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II. Republic of Korea

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I. United States

1. DPRK-ROK Naval Confrontation

The Associated Press (Reid G. Miller, "S. KOREA SHIP SINKS NORTH VESSEL," Seoul, 06/15/99) and Reuters (Bill Tarrant, "S.KOREA SINKS N.KOREA GUNBOAT IN YELLOW SEA," Seoul, 06/15/99) reported that ROK and DPRK warships exchanged fire in the Yellow Sea. According to the ROK Defense Ministry spokesman Brigadier General Cha Young-koo, four DPRK patrol boats and three torpedo boats intruded into ROK waters early Tuesday and several of them began firing when an ROK patrol boat tried to ram DPRK ships. ROK warships returned fire, sinking one DPRK patrol boat and heavily damaging several others. Cha stated, "All responsibility lies on the North Korean side," claiming the ROK fired in self-defense. Hwang Dong-kyu, spokesman for the ROK Joint Chiefs

of Staff, said that seven ROK soldiers were slightly injured in the clash. The ROK has put its military on "DEFCON three" readiness, which is defined as "a serious situation...that could lead to deployment of North Korean military forces."

Reuters ("N KOREA SAYS ONE SHIP SUNK BY SOUTH," Tokyo, 06/15/99) reported that the DPRK on Tuesday demanded an immediate apology from the ROK. The DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) stated, "As we have already clarified, the reckless military provocations by the South Korean rulers are deliberate and planned ones aimed at driving the situation of the Korean peninsula to the brink of war. The South Korean rulers must immediately apologize for the serious consequences of their armed provocations." KCNA also said that ROK warships had bumped against DPRK naval vessels, fired at them and sunk one vessel in DPRK territorial waters.

The Associated Press (Anne Gearan, "U.S. PATROLS MONITOR KOREAN DISPUTE," Washington, 06/15/99) reported that additional US aircraft are patrolling the Yellow Sea. The US administration expressed concern about the situation, but US officials said the tense standoff appears to have eased. Mike Hammer, spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said that DPRK ships pulled back from disputed territory and headed back to the DPRK. Hammer stated, "We have been in close contact with the South Korean government and are reaching out to the North Korean government to make clear that they need to stay north of the limit line." P.J. Crowley, a spokesman for the US National Security Council, stated, "From my understanding, this is an annual situation. North Korea has, in the past, attempted to bring vessels down to these waters. In the past, when they've been warned off by South Korean vessels, they've turned around and returned to North Korea. This year, for some reason, they have not."

[Ed. note: The Northern Limit Line (NLL) is not included in the 1953 Armistice Agreement. It was established unilaterally by the UN Command in 1953 as a buffer zone between the DPRK mainland and ROK-controlled islands. Parts of the line fall within 12 nautical miles of the DPRK mainland. US and ROK military sources said that, in previous years, DPRK fishing boats frequently crossed the NLL during crab-fishing season, but turned around when confronted by ROK patrol boats. The sources also said that this is the first time that DPRK naval patrols have been deployed south of DPRK fishing vessels.]

2. DPRK-UNC Talks

Reuters (Robin Bulman, "NKOREA, UN TALKS END WITH NO AGREEMENT ON STANDOFF," Seoul, 06/15/99) and the Associated Press ("U.S. TAKES INTEREST KOREAN DISPUTE," Washington, 06/15/99) reported that, according to a statement issued by the United Nations Command (UNC), talks between the DPRK and the UNC ended on Tuesday without any agreement. The statement said that the UNC generals urged both Koreas to withdraw their naval forces from the area, but the negotiators "were unable to reach agreement on the issue of reducing tensions." The talks recessed while the DPRK officers conferred with their superiors in Pyongyang, and no date has been set for new talks. The UNC statement read, "The UNC stressed to the North Korean delegates that the Northern Limit Line has existed for many decades and both South and North Korea have acknowledged that a practical separation line exists in the waters off the east and west coasts of the Korean peninsula." An unnamed ROK Defense Ministry official said that the DPRK delegation came to the talks with detailed information about the fighting, suggesting that the incident had been planned. According to the official, the DPRK delegation caught the UN delegation off guard by making detailed charges, and a US general had to telephone the Seoul government to verify the details.

Reuters ("N.KOREA SAYS STARTS UN TALKS ON NAVAL STANDOFF," Seoul, 06/15/99) reported

that DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency reported on Tuesday that talks on the naval standoff between the two Koreas had begun with the United Nations Command (UNC) in Panmunjom. KCNA stated, "General officers' talks are now going on at Panmunjom between representatives of the Korean People's Army and the U.S. Army. At the talks, the KPA side lodged strong protest with the U.S. military side against military provocations being committed by South Korean naval vessels in the north side's territorial waters off the west coast of Korea."

3. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Los Angeles Times (Sonni Efron, "S. KOREA SINKS NORTHERN BOAT IN GUN BATTLE," Seoul, 06/15/99) reported that the sinking of a DPRK patrol boat may affect the vice-ministerial level meeting between the two Koreas scheduled to be held in Beijing on June 21. Park Young-kyu, a researcher at the Korean Institute for National Unification in Seoul, said that the meeting will take place as planned. He added, "But because [at least] one boat was sunk today, they may demand to discuss this as the top agenda item. Then we'll know that they have no real intention to carry through." Lee So-hang, professor at the Institute for Foreign Affairs and National Security in Seoul, stated, "Maybe North Korea has been a little bit shamed [by the ramming], so they would like to test the attitude of the South Korean navy. It's just a confrontation on pride between the two sides." John Barry Kotch, adjunct professor at Hanyang University in Seoul, stated, "Now it looks like part of a concerted diplomatic effort to break out of the bilaterals scheduled in Beijing. It doesn't make any sense. It's irrational." Meanwhile, Radio Pyongyang, declared, "The People's navy, under the heroic leadership of Comrade Kim Jong-il, is destroying the South Korean navy in the Western Sea. This is the result of the more than 185 visits that our Dear Leader [Kim Jong-il] made to naval bases to instruct them."

Reuters (Bill Tarrant, "S.KOREA SINKS N.KOREA GUNBOAT IN YELLOW SEA," Seoul, 06/15/99) reported that ROK Presidential Press Secretary Park Joon-yung said that the ROK "will deal with the military provocation firmly and according to the rules, but policies toward North Korea should proceed consistently and continuously."

4. ROK Public Reaction to Naval Confrontation

Reuters (Hyewook Cheong, "SOUTH KOREANS SHRUG OFF NAVAL CLASH WITH NORTH," Seoul, 06/15/99) reported that ROK residents on Tuesday mostly expressed only minor concern with the confrontation in the Yellow Sea. Lee Won-joong, a pharmacist, said, "Things like this happen all the time, with or without us knowing." Kim Hyun-jung, a student, said "We've seen too many similar incidents, so we are kind of immune to them." However, Han Hae-yun, 36, said that the successful NATO air strikes in Kosovo had some effect on the Korean peninsula. Han said, "I am worried, since there is a war going on right now in a different part of the world. There is no telling that what's happening in Kosovo won't happen here."

5. PRC Reaction to the Naval Confrontation

The Associated Press ("CHINA EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN OVER KOREAN NAVAL CLASH," Beijing, 06/15/99) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue expressed concern on Tuesday over a naval clash between the two Koreas. Zhang stated, "China is deeply concerned about the confrontation. We hope that both sides will exercise restraint and not exacerbate the situation." Zhang added that the PRC has "always stood for the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula."

6. Japanese Reaction to the Naval Confrontation

Reuters ("JAPAN HOPES KOREA SHIP INCIDENT SETTLED PEACEFULLY," Tokyo, 06/15/99) reported that Japanese Foreign Ministry Deputy Press Secretary Masaki Okada said that he hoped that the current confrontation between the ROK and the DPRK in the Yellow Sea will be settled peacefully. Okada stated, "We welcome the talks now taking place at Panmunjom and hope this incident will be settled peacefully. We regret very much that this incident happened."

7. ROK-US Military Exercises

Pacific Stars And Stripes (Allison Perkins, "PILOTS PRACTICE PROTECTING SOUTH KOREA FROM ATTACK, Taegu, 06/16/99, 3) reported that US Air Force and Marine pilots will spend this week in flight to practice protecting the Korean peninsula against an attack from the DPRK. The Cope Jade exercise, held at least twice yearly, will combine squadrons from the ROK and Japan. Lieutenant Colonel Darryl Roberson, commander of the 90th Fighter Squadron, stated, "This is our primary theater of operation. If we do something for real, this is where we'll be, so this training is more realistic." The three-day exercise, which was to begin on Tuesday, will allow the various units to work together in command and control maneuvers. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for June 15.]

8. Bombing of PRC Embassy

The Associated Press (Charles Hutzler, "U.S. SEEKS TO IMPROVE CHINA TIES," Beijing, 06/15/99) reported that US Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering lead a US delegation to Beijing to explain and apologize for the NATO bombing of the PRC Embassy in Belgrade. The delegation consists of experts from the US Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and other security and espionage agencies. Pickering will meet with PRC's Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan, and Deputy Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi on Wednesday. The PRC security officials obstructed media coverage, preventing foreign news crews from filming Pickering's arrival at a downtown hotel. PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue stated, "We've clearly demanded the U.S. conduct comprehensive, thorough, just and responsible investigations on the incident and punish the perpetrators." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for June 15.]

The New York Times carried an editorial ("BACK TO BASICS WITH CHINA," New York, 06/15/99) which argued that the US administration needs to give the PRC and the US people a fuller explanation of the events that led to the bombing of the PRC Embassy in Belgrade. The editorial read, "In an age of computer targeting and laser-guided bombs, mistakes this egregious should not happen. Washington must also fairly compensate the families of the three PRC victims." The editorial also urged the PRC government to resume discussions with the US and give Pickering a "fair hearing."

Hong Kong Standard (Philip Cunningham, "PROBE SHOWS BOMBING NO ACCIDENT," 6/14/99) reported that Ezra Vogel, Director of the Asia Center at Harvard University and a former senior intelligence official in the US Clinton administration, said that the NATO bombing of the PRC embassy in Belgrade was not an accident. Vogel said that there was an official cover-up of the incident. He also said that there was a bureaucratic battle within the US government over where to assign blame, with the White House and the State Department prevailing over the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency to obtain data for a yet-unreleased official report. Vogel predicted that blame would be assigned to lower-ranking people, "unlike the PRC and

Japan where the person at the top steps down." Vogel pointed out that the "security side of the embassy was precisely hit," and the PRC embassy, "like all major embassies, has a lot of electronic equipment." Vogel noted that the Chinese people's anger, while enhanced by PRC government manipulation of the media, was real, and also said that the US President Clinton's first apology was misunderstood as insincere in part because of the casual clothes he was wearing at the time. Vogel concluded that it was "probably the military who did it," perhaps responding to a hot spot without confirming the identity of the building. Yoichi Shimatsu, a US reporter from the Japan Times who is now a media fellow in residence at the University of Hong Kong, quoted a spokesperson at the US National Imaging and Mapping Agency (NIMA) as saying that "the Chinese embassy was correctly marked on our map." Wang Jianmin, a staff writer for Yazhou Zhoukan, quoted a Belgrade resident whose home is a quarter of a mile down the street from the Chinese Embassy as saying that "the embassy was hit twice, the first attack with two missiles, the second with one. The second attack came after the news of the embassy being hit was broadcast on Yugoslav media including radio stations and various TV channels."

9. Alleged PRC Espionage

The New York Times (David Johnston, "SUSPECT IN LOSS OF NUCLEAR SECRETS UNLIKELY TO FACE SPYING CHARGES," Washington, 06/15/99) reported that US Federal authorities said that it is likely that Wen Ho Lee, who was suspect of the alleged PRC espionage, will not face criminal charges of espionage. Mark Holsher, who is Lee's lawyer, said, " Lee has been unfairly injected into a politically charged debate over America-China relations and has been subject to improper leaks in violation of Federal law."

10. US Missile Defense

The Washington Times carried a commentary (James Hackett, "WHAT THE THAAD HIT MEANS," 06/15/99, Pg. 18) which argued that the US military's Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system is important because it will give US forces and US allies an upper-level defense. Hackett wrote, "Within the past year India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran have tested longer-range missiles of the type against which THAAD is most effective. China is deploying hundreds of medium-range missiles opposite Taiwan, and just last week Chinese defense officials said they were preparing to test their new JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missile." Hackett also noted that both land-based and sea-based ballistic missile defenses are needed as soon as possible to face the longer-range missiles "now in the hands of potential adversaries." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for June 15.]

11. Pakistan-India Kashmir Dispute

The Associated Press (Hema Shukla, "INDIA REJECTS NEW PAKISTAN TALKS," Dras, India, 06/15/99), and International Herald Tribune ("INDIAN LEADER VOWS NO TALKS WITH PAKISTAN BEFORE PULLOUT," New Delhi, 06/15/99) reported that Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said on Monday that India was willing to hold talks with Pakistan only if Pakistan stopped violating the Line of Control in Kashmir. Pakistan, however, accused India closing all doors to negotiations to end the crisis and said it would continue its peace efforts. A Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman stated, "The Indians have closed all doors for dialogue. Pakistan will keep the door for dialogue open."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Naval Skirmish

Joongang Ilbo (Shim Shang-bok, "SOUTH AND NORTH KOREAN WARSHIPS EXCHANGE GUNFIRE," Seoul, 06/15/99) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry said that DPRK and ROK warships exchanged gunfire at 9:25 am on Tuesday in contested waters of the Yellow Sea only minutes before talks began to end the standoff. One DPRK ship was hit and was sinking. The gunfire lasted ten minutes. Colonel Hwang Dong-kyu, spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that three DPRK ships shot first and their fire was returned by at least some of the eight ROK ships patrolling the area. "Of the three North Korean ships, the other two returned to North Korean waters," Hwang said. One ROK ship was hit by the DPRK's fire, but no casualties were reported. It was unclear whether there were any casualties aboard the DPRK ships.

2. ROK Government's Dissatisfaction with Media

The Korea Herald (Chon Shi-yong, "PRESIDENT, AIDES DISGRUNTLED BY MEDIA'S HANDLING OF SCANDALS, WEST SEA STANDOFF," Seoul, 06/15/99) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung and his aides criticized what they said was slanted media coverage of the DPRK-ROK standoff in the West Sea. They said that the media were engaged in sensationalism and made unwarranted criticism of the government when reporting Kim's "sunshine policy" of engaging DPRK in the wake of the naval incident. In the face of the media criticism, the President's chief spokesman, Park Joon-young, challenged the media for prejudice. Park especially criticized the Joongang Ilbo for handling the security issue from a "partisan" perspective. Joongang has lately been increasing its criticism of the Kim government. It is rare for a Chong Wa Dae spokesman to publicly mention the name of a specific news organization in expressing dissatisfaction with media reports. Park noted that Joongang said there was a rumor about the death of a DPRK soldier in the incident, and that the report is likely to prompt a dispute at the military talks between the UN Command and the DPRK, which were scheduled for Tuesday at Panmunjom. The spokesman urged the media to be careful when reporting security issues.

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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