DPRK Foreign Ministry accused Washington and Seoul of using food aid as a political weapon, but added that food aid and the peace talks are "different things." [Ed. note: Please see the following related item.] Such a decision by the DPRK would clear the way for talks on a permanent peace settlement for the divided Korean Peninsula to take place for the first time in 24 years. At the meeting this coming Wednesday, the US and the ROK expect the DPRK to respond formally to the joint US-ROK proposal for four-party peace talks, which would also include the PRC.

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA KNOCKS US, S.KOREA ON FOOD," Seoul, 4/12/97) reported that on Saturday the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency quoted a DPRK foreign ministry spokesman as acknowledging that the country's food shortage is "very serious," but adding t

I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA TO ACCEPT PROPOSED PEACE TALKS THIS WEEK -

REPORT," Seoul, 4/14/97) reported that the ROK's national MBC television said Monday that the DPRK has abandoned its demand for huge aid as a precondition for joining peace talks with the ROK and the US. The television station quoted government sources as saying that the DPRK will withdraw the key condition for accepting peace talks when its representatives meet with US and ROK officials in New York on Wednesday. The ROK Foreign Ministry said it was unable to confirm the report. On Saturday, the DPRK Foreign Ministry accused Washington and Seoul of using food aid as a political weapon, but added that food aid and the peace talks are "different things." [Ed. note: Please see the following related item.] Such a decision by the DPRK would clear the way for talks on a permanent peace settlement for the divided Korean Peninsula to take place for the first time in 24 years. At the meeting this coming Wednesday, the US and the ROK expect the DPRK to respond formally to the joint US-ROK proposal for four-party peace talks, which would also include the PRC.

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA KNOCKS US, S.KOREA ON FOOD," Seoul, 4/12/97) reported that on Saturday the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency quoted a DPRK foreign ministry spokesman as acknowledging that the country's food shortage is "very serious," but adding that this circumstance would not determine whether it agrees to the US-ROK proposal for four-party peace talks. "If they think that the food problem decides whether we accept the talks or not, it would be a serious mistake," the spokesman, who was not identified, was quoted as saying. "Our food problem is very serious, but it is foolish to expect our system to be seriously affected by the problem," he said. He also criticized the US and ROK for withholding large-scale food aid until the DPRK sits down to negotiate an official end to the 1950-53 Korean War. "Raising such a condition is dishonest and inhumane behavior aimed at abusing food aid as a political weapon and securing a concession from [the DPRK] in the security issue. The food aid, which is a humanitarian issue, and the talks are different things," the spokesman said.

2. DPRK Famine Situation

Reuters ("N.KOREAN GRAIN OUTPUT SEEN GONE BY THIS MONTH," Seoul, 4/14/97) reported that the ROK's state-run Korea Rural Economic Institute said Monday that the DPRK's grain output last year was well below half its annual needs and that the impoverished state must have almost completely depleted that supply by this month. The institute estimated the DPRK's grain output at between 2.45 million and 2.82 million tons in the year to November 1996, compared with its annual requirements of between 6.06 million and 6.23 million tons. "Excluding some 500,000 tons and one million tons of output already used up during 1996 and in view of the minimum food ration of 458 grams per person per day, the 1996 output would almost completely be depleted by April," the institute said in a statement. Excluding non-food requirements, the institute estimated the DPRK's annual needs as between 4.39 million and 4.49 million tons. The institute's estimate is less than the ROK government's projection of 3.69 million tons for the DPRK's 1996 food harvest. International aid groups have said massive famine in the DPRK is just weeks away. The DPRK recently told United Nations aid groups that a total of 134 children already have died of malnutrition. Also Saturday, the PRC decided to send 70,000 tons of grain to the DPRK as humanitarian aid to its longtime communist ally. [Ed. note: Please see the following related item.]

3. DPRK-PRC Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA ENVOYS TO VISIT N. KOREA," Seoul, 4/12/97) reported that a delegation of the PRC's Communist Party left Saturday on a visit to the DPRK in the first such high-level mission since senior DPRK official Hwang Jang-yop defected in Beijing in February. The PRC's state-run Xinhua News Agency reported that Li Beihai, vice minister of the international department of the Communist Party's central committee, led the delegation. Xinhua characterized the trip as a "goodwill visit," indicating perhaps that the two countries have managed to smooth feelings ruffled by the defection. PRC state-run television announced Saturday that, in another apparent goodwill

gesture, the PRC will send 70,000 tons of grain to the DPRK for humanitarian food aid. Last year, the PRC announced emergency grain shipments for the DPRK of at least 120,000 tons of grain.

4. Hwang Defection

The Associated Press ("U.S. CAN'T PROBE N. KOREA DEFECTOR," Seoul, 4/14/97) reported that a ROK Foreign Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Monday that the ROK will not allow US intelligence agents to join their initial interrogation of high-ranking DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop. The official said the ROK may allow US and Japanese officials to interview Hwang after the ROK is finished. "Participation of U.S. officials in the investigation involves sensitive diplomatic and security issues," the official said. During a visit last week, US Defense Secretary William Cohen asked that US officials be allowed to interrogate Hwang jointly with ROK officials. The 74-year-old Hwang, a member of the DPRK's top decision-making body who once tutored current DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, is seen as an information bonanza for a world eager to learn more about the DPRK's secretive ruling regime. Hwang is expected to arrive in Seoul later this week from the Philippines, where he went last month after spending five weeks stranded in the ROK's consulate in Beijing, where he sought asylum on February 12.

5. US-ROK Relations

The Los Angeles Times (Paul Richter, "S. KOREA'S DEFENSE EFFORTS FAIL TO PASS U.S. MUSTER," Seoul, 4/12/97) reported that US defense officials are concerned that the ROK has grown complacent about the immediate threat from the DPRK and too worried about the power rivalry it sees ahead with Japan. Although talks in Seoul last week between top US and ROK defense officials went smoothly, analysts believe that US officials feel that the ROK is spending less on defense than it should. ROK defense spending has declined from six percent of gross domestic product in 1980 to four percent in 1990 and about three percent currently. US officials also feel that current ROK defense spending has focused too much on acquiring the kind of military that will be more in need if the two Koreas reunify -- big warships, submarines and long-range aircraft -- and not enough on the defensive weapons that would help the ROK defend itself against a huge artillery and missile attack from the North. Seoul's military efforts are "a source of considerable irritation in the Clinton administration, on Capitol Hill and in the professional military," the report quoted Nicholas Eberstadt, an analyst with the American Enterprise Institute, as saying. If a major attack came "completely out of the blue, the South could be caught a little lacking," said Michael Mazarr, an analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, another Washington think tank. Last September's DPRK submarine incursion is seen as a recent indication of the ROK's lack of preparedness for such eventualities. To correct the shortcomings, the US wants the ROK to buy more Patriot surface-to-air missiles and so-called counter-battery radar systems, which enable defenders to return precision fire on artillery as soon as they are fired on. But the ROK has been moving slowly on an expected US\$1 billion purchase of the Patriots and had even toyed with the idea of buying Russian SA-12 missile systems instead. After an indignant comment from the visiting Cohen, ROK Defense Minister Kim Tong Chin indicated on Thursday that his government intends to stick with the US-made Patriot system after all.

6. DPRK-Taiwan Relations

United Press International ("NORTH KOREA, TAIWAN TALKS REPORTED," Seoul, 4/14/97) reported that Taiwan and the DPRK will hold a meeting on economic cooperation next month. The meeting is opposed by the ROK and the PRC. Russia's Itar-Tass news agency on Monday cited unnamed sources in Beijing as saying that representatives of Taiwan's ruling party and business executives will attend talks in Pyongyang on expanding cooperation. The two countries have raised regional concerns with a deal under which Taiwan's power authority will export nuclear waste to the DPRK. Seoul officials

say they are willing to lose ties with Taipei in order to block the shipment of some 60,000 barrels of contaminated clothing, shoes, gloves and equipment. The PRC says Taiwan is using the deal to enforce its pursuit of "two Chinas," which Beijing staunchly opposes. The DPRK, the ROK, the PRC and Taiwan have had complicated ties since 1992, when Seoul cut ties with Taipei and normalized relations with Beijing.

7. Japanese Missile Concerns

The Associated Press ("JAPAN PROBES POSSIBLE MISSILES," Tokyo, 4/14/97) reported that the Japanese government is investigating an unconfirmed report in the Japanese Sankei Shimbun newspaper, which said Friday that the DPRK is setting up for deployment of long-range Rodong missiles capable of hitting the ROK and much of Japan. Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda told Parliament on Monday that Japan so far has been unable to confirm the report, but did not elaborate. The newspaper said the DPRK has three missiles ready for immediate test-firing along its northeastern coast, and plans seven more, citing information gathered by a US spy satellite. In 1993, the DPRK conducted a test firing of a Rodong toward the Sea of Japan, which separates the Koreas and Japan. The missile has a range of 620 miles. London-based Jane's Defense Weekly reported last year that the DPRK is also developing ballistic missiles with a range of 2,200 miles that could reach the US territory of Guam.

8. DPRK Military Promotions

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA PROMOTES 123 GENERALS," Seoul, 4/14/97) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il issued an order Sunday promoting 123 generals, the second such round of promotions this year. The KCNA said that the promotions commemorated Tuesday's 85th birthday of Kim's late father, President Kim Il-sung, and this month's 65th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK's armed forces. The ROK Unification Ministry said this latest round of promotions increased the total number of DPRK generals to 1,220, and suggested Kim was trying to placate a restive military. ROK officials say the DPRK's 1.2-million-member military, the world's fifth-largest, is increasingly discontent with its government's inability to resolve food shortages brought on by two years of disastrous flooding. UN officials say the North's 22 million people go to bed hungry every night and that even its military is not getting enough food.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Prospects Assessed

A consensus among the ROK, the US, and the PRC on volatile Northeast Asian security issues would be hard to achieve if not for the DPRK. With regards to the DPRK, the three nations' agreement on the proposed four-party talks epitomizes their consensus on promoting a "soft-landing" approach to promoting openness and reform in the world's last Communist state. Referring to a series of realignments of contingency plans made by the ROK government in preparation for the collapse of the North, Moon Mu-hong, ROK Assistant Minister of National Unification, stated, "I would in no way say that there is a change in this policy. There have always been preparations for the DPRK's collapse. I would say it is more a shift in weight." However, Moon's remarks may also be a response to a question raised by Sandy Kristoff, an advisor on Asian affairs to the US National Security Council, who stated on March 20 at the Korea Economic Institute that the DPRK's landing may be a "hard" one. The speech was construed as a change in US policy, although officials at the US Embassy in Seoul denied this interpretation. An embassy official stated, "Kristoff's comments were more in the form of analysis rather than a policy presentation. But the situation is bad in the DPRK, and to be prepared for its collapse would be akin to a policy of military deterrence." The official went

on to state that the US and the ROK agree that the best hope for peace on the Korean peninsula is a lengthy period of reconciliation followed by political unification. But the official added that "in the sense that you can't always get what you want, there are close ongoing consultations between the South Korean government and the United States on 'what if' scenarios." (Korea Herald, "VIEWS OF NORTH KOREAN 'HARD' LANDING GAIN MORE SUBSTANCE," Kim Ji-soo, 04/14/97)

2. ROK-Taiwan Relations

Taiwan, once the ROK's anticommunist Cold War ally, has become a target of criticism for its plan to ship nuclear waste to the DPRK. Although the ROK and Taiwan have maintained steady growth in trade volume, their political relations have deteriorated since the ROK switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC. Following the announcement in January that the state-run Taiwan Power Company signed a deal with its DPRK counterpart to transfer of nuclear waste to the DPRK, the ROK has made use of every possible occasion to describe Taiwan as a rich but immoral state attempting to exploit the poverty of an underdeveloped country. ROK President Kim Young-sam, Cabinet members, parliamentarians, and even civic groups joined forces to oppose the deal. The issue of nuclear waste was raised when President Kim met Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, US Vice President Al Gore, and US House Speaker Newt Gingrich, among others. The ROK National Assembly also adopted a resolution and dispatched a delegation to the US to obtain support to stop the shipment. On April 9, the secretariat for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) circulated the ROK National Assembly's resolution to 125 member countries to boost their understanding on the issue. The resolution, calling for the Taiwan to withdraw its plan to ship nuclear waste to the DPRK, was adopted on March 10. The ROK also challenged Taiwan's plan at a senior officials meeting (SOM) of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), held in Singapore on February. In January, the issue was raised at the 19th governing council of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). (Korea Herald, "SEOUL LAUNCHES BARRAGE OF DIPLOMATIC ATTACKS ON TAIWAN," Son Key-young, 04/14/97)

3. DPRK Food Aid

The US Defense Secretary stated on Friday that the DPRK must take "reciprocal actions" that show it wants peace before it will receive major quantities of food aid. Arriving after five days of talks in Tokyo and Seoul, Defense Secretary William Cohen stated that he is skeptical of sending food aid to the DPRK when it continues to retain a large army. "I doubt very much whether there will be massive assistance without some kind of reciprocal action on the part of the North Koreans," he said upon leaving the ROK. The US will continue to supply some food aid, but increased shipments depend on the progress that is made toward peace talks on April 16 when US, ROK, and DPRK officials meet in New York. "I think that there has to be some indication on the part of the DPRK that it wishes to reach some kind of an accord to move away from this militaristic approach that it has taken," Cohen stated. "Are they going to start talking more directly with the south? Are they going to maintain the kind of bellicose rhetoric they've had in the past? What visible steps will there in terms of their stated hope for eventual peaceful unification?" Cohen denied that the US was using food as a bargaining chip, but a looming famine appears to have drawn the DPRK to the negotiating table. (Korea Times, "NORTH KOREA MUST TAKE ACTIONS TOWARD PEACE TO GET AID: COHEN," Washington, 04/14/97)

4. DPRK Blames US for Slow Denuclearization

The DPRK charged on Friday that the fact that the Korean peninsula has not yet been completely denuclearized was entirely due to "the anachronistic US policy toward the peninsula." In an interview with the DPRK Korean Central News Agency, a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman stated the US is supplying "a huge quantity of combat equipment" to the ROK and is continuing to maintain

its nuclear umbrella. The spokesman went on to state that whether or not the peninsula will be denuclearized is entirely up to the US. Welcoming implementation of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) denuclearization pact, the spokesman called on all the nuclear powers of the world to join the international denuclearization movement. The ASEAN Denuclearization Treaty was concluded in December 1995 to establish the region as a denuclearized area, and has since been subscribed to by Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. (Korea Times, "N. KOREA BLAMES US FOR SLOW DENUCLEARIZATION," 04/14/97)

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-14-april-1997/>

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