

# NAPSNet Daily Report 20 November, 1997

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## I. United States

### 1. ROK-DPRK Relations

Reuters (Brian Williams, "FOCUS-S.KOREA MARKET MALADY CASTS CLOUD OVER NORTH," Tokyo, 11/20/97) reported that some observers worry that the ROK's economic problems could have a negative impact on peace negotiations with the DPRK. Noriyuki Suzuki, an analyst at Tokyo-based Radio Press, which monitors the DPRK's official media, said, "From the North's point of view, they must be contemplating how they can turn this situation to their advantage. I don't think there has been a case in the past where the North was confronted with dealing with an economically troubled South." Suzuki said that so far, however, the DPRK's official media has avoided mention of the ROK's financial turmoil. He added, "In the past, South Korea has always ignored the issue of rebuilding ties with the North in times of domestic crisis, and taken a more passive stance." Another unnamed analyst was quoted as saying, "You have North Korea pleading for food because of floods and South Korea pleading for dollars because of economic mismanagement. Reunification just took a giant step backwards." Nozomu Akizuki, a professor of politics at Tokyo's Meiji University, said, "I don't think North Korea will take any action over the South's economy, as an 'economy' doesn't exist in the North anyway, they won't understand what is truly happening in the South. But what could happen

is that the North may misinterpret the current economic crisis in the South and come up with weird ideas because of a vague image they get from the foreign press that South Korea is in a dangerous situation."

## **2. Global Land Mine Ban**

The Los Angeles Times ("U.S. URGED TO CHANGE MINES POSITION," Washington, 11/20/97) reported that Nobel Peace Prize laureate Jody Williams said Wednesday that the United States is isolating itself by not joining 100 other nations in a treaty to ban land mines. In a speech at the National Press Club, she said that retired American generals had concluded that air strikes and conventional tactics were sufficient to defend against any attack by the DPRK against the ROK. "The issue is the world has said these weapons are illegal," she argued.

## **3. Russian Missile Test**

Reuters ("NEW RUSSIAN MISSILE BLOWS UP ON TEST FIRING," Moscow, 11/20/97) reported that Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeev on Thursday was quoted by Interfax news agency as saying that a Russian ballistic missile blew up on Wednesday during a test firing from the Arkhangelsk region in the Far North. The agency said the multi-stage missile, which was apparently not armed, was of a new type destined for Russia's nuclear submarine fleet. Officials at the defense ministry and Arkhangelsk local authorities were not immediately able to confirm the report.

**4. Russian Portable Nuclear Devices** Agence France-Presse ("RUSSIAN NUCLEAR CONTROVERSY REVIVED," Moscow, 11/20/97) reported that Russia's Interfax news agency said that former Russian security chief Alexander Lebed renewed his claim Thursday that Russia has portable "nuclear briefcases." Lebed said the bombs, code-named RA-115 and RA-115-01, weighed about 66 pounds but had never been used. He said the devices need to be located and destroyed to prevent them falling into the hands of terrorists.

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. Four-Party Talks**

ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha said Wednesday that differences over agenda items would not cause the cancellation of the four-party peace talks, and he predicted a breakthrough in the forthcoming preliminary talks in New York. The four countries--the ROK, the DPRK, the US, and the PRC--are expected to hold the third round of preliminary talks in New York on Friday with assistant minister-level officials attending. DPRK delegate Kim Gye-gwan is expected to give a final answer as to whether to hold full-dress talks. Earlier, the ROK and the US told the DPRK that its attempts to discuss the withdrawal of US forces and a separate US-DPRK peace treaty in the four-party talks are totally unacceptable. (Korea Herald, "DIFFERENCES OVER AGENDA WON'T DITCH 4-PARTY TALKS: YOO," 11/20/97)

### **2. DHL Offices in DPRK**

Chonsunshinbo, a publication of Chochongnyon, a pro-DPRK organization of Korean residents in Japan, reported that the worldwide courier company DHL will set up two new offices in the DPRK, one in Kumho district of Shinpo, and the other in the Rajin-Sonbong free-trade zone. Hong Ui-woong, president of the DPRK Korea Foreign Transportation Corporation, made the announcement at the opening ceremony of the Pyongyang DHL office on November 5. (Korea Times, "DHL TO SET UP TWO EXTRA OFFICES IN NK," 11/20/97) [Ed. note: See "US Company Opens DPRK Office" in the US Section of the November 6 Daily Report.]

### 3. DPRK Import of Luxury Goods

The DPRK freighter Wasanho, which ran aground in Kyushu Japan on September 16, was found to have been trying to import Japanese luxury goods. The 2,425 ton vessel was to have unloaded rice stalks for cattle fodder and stones in Japan before its scheduled return to Nampo in the DPRK. A Japanese official in charge of the crew of the ship confirmed that they had requested the purchase of luxury goods and that, on searching their belongings, police found large amounts of US currency. The spokesman for the Fukada Salvage Company said that while he was preparing to salvage the ship, crew members approached him to buy fifty refrigerators and tires for passenger cars. The destination of the goods was not confirmed, but experts say that they are the type used only by special groups in the DPRK and guess that they were destined for Kim Jong-il, to give out as presents on the occasion of his assumption of the top post in the Workers' Party. Efforts to free the ship began on November 13, but two attempts to date have failed. (Chosun Ilbo, "GROUNDED NK FREIGHTER WAS TO IMPORT LUXURY GOODS," 11/20/97)

### 4. ROK Military Purchases

An ROK Defense Ministry spokesman announced Wednesday that the ministry has approved the procurement of an undetermined number of CN-235s transport aircraft from Indonesia, at a cost of 100 billion won. The ministry also approved the execution of its purchase of Mistral portable-SAMs at a cost of 300 billion won. The French missile was chosen over US-made Stingers and the British-made Javelin. (Korea Herald, "INTER-KOREAN AVIATION HOTLINE OPENS BETWEEN TAEGU AND PYONGYANG," 11/20/97)

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](mailto:napsnet@nautilus.org)  
Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: [napsnet@nautilus.org](mailto:napsnet@nautilus.org)  
Berkeley, California, United States

Shin Dong-bom: [dongbom.shin@anu.edu.au](mailto:dongbom.shin@anu.edu.au)  
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Choi Chung-moon: [cily@star.elim.co.kr](mailto:cily@star.elim.co.kr)  
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hiroyasu Akutsu: [akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp](mailto:akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp)  
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: [icipu@glas.apc.org](mailto:icipu@glas.apc.org)  
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: [dlshen@fudan.ac.cn](mailto:dlshen@fudan.ac.cn)

Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: [dlshen@fudan.ac.cn](mailto:dlshen@fudan.ac.cn)

Shanghai, People's Republic of China

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Nautilus Institute

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

[nautilus@nautilus.org](mailto:nautilus@nautilus.org)