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I. United States

1. US Defense Secretary's Asian Trip

Reuters (Charles Aldinger, "COHEN IN S.KOREA FOR TALKS ON N.KOREA THREAT," Camp Humphreys, 01/14/99) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen arrived in the ROK from Japan on Thursday for annual security talks. Cohen told US military personnel at Camp Humphreys, "You are deployed at an area that is one of the hottest flashpoints of the world." He added, "You are performing a critical service for our friends in the entire Asia-Pacific region." Cohen will hold talks Friday with his ROK counterpart Chun Yong-taek about various security issues on the Korea peninsula.

The Associated Press ("JAPAN URGES U.S. TO WARN N. KOREA," Tokyo, 01/13/99) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura urged US Defense Secretary William Cohen on Thursday to join Japan in sending a "strong warning" to the DPRK if it shows signs of launching another rocket. At their meeting, Cohen and Komura agreed to continue joint efforts to watch for any signs of further missile testing by the DPRK. An anonymous Foreign Ministry official said that

Cohen also stressed the importance of three-way cooperation between the US, Japan, and the ROK. The official added that Cohen reiterated that the US would continue to demand that the DPRK allow inspections of a suspect underground construction site.

2. US-DPRK Talks

Associated Press (George Gedda, "U.S. PREPARES FOR NORTH KOREA TALKS," Washington, 01/13/99) reported that an anonymous senior US official said Wednesday that progress toward achieving a Korean peninsula peace treaty could hinge on whether US experts gain access to a DPRK underground site. The official said that the atmosphere of the upcoming four-party peace talks clearly will be influenced by what happens at the earlier, bilateral US-DPRK discussion on the underground site. He added that the DPRK has seemed skeptical about whether the four-party process is worthwhile and that there has been no tangible progress in the talks since the process began. Meanwhile, Senators John McCain, R-Ariz., and Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, urged President Bill Clinton to stand by his refusal of the DPRK demand for compensation for access to the site. They argued that "additional assistance to this regime at this time will simply reward behavior that is inconsistent with its presumed desire to improve relations with the United States and increase stability on the Korean peninsula."

3. US-ROK Military Talks

Reuters ("U.S., SEOUL WEIGH N.KOREAN MISSILE ATTACK THREAT," Seoul, 01/14/99) reported that US Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman General Henry Shelton and his ROK counterpart General Kim Jin-ho on Thursday discussed rapid deployment of US reinforcements and missiles in the case of attack by the DPRK. A US Forces Korea statement said that the two "expressed serious concern over North Korea's missile development." It added, "They discussed in depth ways to deploy U.S. reinforcements rapidly in case of North Korea aggression, to include the use of missiles." The meeting "acknowledged that North Korea's military threat remains high despite their continued economic difficulties" and discussed how to combat the DPRK's chemical and biological weapons capability. The meeting also assessed a newly established Combined Psychological Operations Task Force which "will improve many aspects of the psychological warfare plans." The two sides also agreed to continue close cooperation on countering DPRK submarine intrusions.

4. ROK Aid to DPRK

Reuters ("S. KOREA PREPARES FOR AGRICULTURAL AID TO N.KOREA," Seoul, 01/14/99) reported that the ROK Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry said on Thursday that it was prepared to provide aid to the DPRK's agricultural sector. The ministry said that members of the ROK-DPRK agricultural cooperation promotion committee at a meeting on Thursday exchanged views on providing aid, including agricultural skills, fertilizer, chemicals, and seeds. The committee, established in July 1998, comprises agricultural experts on the DPRK from the academic and research fields, as well as officials from the agriculture, unification, and finance ministries. A statement from the committee said that no concrete decisions were made and it gave no figures for the amount of aid being considered. However, an official at the ministry's agricultural policy and planning division said that the committee would prepare for a possible development in ROK-DPRK cooperation.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Political Structure

Chosun Ilbo ("NK RESHUFFLES POLITICAL STRUCTURE," 01/14/99) reported that according to a report entitled "The List of North Korea's Power Structure" issued by the Ministry of Unification on January 14, the DPRK has recently reshuffled its political structure. The State Security Agency, which is the counterpart of the ROK's Agency for National Security Planning (formerly the KCIA), was placed under the control of the National Defense Commission, which is headed by DPRK leader Kim Jong- il. Kim himself led the State Security Agency, but since last year it has been drastically weakened, as First Vice-Chairman Kim Young-ryong was purged on charges of corruption. The DPRK, however, has not yet reorganized its party structure, so the seats that had been occupied by Hwang Jang-yop (International Affairs) and Suh Gwan-hee (Agricultural Affairs) are still vacant. The identity of the chief of the Department of the Unification Front is not yet known. Furthermore, the DPRK split up the posts of Secretary of the Municipal and Provincial Party Committee and Chairman of the People's Committee, which had been occupied by one person, and the Chairman of the People's Committee will now be in charge of economic affairs.

2. ROK Aid to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("$100 MILLION IN AID TO NK AVAILABLE," 01/13/99) reported that Kang In-duk, ROK Minister of Unification, said in an interview with the Korea Herald on Thursday that the ROK is ready to supply rice and/or fertilizer to the DPRK with no strings attached. Kang indicated that if the DPRK government makes a formal request, the ROK government is willing to donate 500,000 tons of fertilizer worth US$100 million. Kang said that the funds to procure aid could be taken from a government-led ROK- DPRK cooperation fund. He added that the government would have to give serious consideration to public sentiment, indicating that a favorable response from the ROK people would be necessary before any aid was given.

3. EU Aid to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("EU TO SEND ENVOY TO NK FOR AID TALKS," 01/14/99) reported that Frank Hesske, head-designate of the European Union (EU) delegation to the ROK, said on Thursday that the EU will dispatch three top-level officials, including a bureau head of the EU executive committee, to the DPRK from January 22-25. The high-ranking EU officials' visit to the DPRK is the first of its kind, and analysts speculate that it may speed up reconciliation of Europe and the DPRK. Speaking to reporters at the German Embassy in the ROK, Hesske said that at the top of the agenda for the meeting is the development of an effective food aid model, and assistance to restore the DPRK farming industry, including the production of seeds. Hesske said that the delegation will ask the DPRK authorities to guarantee that the supplied food aid is distributed to those in need. He added that the DPRK cannot survive by food aid alone, and that assistance to rebuild the farming infrastructure is necessary. Claus Vollers, German Ambassador to the ROK, who was also present along with British Ambassador Stephen D. R. Brown, said that the DPRK must recognize that it would to its own advantage to lend cooperative efforts to international society, rather than to try to extort aid for the right to inspect its nuclear facilities. Vollers said that the EU has made a contribution towards the construction costs of light-water reactors for KEDO, and the EU must participate in the investigation of the Kumchangri underground facilities.

4. US-ROK Psychological War Planning

Chosun Ilbo ("PSY-WAR COMMAND TO BE CREATED," 01/14/99) reported that at the twentieth

Military Command Meeting (MCM) between the US and the ROK at the Ministry of Defense on Thursday, ROK and US Joint Chiefs of Staff chairmen Kim Jin-ho and Henry Shelton reached an agreement to form a Combined Psychological Operations Task Force (CPOTF) to operate in times of war. According to the plan, when a DEFCON-3 situation is reached, the command will be assembled under an ROK general and mount psychological warfare operations against the DPRK. The two sides also agreed to reduce the time for deployment of troops from Japan and the US, and to increase cooperation on localized infiltration, such as submarine and spy boat incursions. In preparation for either a nuclear or biochemical threat, additional Patriot missile defense systems will be deployed, as will strike capabilities against rear areas of the DPRK. Biochemical defense will also be strengthened.

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.

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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

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Nautilus Institute

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