

# NAPSNet Daily Report 14 March, 2000

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## I. United States

### 1. ROK-DPRK Talks

Agence France Presse ("KIM DAE-JUNG URGES NORTH TO ACCEPT OFFER FOR DIALOGUE," Seoul, 3/14/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung said on Tuesday at the opening ceremony of the Korea Military Academy that the DPRK should accept the ROK's proposal to exchange special (presidential) envoys to fulfill the 1991 Basic Agreement. Kim said, "when Pyongyang first makes peace with the Republic (ROK) and agrees to economic cooperation with us, the international community will be able to assist in rebuilding the North Korean economy. The Republic intends to genuinely help Pyongyang. We do not intend to harm or absorb North Korea. I urge the Pyongyang authorities to open up their minds and come to the South-North negotiation table." He also said that the ROK wanted to open dialogue with the DPRK, seek reconciliation, and reach an early settlement on the issues of separated families. Kim added, "on this occasion, I am also clarifying my willingness to accept any North Korean proposal conducive to opening bilateral dialogue regardless of the level of the delegations. I am saying this in the belief that any type of dialogue will help the two sides cooperate with each other and be reconciled." ROK Unification Minister Park Jae-kyu said on March 14 that the ROK had been in contact with the DPRK, "exchanging messages with North Korean

authorities who are trustworthy." Park said that the ROK did not want to publicize the links until the completion of April 13 National Assembly elections, for fear of influencing the vote.

Agence France Presse ("SOUTH KOREA SAYS TIME NOT RIGHT FOR SUMMIT WITH NORTH," Washington, 3/13/00) reported that following a meeting with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, ROK Foreign Minister Lee Jung-binn said on March 13 that the time was not right for an inter-Korean summit suggested earlier this year by ROK President Kim Dae-jung. Lee said, "we have not yet proposed formally a summit meeting with North Korea. If South- North relations improve, we can think about summit talks with North Korea, but I think it is not time to propose summit talks." Lee and Albright met at the US State Department during a break in talks in New York on the DPRK's expected high-level visit to Washington. Albright said, "our consultations today confirm that the alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States is stronger than ever. We reviewed the situation on the Korean peninsula and I reaffirmed America's commitment to South Korea's defense." In addition to the DPRK question, Albright and Lee signed an agreement that would eliminate a double social security taxation faced by ROK workers temporarily in the US and US workers temporarily in the ROK.

## **2. DPRK Ambassador to Italy**

Agence France Presse ("ITALY WELCOMES FIRST AMBASSADOR FROM NORTH KOREA," Rome, 3/10/00) reported that the DPRK's first ambassador to Italy, Kim Hung-rim, presented his credentials on March 10 to the Italian government. The Italian foreign ministry said in a statement that it had accepted Kim's credentials as the new envoy to Italy. Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini is scheduled to visit the DPRK at the end of the month.

## **3. PRC-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Cooperation**

The New York Times (Erik Eckholm, "CHINA AND TAIWAN PURSUE SECRET NUCLEAR WASTE DEAL," Beijing, 3/13/00) reported that Taiwan officials confirmed on Monday that executives of the government-owned nuclear power companies of the PRC and Taiwan met secretly in Hong Kong in January to sign a deal for cleaning nuclear waste. A "letter of intent" was signed to explore the disposal of over 200,000 drums of radioactive wastes from Taiwan's nuclear power plants in the PRC in return for money and technical aid to the PRC's nuclear power industry. However, the officials said that no contract has been signed, and the talks have been suspended in recent weeks of heightened tensions. Officials of the Taiwan Power Company (Taipower) said that they hope talks can resume this spring. Huang Hui-yu, a spokeswoman for Taipower, said, "we hope we can eventually arrive at some sort of commercial arrangement with the mainland. We have indicated our willingness to offer certain forms of technical assistance for their nuclear plants, and they indicated a possible willingness to help in handling our waste material." Officials in Taiwan and the PRC refused to comment on the talks. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 14, 2000.]

## **4. PRC-Russian Security Cooperation**

Knight Ridder Newspapers ("CHINA, RUSSIA STEP UP TIES IN BID TO KEEP U.S. IN CHECK," 3/14/00) carried an analytical article which noted that Russia and the PRC are joining together in an effort to resist US domination of the post-Cold War world. US experts said that Russia and the PRC's common interest in restraining US power could make it harder for the US to pursue its objectives in Asia and elsewhere and to use the UN as a foreign policy tool. Ron Montaperto, an Asia expert at the

US Defense Department's National Defense University in Washington, said, "anything we do that gives them practice in getting along with each other is not good policy." US analysts believe that the PRC's goal is to fortify its eastern coastal waters, extend its control over adjacent sea lanes, and make it harder for the US to shield Taiwan. Anonymous US defense officials said that the US Navy is confident it can deal with the new threats should tensions escalate in the Taiwan Strait. However, the officials concede that the PRC's US\$800 million destroyers and their batteries of Sunburn anti-ship missiles will make defending Taiwan riskier for US warships. One US defense official said, "the Sunburn anti-ship cruise missile ... does cause concern. It's a dangerous system." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 14, 2000.]

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. DPRK-Japanese Talks**

Joongang Ilbo (Oh Young-hwan, "NORTH KOREAN AND JAPANESE RED CROSS DELEGATIONS MEET IN BEIJING," Seoul, 03/13/00) reported that ROK and Japanese Red Cross delegations met in Beijing on March 13 to discuss humanitarian issues, including investigations into Japan's allegation that its citizens were kidnapped by DPRK agents. The DPRK Red Cross delegation, headed by its secretary-general Ho Hae-ryong, arrived in the PRC on March 11. The Japanese delegation led by Tadateru Konoe arrived in Beijing on March 13. The two parties reviewed the progress of issues they had discussed during the December talks in Beijing, including investigations into the alleged abduction of Japanese citizens by the DPRK, and resumption of visits to Japan by Japanese spouses of DPRK citizens. The Japanese Red Cross delegation officially notified the DPRK of the Japanese government's plan to offer 100,000 tons of food in relief aid. Meanwhile, Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi commented, "the Beijing Red Cross talks are extremely important as the first step towards normalizing diplomatic ties with North Korea."

### **2. DPRK-EU Economic Cooperation**

The Korea Herald ("N.K. PUSHING ACTIVE ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH EU MEMBERS," Seoul, 03/14/00) reported that the DPRK is reportedly promoting civilian-level economic cooperation with European countries such as the Netherlands and France this year. An ROK government official said on March 13 that officials of the Netherlands' Wartsilia, which agreed to construct two 9.6 megawatt-grade electric generators worth US\$4 million in the DPRK two years ago, will visit the DPRK in May. The two sides are also expected to wrap up talks on Wartsilia opening a branch office in Pyongyang. The ROK government source said that officials of French telecommunications company Alcatel will soon fly to Pyongyang to discuss exchanges and repair projects for international phone facilities established there in the early 1980's. The projects are expected to contribute to a better atmosphere for state economic cooperation between the DPRK and EU member countries.

### **3. DPRK-ROK Software Project**

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SEOUL APPROVES FIRST INTER-KOREAN SOFTWARE PROJECT," Seoul, 03/14/00), Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "SAMSUNG TO OPEN SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT CENTER WITH NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 03/13/00), and The Korea Times (Lee Soo-jeong, "GOV'T ALLOWS SOUTH-NORTH JOINT SOFTWARE PROJECT," Seoul, 03/13/00) reported that the ROK Unification Ministry gave approval on March 13 to Samsung Electronics Company's

plan to invest US\$727,000 in a project to jointly develop computer software with a DPRK partner. A ministry official said, "Samsung Electronics and its North Korean counterpart, Korea Computer Center (KCC), will set up a joint-venture software firm in Beijing next month." The official added that this will be the first time that ROK and DPRK firms have worked together on a computer software project, and it is expected to contribute to the ROK's policy of enhancing ties with the DPRK through economic exchanges. The two sides will develop document summary systems, computer games, Chinese character-codes for cellular phones, programs for Linux systems, and other types of office software.

#### 4. DPRK Currency Rate

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Chang-hyun, "NORTH KOREA'S CURRENCY RATE DROPS," Seoul, 03/13/00) reported that the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said that this year's currency rate in the DPRK is 2.13 won buying and 2.2259 won selling against the dollar, a drop of 0.03 won and 0.043, for buying and selling, respectively from last year. Last year's rate was 2.16 won buying and 2.1816 won selling. The exchange rate against the Japanese Yen is 0.0195 won buying and 0.0202 won selling. The KOTRA announced the DPRK's currency and exchange rate system after obtaining the information from the DPRK's Chosun Trade Bank, which announced its currency plan on February 11.

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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