NAPSNet Daily Report 15 January, 1999

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 15 January, 1999", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, 1999, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-15-january-1999/

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I. United States

1. US Defense Secretary's ROK Visit

Reuters (Charles Aldinger, "COHEN APPEALS TO NORTH KOREA FOR COOPERATION," Seoul, 01/15/99) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen, at a news conference on Friday with ROK Defense Minister Chun Yong-taek, appealed to the DPRK to lessen tensions on the Korean peninsula. Cohen stated, "At a time when North Korea cannot feed its own people, the entire peninsula would benefit from policies in the North that encourage the benefits of cooperation rather than raise the risk of confrontation." He added, "Our allied military capability has never been stronger nor more sure of decisive victory if attacked." Cohen also praised ROK President Kim Dae-Jung's "sunshine policy" toward the DPRK, but said that it was up to the DPRK to respond. He warned, "North Korea will lose any hope of realizing the benefits of dialogue and engagement if it undermines the framework agreement. The United States will continue to work to preserve that

agreement, but we cannot do it alone."

The Associated Press ("U.S., KOREA VOW CLOSER MILITARY TIES AGAINST NORTH KOREAN 'THREATS'," Seoul, 01/15/99) and Agence France-Press ("UNITED STATES READY TO HELP SOUTH KOREA IF NORTH KOREA ATTACKS, SECRETARY SAYS," Seoul, 01/14/99) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen and ROK Defense Minister Chun Yong-taek agreed in a joint statement on Friday to strengthen their nations' military alliance against the DPRK. The statement said, "Secretary Cohen and Minister Chun agreed that ... combined defense readiness should be steadfastly maintained against a wide range of possible threats." It added, "Secretary Cohen reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to render prompt and effective assistance to the ROK for repelling any armed attack against the ROK in accordance with the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty and to provide a nuclear umbrella for the ROK."

2. PRC Views of DPRK Underground Construction

Reuters ("CHINA MEDIA BLAST U.S. DEMANDS ON NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 01/15/99) reported that the PRC's official Xinhua news agency in a signed commentary on Friday criticized the US for demanding access to a suspect underground construction site in the DPRK. The commentary said, "It seems rather unjustified and ridiculous that the U.S. should demand that it can monitor another country's activities simply because it merely suspects that country is up to no good." The article also expressed hope that upcoming US-DPRK talks would lead to the full implementation of the 1994 Agreed Framework. It added, "China will, as always, contribute positive and constructive efforts to benefit a resolution of the issue about the peninsula."

3. PRC-Taiwan Talks

The Associated Press ("CHINA INVITES TAIWAN ENVOY FOR TALKS ON RESUMING DIALOGUE," Taipei, 01/15/99) reported that Jan Jyh-horng, deputy secretary general of Taiwan's semiofficial Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), said Friday that the PRC has invited a middle ranking Taiwanese official to Beijing for talks. Jan said that Taiwan is "looking into the invitation further," but would prefer to host a PRC official to prepare for a planned visit by top PRC negotiator Wang Daohan to Taiwan later this year. Jan stated, "Their side could come and have a look around to prepare for (Wang's) visit." Jan also expressed "regret" over a decision by Yang Shaoming, a deputy secretary general of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, to cancel a visit to SEF offices in Taipei. Yang is on a low key, informal visit to Taiwan this week. Meanwhile, PRC Vice Premier Qian Qichen said Friday that Taiwan and Macao will be able to have unofficial contacts after the Portuguese colony's handover to the PRC on December 20, but official exchanges will need government approval. He added that Taiwan also will be able to keep its representative office in Macao. The policies are similar to those governing contacts between Taiwan and Hong Kong.

4. PRC Views of Theater Missile Defense

Reuters ("CHINA MEDIA BLAST U.S. DEMANDS ON NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 01/15/99) reported that the PRC's official Xinhua news agency in a signed commentary on Friday criticized Japan's announced plans to cooperate with the US to develop an anti-missile defense system. It stated, "According to the logic, the United States seems to be the only country in the world allowed to launch rockets and satellites." It accused Japan and the US of clinging to an "outmoded Cold War mentality."

The South China Morning Post ("MISSILE PROJECT POSES NO THREAT SAYS BEIJING," 01/15/99)

reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen said Thursday that a joint project between the US and Japan to develop a theater missile defense (TMD) system is no threat to the PRC. Cohen stated, "Japanese and American people have an obligation to provide protection for their troops and for their population in the region against what, in theory, is an increasing threat from missile proliferation." He added, "TMD in no way poses a threat to the Chinese, so I can't accept the characterization as being reckless or irresponsible."

5. US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines

The Los Angeles Times (Valerie Reitman, "COHEN URGES JAPAN TO RATIFY GUIDELINES FOR MILITARY AID," Tokyo, 01/15/99) reported that US Defense Secretary William S. Cohen urged Japanese leaders on Thursday to push forward legislation to implement the new US-Japan defense cooperation guidelines. John Neuffer, a political analyst at Mitsui Marine Research Institute, a Tokyo think tank, said that the DPRK's rocket launch last August "played a big role. It became very clear that [the Japanese] had to get those guidelines through. They didn't want to be stuck with legislation to implement guidelines with a crisis breaking out on the Korean peninsula." He added, "U.S. government officials want as many [Japanese political] parties signing on to the guidelines as possible. They don't want grudging approval. They want it to look like a strong mandate to move forward." Meanwhile, Ichiro Ozawa, leader of the Liberal Party, which just formed a coalition with the ruling Liberal Democrats, said Thursday that Japan should provide assistance only when "our country's situation affects our peace and safety."

6. Russian Nuclear Agency

The Associated Press ("RUSSIA TO CREATE NUCLEAR AGENCY," Moscow, 01/15/99) reported that Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev said Wednesday that Russia is planning to create a joint command this year to oversee its nuclear forces. Sergeyev stated, "Unless a more efficient combat control system is created, our missiles, no matter how many we have, will be decorative." ITAR-Tass news agency said that the proposed joint command would control Russia's Strategic Missile Forces and the nuclear components of the air force and navy.

7. Y2K Bug

Reuters (Sue Pleming, "PENTAGON CONFIDENT ON Y2K, WORRIES ABOUT RUSSIA," Washington, 12/14/99) reported that US Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre said that the Defense Department's nuclear systems would not be effected by computer errors caused by the Y2K problem. Hamre said that 1,673 out of the military's 2,300 "mission-critical" systems had been fixed and all of them would be ready by midnight on December 31. He stated, "The Department of Defense will be able to protect the people of the United States and its allies in 351 days and 12 hours. There is not a question about that." However, he voiced some concern that Russia was not as active in tackling the Y2K problem as the US, especially for early warning systems. He stated, "My sense is that Russia is not as fully aware of the extent that this is a problem. They don't seem to have the same level of urgency that we have over it. But we are comfortable they will retain positive control over their nuclear inventory." He added, "We are not anxious there are going to be accidental occurrences as a result of Y2K for nuclear command and control systems. But we want to have the least amount of uncertainty."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting

Chosun Ilbo ("US-ROK BEEF UP JOINT DEFENSE ON PENINSULA," Seoul, 01/15/99) reported that the US and ROK governments have agreed to beef up their joint defense posture by placing the ROK under the protection of the superpower's nuclear umbrella should the DPRK wage war using weapons of mass destruction. Chun Yong-taek, the ROK Defense minister, and his US counterpart William Cohen made this announcement on Friday, following talks at the 30th annual ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting. The two governments will urge the DPRK to allow a thorough on-site inspection of underground facilities at Kumchang-ri, which is suspected of being a nuclear weapons development facility. They have also agreed, in principle, to expand the missile range of ROK Army weapons to 300 km, up from the current 180-km range. Cohen said that the ROK and US governments have evidence which contributes to, but does not necessarily confirm, the suspicion that the DPRK has breached the terms of the 1984 Geneva Nuclear Accord. He said that the position of the US is to support the continuation of the four-party peace talks on the Korean peninsula and pledged that his government would not contact the DPRK directly without the knowledge of ROK.

2. ROK-US Joint Psychological Warfare Unit

JoongAng Ilbo ("PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE TEAM TO OPERATE IN WARTIME," Seoul, 01/14/99) reported that in the event of war in the Korean Peninsula, a joint ROK-US psychological-warfare unit will swing into operations to seduce DPRK citizens into forming a free and democratic political structure. Kim Jin-ho, the ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his US partner General Henry H. Shelton, during their annual Military Committee Meeting on January 14, signed an accord between the two countries in Seoul. The new Combined Psychological Operations Task Force will be basically inactive during ordinary times, but if war is imminent, the ROK-US Combined Forces Command will form a team of experts well-versed in psychological tactics under the leadership of an ROK general-level officer to inform DPRK citizens about the free world.

3. US-DPRK Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("DPRK TALKS UPCOMING IN GENEVA," Seoul, 01/15/99) reported that the third meeting between the US and the DPRK to discuss the suspected underground nuclear weapons facilities at Kumchangri in the DPRK will be held in Geneva. The two parties will meet twice, on January 16-17 and January 23-24. Between these two talks, the fourth main session of the four-party talks for peace on the Korean peninsula will take place on January 19-22, also in Geneva. It is known that the US may propose humanitarian aid to the DPRK as well as, to a certain extent, an easing of US economic sanctions, if the DPRK agrees to allow access to the underground facilities.

4. Mount Kumgang Tourism Project

Chosun Ilbo ("MOUNT KUMGANG PROJECT FINALLY APPROVED," Seoul, 01/15/99) reported that the ROK government approved Hyundai Business Group's Mt. Kumgang tourism development project on Friday. Government approval will allow Hyundai to send the first installment of US$25 million to the DPRK, less the US$2.87 million already paid out. Hyundai said it expects to remit the payment soon. Hyundai agreed to pay the DPRK a total of US$942 million for six years and three months until early 2005 in monthly installments for exclusive 30-year use. The group expects to receive a written guarantee from the DPRK's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee at the end of January for

their exclusive right to develop resort facilities, hot springs, and performance halls for more than 30 years. According to Hyundai's master plan to develop the Mt. Kumgang area, including Naekumgang (the inner Mt. Kumgang area), as well as the Tongchun area and Sijoong Lake, the ROK's largest chaebol plans to invest US$400 million by the end of 2000 to construct ski and hot spring resorts, golf courses, hotels and condominiums, and other facilities.

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 in partnership with:
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