NAPSNet Daily Report 15 January, 1998

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 15 January, 1998", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, 1998, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-15-january-1998/

IN TODAY'S REPORT:

I. United States

1. US Treasury Official Visits ROK
2. ROK Labor Talks
3. Effect of Financial Crisis on ROK Military Spending

II. Discussion

1. Global Land Mine Ban

I. United States

[][]

1. US Treasury Official Visits ROK

Reuters ("SUMMERS BEGINS TALKS WITH SOUTH KOREAN FIN MIN," Seoul, 01/15/98) reported that US Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers arrived in the ROK on Thursday and began talks with ROK Finance Minister Lim Chang-yuel on the ongoing financial crisis. Summers will meet President Kim Young-sam and President-elect Kim Dae-jung on Friday morning.

[][][]

2. ROK Labor Talks

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "SOUTH KOREANS DISCUSS LAYOFFS," Seoul, 01/15/98) and the New York Times (Nicholas D. Kristof, "UNIONS AGREE TO DISCUSS LAYOFFS IN SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 01/15/98) reported that ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung on Thursday urged unions and corporations to compromise in finding an acceptable formula for layoffs. Speaking to a consultative group of top business, labor, and government leaders, Kim stated, "When businesses are collapsing, does it matter whether the management wins or the labor union wins?" As part of the attempt at compromise, the incoming government is offering to expand an unemployment insurance

fund begun two years ago. Meanwhile the National Assembly decided to delay deliberation of a layoff bill pending the outcome of the consultative group's talks.

[][][]

3. Effect of Financial Crisis on ROK Military Spending

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "S. KOREA FORCED TO SLOW PROJECTS," Seoul, 01/15/98) and the Los Angeles Times (Paul Richter, "CRISIS THWARTS PENTAGON EFFORTS TO BEEF UP ASIA MILITARY," Washington, 01/15/98) reported that Chang Jae-shik, an aide to President-elect Kim Dae-jung, said that the ROK's economic crisis could delay or cancel several government spending projects. Chang stated, "We simply don't have the money." In particular, the ROK Defense Ministry is likely to delay a US$3 billion plan to buy four AWACS surveillance radar jets from the US and a US$1.2 billion project to build three 1,500-ton submarines. East Asian military spending reached US$165 billion last year, and Asian purchases from US companies accounted for about 25 percent US weapons sales. US officials also worry that the financial crisis may hurt their efforts to induce the ROK to pay a larger share of defense costs.

II. Discussion

[][][]

1. Global Land Mine Ban

[Ed. note: The following article by Ramesh Thakur ("NO TO TIME- RELEASE MASS MURDER WEAPON,") first appeared in the Japan Times on Wednesday, December 17, 1997, pg. 19. Ramesh Thakur is Head of the Peace Research Centre in Canberra, Australia. In April he will take up his appointment as vice rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo. NAPSNet presents the article in its entirety, with the permission of the author. An earlier article by Dr. Thakur on the land mine ban can be found on the Special Reports Page]

The Mine Ban Treaty, signed in Ottawa on Dec 3-4 by over 120 countries, bans the use, production, acquisition, stockpiling and transfer of all anti-personnel landmines except for a minimum number for training. Antitank mines are still permitted, so long as they are vehicle- or command- but not victim-activated. The United States, Russia and China should climb aboard the Ottawa Express. They have been left feeling lonely, exposed and decidedly uncomfortable, especially after the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the antimine campaign.

Land mines should be outlawed because of the horrific nature of injuries; because they are victim-activated; because 80-90 percent of the victims are civilian; and because they continue to cause death and injury for decades after being sown: the weapon of mass murder in slow motion. They are a humanitarian tragedy, a threat to peace and stability and an obstacle to reconstruction and development.

Existing stockpiles must be destroyed within three years of the Ottawa Treaty's entry into force and minefields cleared within 10, although extensions of up to 10 years is possible. The treaty is not subject to reservations or time limit. A party may withdraw with six months' notice, but, if it is engaged in armed conflict at the end of the six months, its withdrawal will be suspended until the end of hostilities.

Washington had demanded a package of four modifications; all were rejected. While US endorsement would have added significantly to the convention's political weight, accommodating US

wishes would have greatly diluted the treaty. Its integrity proved more important than US inclusion.

The Americans squabbled over the deferral period, wanting the treaty to come into force after nine years; they wanted a change in the definition of land mines in order to permit the continued deployment of their mixed antitank, antipersonnel mine systems; they pressed for the Korean Peninsula to be exempted from the treaty because of its unique security environment; and they wanted an opt-out clause in the event of war.

Some belittle the Ottawa Treaty as a 'feel good' outcome. We can do with feeling good. Besides, like old age, it is better than the alternative: a 'feel bad' treaty, or a 'feel empty' nontreaty.

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

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

Shin Dong-bom: dongbom.shin@anu.edu.au
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Choi Chung-moon: cily@star.elim.co.kr
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-15-january-1998/

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

nautilus@nautilus.org