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Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network
DAILY REPORT
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I. United States

1. DPRK Rhetorical Attacks

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA STEPS UP WAR OF WORDS ON SOUTH," Tokyo, 6/19/97) and the Associated Press ("TENSIONS LIKE EVE OF KOREAN WAR," Tokyo, 6/18/97) reported that the DPRK on Thursday stepped up its war of words against the ROK. The DPRK's Rodong Shinmun newspaper, an outlet for the DPRK's ruling party, said in a commentary carried on state-run Radio Pyongyang and monitored by Japan's Radiopress news agency that the ROK's recent amphibious war games were clearly directed against the DPRK and were raising tensions to a level similar to the eve of the Korean War. "This war exercise by the puppets is clearly a kind of declaration of war and can never be tolerated," the commentary said. "In the last decade or so, South Korea has camouflaged invasion exercises as 'defensive maneuvers'," it said. "But this time, the Kim Young-sam group openly declared that this was a war exercise to land on the beaches of our republic," the commentary said. "Because of their actions, today in our country a delicate situation like the night before June 25, 1950, has been created." The Rodong Shinmun added: "If the puppets and their American imperialist masters provoke an aggressive war, our people and the People's Army will reply with a hundred-fold, thousand-fold defeat against them." The commentary also said the DPRK was prepared to mobilize "dormant power" built up over the past several decades if the ROK and the US failed to heed its warnings. Thursday's commentary followed a warning from a DPRK military spokesman Wednesday that the country's armed forces were ready for a "final battle" with the US and the ROK. [Ed. note: see following item.] DPRK-watchers in Japan and the ROK have said Pyongyang's tough words are part of a long-term brinkmanship strategy aimed at securing closer ties with the US and raising the DPRK's international profile at the expense of the ROK.

Reuters ("N.KOREA ISSUES STERN WARNING TO U.S., S.KOREA," Tokyo, 6/18/97) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday warned it was ready for a "final battle" with the US and the ROK. The

threat was issued in a rare public statement by a military spokesman, and used language that was strong even by the standards of the DPRK's daily anti-ROK propaganda, analysts said. "At this moment when dark clouds of war are rushing toward our motherland and fighting is about to break out, our revolutionary armed forces cannot remain an onlooker to the situation," the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted the military spokesman as saying. "If the enemies try to test our will and military strength despite our repeated warnings, our people's army will mobilize all potentials consolidated for scores of years and give vent to our people's pent-up grudges and wrath," said the spokesman. The spokesman said recent ROK military amphibious landing exercises on islands near the DPRK, and other US exercises, showed that Seoul and Washington were set to strike while the DPRK was weak. "The enemies are thought to believe it is high time they made a forestalling attack since (the DPRK) is temporarily suffering from repeated natural disasters and numerous soldiers of its armed forces are engaged in farming," KCNA quoted the spokesman as saying. Subsequently, the ROK Defense Ministry denied stepping up military exercises, and ROK officials instead accused the DPRK of trying to justify its huge military spending by whipping up war threats.

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JUNE 18," USIA Transcript, 6/18/97), in response to a question concerning increasingly harsh DPRK commentaries, stated, "It is always best not to respond every time there is bellicose language from Pyongyang, because then we'd have to have press briefings for six or seven hours a day." Burns continued, "I would just prefer to say that President Clinton and President Kim have their hand outstretched for peace with North Korea in the guise of the four-party talks. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the North Koreans accepted the offer of the United States and South Korea?"

2. US Assessment of Four-Party Peace Talks Prospects

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JUNE 16," USIA Transcript, 6/16/97), commented Monday on the prospects for DPRK agreement to join the proposed four-party peace talks proposal. Burns stated, "We continue to hope that North Korea will accept our invitation to participate in the four-party talks, but we have no agreement yet by North Korea that it will do so. This is a big -- a very large, important objective of American policy in Asia and we hope to realize it, but we have been down the road enough times or almost to the altar enough times with the North Koreans to understand that you do not want to say your vows until you actually get to the altar and we're not there yet. I do not know if we are even walking in the church yet. I'm not sure where we are. We are probably thinking about the church and we have it on the horizon, we've got our tuxedos on, but -- is this going to be understandable in translation into Korean? That is what I'm worried about." Burns then continued, "Forget about my matrimonial metaphors. Let's just say this. We have been down enough roads with the North Koreans and never gotten to the end of those roads to know that we'll have to take it one step at a time. We do not have an agreement yet. We hope to have an agreement. We will continue to work on it. We're working pretty hard on this right now. There are a lot of talks, but no progress yet that I can point to."

3. US Assessment of US-DPRK Missile Talks

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JUNE 16," USIA Transcript, 6/16/97), commented Monday on the results of the US-DPRK missile talks, which ended the previous Friday, reportedly with little progress toward resolving outstanding issues. Burns stated, "Those were useful and business-like talks in the lexicon of the State Department -- useful and businesslike." Asked what would then follow, Burns replied, "Well, hopefully more useful and more businesslike talks so that we can get better behavior from the North Koreans on proliferation issues. That is important. But we will continue to work very seriously with the North Koreans on all these issues." Asked if further missile talks were expected, Burns said, "I don't know that we have

agreed to any specific dates for new talks. But obviously, the United States wants to have regular talks with the North Koreans on the issue of missile proliferation, yes."

4. Cargill-DPRK Grain Deal

Reuters ("TRADERS SAY N.KOREA GRAIN DEAL DEFUNCT," Tokyo, 6/19/97) reported that Asian grain industry sources said on Thursday they understood that the zinc-for-wheat barter deal between the DPRK and Cargill Inc. had been called off, despite a claim from Pyongyang that talks were continuing. The sources said the US grains giant had already sold the 20,000-metric ton shipment of wheat that had originally been destined for DPRK to other buyers in Southeast Asia. Late on Wednesday, the DPRK denied it had called off the barter agreement and accused Cargill of spreading "groundless rumors." In comments carried by the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), a DPRK trade official said that the DPRK had not unilaterally pulled out of the deal, as Cargill had said. The official also said the deal was still under discussion, but one source in the Asian grain trade said that Pyongyang and Cargill were no longer holding talks on the barter deal.

5. DPRK Seen Counterfeiting US Dollars

The Associated Press ("REPORTS: N KOREAN COUNTERFEITING," Tokyo, 6/19/97) reported that a police spokesman in Toyama, on the central Japan coast, said that police are reportedly looking for a DPRK mastermind after breaking up a counterfeiting ring passing off fake US$100 bills in Japan. Six men suspected of circulating an undisclosed number of the fake bills were arrested Monday. North Koreans have frequently been implicated in counterfeiting US$100 bills, leading to suspicions that the scams may have support from the DPRK government. Late last year, a Japanese terrorist and several North Koreans were arrested in Cambodia for allegedly carrying counterfeit US dollars. At the time of their arrest, the suspects were riding in a DPRK diplomatic vehicle.

6. DPRK Famine Situation

The Associated Press ("RED CROSS WANTS AID FOR N. KOREA," Geneva, 6/19/97) reported that International Red Cross Secretary-General George Weber on Thursday issued an appeal by the organization for US$18.6 million to expand food aid to the DPRK. The additional money would bring food aid to 700,000 people, up from the 130,000 the Red Cross has been helping for 18 months, Weber said. "The expanded operation will allow a much greater number of people to receive adequate food rations until the next harvest in late October," Weber said. He added that the program would also include medicine, medical equipment and training to improve health care for 2.6 million people.

7. Analysts Assessment of US-PRC Relations

Zbigniew Brzezinski and Michel Oksenberg wrote an opinion article in The Washington Post ("THE CHINA DRIFT," C09, 6/15/97) in which they asserted that the PRC and the US "appear to be drifting into mutually damaging acrimony." Citing conversations with PRC President Jiang Zemin, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, and other foreign policy officials and specialists, the authors wrote that they are convinced that "Sino-American relations could be a -- perhaps the -- major bulwark for global and regional stability in the 21st century." Yet, they noted, in both the US and the PRC there are increasing tendencies to regard the other as a threat to long-term interests and as a potential adversary. The authors then argued, "In our view, there are no fundamental conflicts of interest, such as there were existed between the United States and the Soviet Union. Rather, the two sides have failed to develop a strategic framework to deepen areas of common interest and to manage disagreements." The authors continued, "Without a compelling common vision, the leaders on both sides lack the political will to make progress on vexing issues mired in their bureaucracies,"

including human rights, PRC entry into the World Trade Organization, PRC arms sales, the US trade deficit with the PRC, increasing US military collaboration with Japan, and the US position on developments in Taiwan. The authors asserted that in the area of national security, the opportunities for cooperation are particularly great. While arguing that the US bilateral security treaties with Japan and the ROK "provide stability for the entire Asia Pacific region," the authors noted that "many Chinese are beginning to view with alarm what they believe to be a US effort to extend Japan's military role in the region." To alleviate this concern, the authors concluded, "is reason to include China in post-Cold War security arrangements in Northeast Asia. Excluding the Chinese can only make them think these arrangements are directed against them. Sino-Japanese-American trilateral discussions should be held, military-to-military contacts increased and extensive discussions be discreetly held among Washington, Seoul and Beijing on Korea's post-reunification security arrangements." [Note: Zbigniew Brzezinski was national security adviser to US President Carter. Michel Oksenberg, a professor of political science at Stanford University, was in charge of the PRC on the National Security Council in the Carter administration. Both were in Beijing a week earlier.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

A preliminary session for the four-party peace talks may be held as early as next month. After working level negotiations on June 18, the two Koreas and the US reportedly came to a basic agreement to hold the proposed preliminary meeting "as early as possible." In addition, an agreement to include the PRC in the preliminary session was reached yesterday, according to a diplomatic source in Washington DC. Vice-ministerial level officials from the respective nations will participate in the preliminary venue. (Kyonghyang Shinmun, "POSITIVE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A PRELIMINARY SESSION FOR THE FOUR PARTY PEACE TALKS," 06/19/97)

2. ROK Air Force Inaugurates New Base

Sosan Air Force Base, the ROK Air Force's largest and most modern airbase, was officially commissioned yesterday. Among the senior military officials on hand at the ceremony were ROK Defense Minister Kim Dong-jin; General Yoon Yong-nam, Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Air Force Chief of Staff General Lee Kwang-hak. This new tactical wing, created last December, is primarily composed of F-16s whose main responsibilities include defending the western portion of the ROK. These fighter planes have a wide range of weapons and auxiliary systems superior to those of the MiG-29, the DPRK's latest fighter jet. One technical highlight of the ROK F-16s is the LANTIRN system, an auxiliary device that enables the fighter planes to stage precise night attacks. (Korea Times, "NEW ROK AIR FORCE BASE TO DEFEND WESTERN FLANK COMMISSIONED IN SOSAN," 06/19/97)

3. DPRK Acquires Agricultural Investment

The DPRK has recently authorized a Korean-American businessman to attract foreign investments to its agricultural sector and market farm products abroad, the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said yesterday. The quasi-governmental trade body said that the deal, estimated to be worth about US$250 million, directly involves Kim Yang-il, former chairman of a Korean merchant association in the US. According to the Ministry of National Unification, although Kim had acted as a middle-man in the past between the DPRK and other countries in international trade, this is the first time that a civilian has been awarded such authorization outside the Stalinist state. Kim, a self-employed businessman, will negotiate with individuals, companies, organizations, and governments to lure them to invest in over 100 government-run "cooperative farms." Such contracts will involve the lease of lands for cultivating products for overseas exports. KOTRA speculated that

the recent move is an attempt to jump-start the currently unproductive farms, as well as to acquire foreign currency through such ventures. (Korea Herald, "DPRK TO ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE," 06/19/97)

4. Assessment of DPRK Prospects

The Far Eastern Economic Review reported that the US is beginning to prepare emergency measures in anticipation of a possible coup d'etat in the DPRK. The report drew on a recent analysis by the US Department of Defense which estimates that the DPRK's industrial activities have dropped to one tenth of their level from 5 years ago, and notes that the collapse of the infrastructure has made it extremely difficult to transport food to the countryside. In the journal article, an anonymous Defense department official was quoted as saying that the possibility of the collapse of the DPRK has become more real than it was a year ago. In preparation, the US has developed three scenarios in the event that the DPRK cannot resolve its food crisis, and is studying potential counter measures, along with the ROK and Japan. The first scenario is that of a military coup which would lead to Kim Jong-il's assassination or exile, and a civil war. The second projects a complete collapse of the DPRK due to riots and mass defections. The third possibility would be an invasion of the ROK by the frustrated military. At the present time, officials believe that the first scenario is the most likely. (Chosun Ilbo, "POSSIBILITY OF COUP IN DPRK: HONG KONG MAGAZINE," 06/19/97)

III. Japan

1. Russia's Six-Party Peace Talks Proposal

The Sankei Shimbun ("RUSSIA MAY PROPOSE SIX-PARTY PEACE TALKS AT DENVER SUMMIT," Moscow, 5, 6/17/97) reported that the Russian Vice Foreign Minister told the Interfax News Agency on June 16 that Russia not only supports the four-party Korean peace talks proposal, but is also ready to propose six-party peace talks including Japan and Russia at the Denver Summit. According to the report, the Vice Foreign Minister said that the involvement of the original Korean War parties alone cannot ease the tension on the Korean Peninsula.

2. Japan's Food Aid Policy to DPRK

The Sankei Shimbun ("RULING PARTIES FAIL TO REACH AGREEMENT," 2, 6/15/97) reported that Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Policy Council Research Chairman Taku Yamazaki told reporters that, given the Foreign Ministry's reluctance to provide food aid to the DPRK, the inter-ruling party discussions on such aid have to be canceled. The Sankei Shimbun pointed out that Yamazaki himself has been wary about food aid because the DPRK remains stiff on humanitarian issues, and reluctant about the four-party peace proposal. The report also commented on the strong opposition to food aid to the DPRK among the LDP, which initially led Yamazaki to cancel the inter-ruling party talks on food aid to the DPRK.

3. Japan's Constitutional Interpretation on Collective Defense

The Sankei Shimbun ("HASHIMOTO ADMINISTRATION RESUMES TRADITIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETATION ON COLLECTIVE DEFENSE," 6/14/97) reported on Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda's comments on the ongoing review of Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines. At an Upper House meeting on June 13, he stated that the Hashimoto Administration will not change the traditional constitutional interpretation on collective defense and consider collective defense as unconstitutional. Ikeda also noted that though the constitution is open to change, the present administration will act under the present constitution.

4. Japan's Theater Missile Defense Policy

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN TO PARTIALLY JOIN US-LED TMD INITIATIVE," 1, 6/15/97) reported that Japan's Defense Agency has decided to participate in the development of lightweight exo-atmosphere projectiles (LEAP), one of the four core missile defense systems comprising the US-led theater missile defense (TMD) initiative. However, the Agency has also postponed a decision on whether to introduce the entire TMD system. Among the reasons cited for joining the LEAP project is the lack of progress in the development of the other three TMD systems: the Patriot system, the theater high altitude area defense (THAAD) system and the SM-2 Block IV A system. Although the Agency has already earmarked about 460 million yen to study the technical possibilities and cost-effectiveness of TMD, there are still technical uncertainties concerning THAAD missiles. According to Defense Agency sources, despite US estimates that the cost of Japan-US joint LEAP development would approach US$2 billion, expenditures on research in the next few years are not expected to be excessive.

IV. People's Republic of China

1. Statement of DPRK Defense Ministry

China Daily ("DPRK RAPS US-ROK `PLANNING FOR WAR'," Seoul, A11, 6/19/97) reported that on June 18, the DPRK defense ministry accused the US and ROK of secretly planning for war while outwardly seeking peace. In the unusually strong statement, the report said the DPRK's Ministry of the People's Armed Forces expressed doubts about the Korean peace talks being proposed by Washington and Seoul. In a statement carried by the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency, it was reported that "The enemies are outwardly calling for four-way talks for a lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and, behind the scenes, making war preparations in earnest." The DPRK defense ministry charged that the ROK, assisted by the US, recently conducted a series of military landing operations to prepare for war against DPRK. Officials accused the ROK and the US of believing "it is high time" for an attack to take advantage of the DPRK's natural disasters, and affirmed that the DPRK "will not hesitate to fight the final battle with the US and the South Korean authorities if they so earnestly wish to make a military showdown."

2. DPRK Leader's Troop Inspection

DPRK newspapers reported on June 12 that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il inspected a defense force on the western coast. During the June 10 inspection, Kim emphasized that the unit's tasks are very important, and demanded that the unit improve its combat capability by every means to make its defense area impregnable. People's Daily ("KIM DEMANDS TROOPS TO IMPROVE COMBAT CAPABILITY," Pyongyang, A3, 6/14/97)

3. PRC Food Aid to DPRK

With the last 10,000-ton shipment arriving on June 17 at the country's western seaport of Nampo, the PRC has completed the delivery of this year's 70,000-ton relief grain to the DPRK, Jie Fang Daily ("CHINA HAS COMPLETED DELIVERY OF RELIEF GRAIN," Nampo, DPRK, A4, 6/18/97) reported. It said the grain aid committed by the PRC Government on April 12 was comprised of 10,000 tons of rice and 60,000 tons of corn.

4. PRC-US Relations

At a news briefing in Beijing on June 17, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Cui Tiankai commented on the ongoing visit to the US of the Taiwanese foreign minister, John Chang. Cui said that the PRC

has made solemn petitions to the US over the issue to express the PRC's serious concern and dissatisfaction. "We have always been opposed to the US and Taiwan engaging in any form of official contact," the spokesman said. China Daily ("MOST TREATIES WILL BE HONORED," A1, 6/18/97)

PRC President Jiang Zemin met with former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Beijing on June 18. Jiang thanked Dr. Kissinger for his efforts to promote Sino-US relations. Mentioning that the PRC and the US have common interests, President Jiang expressed his hopes that Kissinger would continue his efforts to develop the improving Sino-US relationship. On the issue of Hong Kong, Jiang expressed his confidence in its stable transition, pointing out that the guarantee of long-term prosperity and stability in Hong Kong is in the interest of all countries, including the US. Jie Fang Daily ("PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG IN INTERESTS OF ALL COUNTRIES," Beijing, A1, 6/19/97)

5. Diaoyu Islands Disputes

PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Cui Tiankai said on June 16 that the PRC is indignant that Japanese right-wingers have again landed on the PRC's Diaoyu Islands. According to the spokesman, on June 11, three Japanese right-wingers landed on Beixiao Island, which is attached to the Diaoyu Islands. He said the PRC Foreign Ministry has appealed to the Japanese Government to respect the PRC's stance and honor its commitment by taking measures to prevent such events from happening again. Wen Hui Daily ("JAPANESE ON DIAOYU ISLANDS ROUSES AN INDIGNANT CHINA," Beijing, A1, 6/17/97)

6. Dalai Lama to Set Up an Office in Taiwan

On June 18, an official in charge of the Information Bureau of the Taiwan Affairs Office under the State Council of China commented on the plan by supporters of the Dalai Lama to set up an office in Taiwan. In an interview with Xinhua, the official said the Dalai Lama supporters are engaged in activities to split the motherland. The plan to set up an office in Taiwan, under the pretense of a non-official religious and cultural group, is actually aimed at establishing a stronghold there. If Taiwanese authorities assist the group in opening the office, the official said, it only aids the Dalai Lama's supporters to continue activities to divide the motherland, and will certainly be strongly opposed by the PRC people. People's Daily ("DALAI CLIQUE'S TAIWAN PLAN CRITICIZED," Beijing, A4, 6/19/97)

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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