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I. United States

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1. DPRK Underground Construction

US State Department Spokesman James P. Rubin ("STATE 11/18 ON N. KOREA TALKS ON UNDERGROUND CONSTRUCTION," Washington, USIA Text, 11/18/98) released the following statement: "A U.S. delegation led by U.S. Special Envoy for the Korean Peace Talks, Ambassador Charles Kartman, met in Pyongyang November 16 through 18 with DPRK officials to discuss serious U.S. concerns about suspect underground construction in North Korea. The DPRK delegation was headed by Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan. During the two days of intensive discussions, the U.S. laid out our serious concerns about construction activities in Kumchangni, North Korea and reasserted the need for access to the site and other steps necessary to resolve our concerns. Although we worked to resolve our concerns, we were not satisfied with the response we received. We agreed to meet again as soon as possible. We will settle the details, including venue, through the New York channel."

US State Department Spokesman James P. Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, NOVEMBER 18, 1998," USIA Transcript, 11/18/98) said that the US was not surprised by the DPRK's denial that its underground site is producing nuclear weapons. He stated, "The goal of these

discussions was to firmly impress on the North Korean side the gravity of this issue and through the Foreign Ministry officials to the North Korean leadership, the gravity of this issue. We pressed hard for clarification of the nature of the site at Kumchangni, and we supplied our ideas on how the North Koreans could resolve our concerns, including the necessity of access to the site." He added, "This is an ongoing process. There was no expectation that we were going to resolve it right away.... We hope and expect the North Koreans will reflect on that message, and we'd obviously like to have a follow-on meeting quickly because of the importance we attach to this matter." Rubin emphasized, "we've said before that failure to resolve our concerns will affect the viability of the Agreed Framework because of the seriousness with which we regard the suspicions we have on this underground facility." He said that the US "flatly rejected" the DPRK's demand for compensation for access to the site. Rubin said that the discussions took place over two days at the DPRK Foreign Ministry, "and they were all on this subject."

The San Jose Mercury News (Richard Parker and Michael Zielenziger, "U.S. SAYS NORTH KOREA IS BUILDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS FACILITY," 11/17/98) reported that US intelligence analysts believe that the DPRK's underground construction site north of Pyongyang is intended to house a reactor to make weapons-grade plutonium. An anonymous US official familiar with Korea stated, "There is no doubt that this site is being constructed for a nuclear weapon." He added that there may be more than the one construction site. He pointed to the lack of any evidence that an electrical grid is being constructed near the site, arguing that without electricity, the site cannot be a food-storage facility, a munitions plant, a missile site or even a chemical weapons plant. Whatever is built there must therefore produce its own electricity. An unnamed senior defense official said that analysts believe that the DPRK intend to put a Chernobyl-style graphite-uranium reactor in the underground excavation, adding that intelligence agencies had "virtually eliminated" any other explanations. He said that the DPRK does not appear as yet to have moved reactor parts into the new underground site or dismantled the one at Yongbyon. He stated, "They have nothing that I know of to negotiate with now, except threats. It's almost like dealing with an armed hostage-taker." The article said that unnamed US officials are talking about cutting off all aid to the DPRK because of the site. Former US Ambassador to the ROK James Laney stated, "We must find some way of resolving this unsatisfactory situation. It is no longer just the North and South. We're talking about the whole region now." He added, "There's a growing sense of skepticism about the North's intentions. For a long time, we assumed that time was on the side of the South and the United States. (The missile launch) shattered that complacency, and the discovery of these underground sites raised very serious concerns about whether the North was playing a game with the rest of the world." Admiral Joseph Preuher, commander-in-chief in the Pacific, said that the US has beefed up its defenses and aerial surveillance in response to the DPRK actions. He stated, "We feel like we have a little more warning time, maybe a couple of days." Unnamed US intelligence officials said that the DPRK's army is suffering from severe shortages of fuel, food, and spare parts. The officials believe that the DPRK's army will cease to be a serious offensive threat in five years. They said that an underground plutonium facility could be ready to produce nuclear weapons in two to five years.

Reuters ("CLINTON CONCERNED OVER N.KOREAN NUCLEAR ACTIVITY," Washington, 11/18/98) reported that US President Clinton said Wednesday that he was concerned about activity in the DPRK which he said left doubts about its commitment to the 1994 Agreed Framework. Clinton stated, "If Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have dominated recent headlines we must be no less concerned by North Korea's weapons activities." He said that those activities included the DPRK's "provocative missiles program and developments that could call into question its commitment to freeze and dismantle its nuclear weapons effort." Clinton said his trip to Japan and the ROK would "give us an opportunity to address this critical issue, where China has also played a very constructive role." He added that part of his mission to the ROK was to "ensure that our forces are strong and vigilant."

The Associated Press ("U.S. PUSHES N.KOREA FOR SITE ACCESS," Washington, 11/17/98) and Reuters ("U.S. PRESSES NORTH KOREA FOR ACCESS TO SITE," Washington, 11/17/98) reported that US Representative Tony Hall, D-Ohio, said that he had briefly discussed the underground site with DPRK officials during his recent trip there, but they were not particularly forthcoming. Hall stated, "Several tunnels are there, no question about it." He added that one DPRK official called the controversy "a headache issue" for the DPRK. Hall said that the officials he talked to were committed to the four-party peace talks process and did not want to see them break down. He added, however, "if they are making nuclear materials, it would destroy the framework talks."

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2. Bill Clinton's Asia Trip

Reuters (Brian Williams, "CLINTON'S JAPAN VISIT TO LOOK AT ECONOMY, SECURITY," Tokyo, 11/18/98) reported that US President Bill Clinton left Washington for Japan Wednesday and was scheduled to arrive Thursday. Clinton is on a five-day trip that will take him to Japan, the ROK, and the US territory of Guam before he returns to Washington late Monday. He will be accompanied by National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, and White House economic adviser Gene Sperling. Before meeting Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, Clinton will be briefed by his DPRK envoy Charles Kartman. Clinton was expected to use the DPRK situation to push Obuchi to swiftly pass legislation that would allow Japan to take measures such as enforcing naval blockades and minesweeping operations in the event of emergencies around Japan.

Reuters ("OBUCHI TO DISCUSS RUSSIA, JAPAN [sic] WITH CLINTON," Kuala Lumpur, 11/18/98) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi said on Wednesday that he wanted to discuss Russia and Korea during US President Bill Clinton's visit to Tokyo this week. Obuchi stated, "I'd like to discuss such issues concerning Russia, which I have just visited, as well as issues on the Korean peninsula."

Reuters (Teruaki Ueno, "CLINTON'S JAPAN VISIT TO BOOST DEFENCE TIES/RPT," Tokyo, 11/18/98) reported that Japanese defense experts and officials said that US President Bill Clinton's visit to Japan this week is likely to help forge the strongest-ever military ties between Japan and the US. [Akio Watanabe](#), professor of international politics at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo, stated, "Since the two countries agreed on new defense cooperation guidelines last year, the military alliance is moving towards a new, stronger level. President Clinton's visit will serve as a springboard to that end." In addition to the defense guidelines, Japanese government sources said that Japan wants to see whether the US will support a Japanese plan to build and launch spy satellites. One unnamed government source said, "We have two options. One is to develop satellites on our own and the other is to buy satellites from the United States or jointly develop satellites." He added, "President Clinton may press Japan to buy U.S. satellites so that the U.S. space industry will benefit from it." Defense expert Kazuhisa Ogawa said that Japanese involvement in the Theater Missile Defense program will also be an issue for discussion during the talks. Ogawa stated, "Joining in the TMD project would mean that Japan would be incorporated permanently into the global missile and nuclear strategy of the United States."

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3. DPRK Tourism Project

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "FAMILIES EXCITED ABOUT N.KOREA TOUR," Donghae, 11/18/98) and Reuters (Hong Ki-soo, "S. KOREANS BRAVE FREEZE TO VISIT N. KOREAN MOUNTAIN," Donghae, 11/18/98) reported that a cruise ship carrying ROK tourists to the DPRK's

Mt. Kumgang departed on Wednesday for a five-day, four-night tour. ROK tourists are forbidden from holding reunions with separated relatives in the DPRK, photographing or talking to DPRK citizens, straying from the group, or acts or remarks critical of the DPRK's human rights or social and political systems. Sohn In-sup, an ROK government instructor, said during a recent orientation, "Don't think ever that family reunion will be possible. If you do anything to provoke North Koreans, that will jeopardize the whole tour project." Sohn added, "Extra precaution is needed, because North Koreans are doing this reluctantly to earn badly needed foreign currency." He pointed out that the US\$906 million that Hyundai has agreed to pay the DPRK over the next six years for the right to operate the tours "is a little more than the North's 1997 total export volume of \$730 million and will certainly be a huge plus for its dilapidated national coffer."

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4. DPRK Famine

The Associated Press (Geir Moulson, "U.N.: KOREAN KIDS MALNOURISHED," Geneva, 11/18/98) reported that UN experts said Wednesday that two-thirds of DPRK children under age seven suffer from malnourishment. A survey carried out in September and October by eighteen teams, each headed by a foreign official from the World Food Program (WFP), the UN Children's Fund, or the European Union, also showed that 16 percent of children in the DPRK are acutely malnourished, with a body weight too low for their height. That figure is exceeded in Asia only by Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka. The officials measured the weight and height of 1,800 DPRK children from infants up to age seven in homes randomly selected in areas where aid agencies have access. UNICEF official Kirsi Madi said that it was the first "technically sound survey" of the problem. 30 percent of toddlers aged one to two were acutely malnourished. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, WFP director for the region, said that at that age, "malnutrition can permanently impair physical and intellectual growth." Children in the DPRK's three largest cities -- Pyongyang, Wonsan, and Nampo -- were better off than their counterparts elsewhere, with 11 percent acutely malnourished. Boys were almost twice as badly affected as girls.

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5. Asian Financial Crisis

Dow Jones Newswires (Peter Wonacott, "S KOREA SAYS OPEN MKTS, DEMOCRACY WAY OUT OF CRISIS," Kuala Lumpur, 11/18/98) reported that Han Duck-soo, ROK minister of state for trade at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that ROK officials told other Asian leaders at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum that free markets and democracy are the best way out of current economic problems. Han stated, "Capital controls are harmful for the development of the country. Trade protectionism must not be allowed to raise its head." In a speech Monday, ROK President Kim Dae-jung said, "Our success in overcoming the present crisis will hinge on our determination to reform and open up to the world with the aim of achieving a truly free market system." He added, "We Koreans are going all out to reform and open our markets. We are doing this under the guiding principle of the parallel development of democracy and a market economy."

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6. US-PRC Relations

The Los Angeles Times (Jim Mann, "JIANG TO U.S.: BACK OFF ON TAIWAN, TIBET," Kuala Lumpur, 11/17/98) reported that US officials said that PRC President Jiang Zemin protested to US Vice President Al Gore on Monday that the Clinton administration has been displaying too much support

for both Taiwan's Nationalist government and the Dalai Lama, the exiled leader of Tibet. An unnamed US official said that Jiang discussed the issues at length during a two-hour meeting with Gore. He stated, "Jiang went off for about 40 minutes on these two subjects. It was a very lengthy discourse, a monologue on both issues." A senior US official said that Jiang gave "a very calm, measured statement ... of China's fundamental views about both Taiwan and Tibet. There was no hot rhetoric." PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao later said that the talks between Jiang and Gore were "positive and fruitful," although he confirmed that Jiang had spoken to Gore about the two "major issues" of Taiwan and Tibet.

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7. Nuclear Test Detection Facility

The Associated Press ("MALAYSIA TO BUILD NUCLEAR TEST DETECTION FACILITY - OFFICIAL," Kuala Lumpur, 11/18/98) reported that Wolfgang Hoffman, executive secretary of the Vienna-based Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, said Wednesday that Malaysia is planning to build a US\$250,000 facility as part of a global effort to detect nuclear weapons tests. Hoffman said that the facility would detect radioactive trace elements released after a nuclear explosion. He stated, "It's a great step toward controlling nuclear buildup. We trust each other, but we also want to be sure." He said that Malaysia is an ideal location to establish the nuclear test detection station because it's located at the confluence of global wind currents that carry trace elements from nuclear tests.

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8. Soviet Missile Development

The Associated Press ("REPORT: RUSSIA USED DUMMY MISSILES," Moscow, 11/17/98) reported that the Russian magazine Vlast (Power) said on Tuesday that many of the strategic missiles displayed in Red Square parades during the Soviet era were only dummies. One such fake - GR-1, an acronym for Global Missile - showed during a May 9, 1965, parade prompted the US to build an anti-missile defense system costing billions of dollars. In fact, the Soviet Union had abandoned the GR-1 project long before the parade. It added that another two mobile ballistic missiles shown on the same day were also fakes, their test launches having been a complete failure. The article stated, "Foreign military attaches were scared to death, triggering panic in NATO headquarters. A huge international uproar followed, and only those who prepared this demonstration knew they were dummies." The magazine said that when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev said that the Soviet Union was making missiles "like sausage," the Soviets only had four intercontinental ballistic missiles. It added, "The myth about the Soviet missile superiority was convenient for both the Soviet leadership and the American military industrial complex, which was getting huge contracts." The article said that the Soviet Union did not reach parity with the US in land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles until 1970, and overall nuclear balance was attained only shortly before the 1991 Soviet collapse.

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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