NAPSNet Daily Report 21 May, 1997

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 21 May, 1997", NAPSNet Daily Report, May 21, 1997, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-21-may-1997/

In today's Report:

I. United States

1. US Denies Plan for DPRK Special Envoy
2. DPRK Resists Providing Nuclear Information
3. Red Cross Official Visits ROK
4. US-PRC Differences on DPRK Famine Situation
5. US Congressman Pushes Potatoes for DPRK
6. US-ROK Aviation Dispute
7. PRC Leadership Tension

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Talks
2. ROK-US Diplomacy
3. PRC Urges Four-Party Talks

III. Russian Federation

1. RF Media on RF-DPRK Relations
2. RF-US Cooperation on Chemical Weapons Demolition
3. DPRK Food Crisis
4. DPRK Defectors
5. Estimates of Korean Unification Costs
6. RF-PRC Relations
7. RF Arms Exports to PRC
8. RF Arms Exports to Southeast Asia
9. RF Media on ASEAN Role
10. RF National Security Concept Approved
11. RF Defense Minister Visits
12. RF membership in the G7
13. RF Far East Energy Crisis Problems

14. RF Far East and US Marines in Japan
15. Alleged RF Laser Attack on Canadian Helicopter
16. RF Connection to the AUM Synrikyo Case
17. Mongolia's Former Communists Back in Power

I. United States

1. US Denies Plan for DPRK Special Envoy

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MAY 20," USIA Transcript, 5/20/97) responded to a question concerning reports that the US is considering appointing a special envoy to handle relations with the DPRK. Burns stated, "I cannot confirm that report. ... Frankly, I'm not familiar with any plan to appoint a special negotiator. I do know that we have excellent foreign service officers working on this. Chuck Kartman is a career specialist. He's heading our Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. He has spent many years on Korea, understands the Korean problem very well. He's been our point person. I know the Secretary is very pleased by the job that he's done. Now, should it be necessary to appoint new people to work on North Korea in the future, I'm sure we'll announce it. But I have nothing to announce, and I'm not aware of any plans to do so."

2. DPRK Resists Providing Nuclear Information

Reuters ("N.KOREA RELUCTANT TO GIVE NUCLEAR DETAILS," Tokyo, 5/21/97) reported that Hans Blix, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said on Wednesday that the DPRK has remained reluctant to provide information on nuclear reactors suspected of being used to produce nuclear weapons. A Japanese official said Blix told Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda that Pyongyang still refuses to give details on how its nuclear

In today's Report:

I. United States

1. US Denies Plan for DPRK Special Envoy
2. DPRK Resists Providing Nuclear Information
3. Red Cross Official Visits ROK
4. US-PRC Differences on DPRK Famine Situation
5. US Congressman Pushes Potatoes for DPRK
6. US-ROK Aviation Dispute
7. PRC Leadership Tension

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Talks
2. ROK-US Diplomacy
3. PRC Urges Four-Party Talks

III. Russian Federation

1. RF Media on RF-DPRK Relations
2. RF-US Cooperation on Chemical Weapons Demolition
3. DPRK Food Crisis
4. DPRK Defectors
5. Estimates of Korean Unification Costs

6. RF-PRC Relations
7. RF Arms Exports to PRC
8. RF Arms Exports to Southeast Asia
9. RF Media on ASEAN Role
10. RF National Security Concept Approved
11. RF Defense Minister Visits
12. RF membership in the G7
13. RF Far East Energy Crisis Problems
14. RF Far East and US Marines in Japan
15. Alleged RF Laser Attack on Canadian Helicopter
16. RF Connection to the AUM Synrikyo Case
17. Mongolia's Former Communists Back in Power

I. United States

1. US Denies Plan for DPRK Special Envoy

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MAY 20," USIA Transcript, 5/20/97) responded to a question concerning reports that the US is considering appointing a special envoy to handle relations with the DPRK. Burns stated, "I cannot confirm that report. ... Frankly, I'm not familiar with any plan to appoint a special negotiator. I do know that we have excellent foreign service officers working on this. Chuck Kartman is a career specialist. He's heading our Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. He has spent many years on Korea, understands the Korean problem very well. He's been our point person. I know the Secretary is very pleased by the job that he's done. Now, should it be necessary to appoint new people to work on North Korea in the future, I'm sure we'll announce it. But I have nothing to announce, and I'm not aware of any plans to do so."

2. DPRK Resists Providing Nuclear Information

Reuters ("N.KOREA RELUCTANT TO GIVE NUCLEAR DETAILS," Tokyo, 5/21/97) reported that Hans Blix, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said on Wednesday that the DPRK has remained reluctant to provide information on nuclear reactors suspected of being used to produce nuclear weapons. A Japanese official said Blix told Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda that Pyongyang still refuses to give details on how its nuclear

I. United States

1. US Denies Plan for DPRK Special Envoy

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MAY 20," USIA Transcript, 5/20/97) responded to a question concerning reports that the US is considering appointing a special envoy to handle relations with the DPRK. Burns stated, "I cannot confirm that report. ... Frankly, I'm not familiar with any plan to appoint a special negotiator. I do know that we have excellent foreign service officers working on this. Chuck Kartman is a career specialist. He's heading our Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. He has spent many years on Korea, understands the Korean problem very well. He's been our point person. I know the Secretary is very pleased by the job that he's done. Now, should it be necessary to appoint new people to work on North Korea in the future, I'm sure we'll announce it. But I have nothing to announce, and I'm not aware of any plans to do so."

2. DPRK Resists Providing Nuclear Information

Reuters ("N.KOREA RELUCTANT TO GIVE NUCLEAR DETAILS," Tokyo, 5/21/97) reported that Hans Blix, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said on Wednesday that the DPRK has remained reluctant to provide information on nuclear reactors suspected of being used to produce nuclear weapons. A Japanese official said Blix told Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda that Pyongyang still refuses to give details on how its nuclear reactors have been used and whether nuclear-grade plutonium was extracted from spent nuclear fuel. "In regard to the freezing of nuclear facilities, North Korea has been cooperative. But there has been no progress in securing information (on the operations of the nuclear reactors) from North Korea," the official quoted Blix as telling Ikeda. The Vienna-based IAEA said in April that the DPRK had yet to account for an amount of weapons-grade plutonium that experts say it possesses. The IAEA has never been able to confirm that the North has a nuclear device but insists it has fissionable material it is not owning up to.

3. Red Cross Official Visits ROK

The Associated Press ("RED CROSS CHIEF VISITS SEOUL," Seoul, 5/21/97) reported that George Weber, secretary-general of the International Red Cross, arrived in the ROK Wednesday for a four-day visit to meet with ROK government and Red Cross officials to discuss food aid to the DPRK. His visit comes as Red Cross representatives of the two Koreas prepared to meet in Beijing on Friday to resume talks on food aid to the North. The ROK Red Cross so far has given the DPRK US$4 million worth of relief goods through the International Red Cross.

4. US-PRC Differences on DPRK Famine Situation

United Press International ("SHALIKASHVILI, CHINA DISCUSS N. KOREA," Washington, 5/20/97) reported that General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said upon returning from his week-long trip to the PRC that he and his PRC military counterparts disagree about the seriousness of famine in the DPRK. Shalikashvili said, "We shared the fact that hunger exists (in North Korea), that it fuels instability, that that's a situation that has to be watched very carefully. However, the Chinese military leaders that I spoke with do not think that the conditions are yet such that they could spill over into a conflict. Perhaps they are less concerned about it than I would be." Shalikashvili added that DPRK issues came up "in almost all of my discussions with my military counterparts."

5. US Congressman Pushes Potatoes for DPRK

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("US LAWMAKER WANTS POTATO PRODUCTS DONATED TO NORTH KOREA," Washington, 5/21/97) reported that US Congressional Representative Bob Smith, a Republican from Oregon, sent a letter Monday to Bill Richardson, US Ambassador to the United Nations, asking him to consider sending potato products to the DPRK as part of the US$25 million in food aid the US pledged earlier this year. Smith, who chairs the House Agriculture Committee, said the move would effectively help avert famine in the DPRK, because dehydrated potato flakes are a source of good protein and can be easily prepared, and because potato flakes are light-weight and can be shipped cheaply. Smith also emphasized that sending the potato products would help alleviate the surplus in the US. On May 1, US potato stocks totaled 101 million hundredweight (100 pounds), up 32 percent from a year earlier, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

6. US-ROK Aviation Dispute

AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S. FAIL TO AGREE ON 'OPEN SKIES' AVIATION DEAL," Seoul, 5/21/97) reported that the US and the ROK failed in two-day talks this week to agree on a new aviation pact designed to fully open air routes of the two countries. The ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday that the two countries had full discussions on replacing the existing 40-yea-

-old agreement. "But the two countries differed on some technical issues like whether or not to allow business cooperation with airliners of third countries in each other's air routes," a ministry spokesman said. He added that a second round of talks is slated for July in Washington. "Since the countries are enthusiastic about an open sky agreement at an earliest date, we hope to finalize a deal in July," he said. Daniel T. Fantozzi, director of the Office of Aviation Negotiations at the US State Department and head of the US negotiation team, also said agreement in July is likely. "Negotiations went very well ... I think it's reasonable to expect an agreement will be reached in Washington," he said.

7. PRC Leadership Tension

Reuters ("STRAIN SEEN BETWEEN CHINA MILITARY, PARTY CHIEF," Beijing, 5/21/97) reported that sources close to the PRC military, who declined to be identified, said Tuesday that strains are emerging between the PRC's top military brass and Communist Party leaders as the ruling elite jostles for power and position ahead of a key party congress this year. Disputes over both policy and personnel have created cracks between veteran top officers of the People's Liberation Army loyal to late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, and President Jiang Zemin, Deng's successor. Jiang's decision to sign a strategic partnership with Russia was the most recent source of friction with powerful military veteran Gen. Liu Huaqing, senior vice chairman of the party's Central Military Commission, a member of the seven-member Politburo Standing Committee and close ally of Deng, the sources said. The PRC's top military brass regarded the partnership as bringing advantages to Russia in its dispute over expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, but serving little use to Beijing's interests, the sources said. "The People's Liberation Army feels that whether China signed or didn't sign was all the same," said one source with close links to the military. "So what was the need to sign?" The view differs widely from that of Jiang, who is also head of the Communist Party and chairman of the Central Military Commission. Jiang is eager to boost both his own personal standing and that of Beijing on the international stage, and sees the partnership as a means to that end, diplomats say. The source added that Jiang and Liu had already locked horns over whether two elderly military generals should step down from the military commission -- and whether they should be replaced if they do retire.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Talks

Red Cross officials from the ROK and the DPRK will meet in Beijing Friday for a second round of talks on aid to the North. Kang Young-hoon, president of the ROK National Red Cross (KNRC), yesterday sent a message to his DPRK counterpart Ri Song-ho, in which he yielded to Pyongyang's adherence to Beijing as the venue of the talks. While expressing regret over the DPRK again insisting that the Red Cross talks be held in Beijing, instead of somewhere on the Korean Peninsula, Kang said in the message, "I have decided to send our delegation to Beijing in view of the need to resolve procedural matters to alleviate the sufferings of our northern brethren as soon as possible." Kang proposed that ROK and DPRK delegates meet at the PRC World Hotel in Beijing at 10 a.m. Friday. On Saturday, Ri had accepted Kang's proposal for the resumption of inter-Korean Red Cross talks, but stuck to Beijing as the venue, claiming that there is no need to make things complicated by changing from the location of the first round of Red Cross talks held May 3 and 5. Kang had proposed Friday that ROK and DPRK Red Cross officials hold a second round of talks on aid to the North May 23 at the truce village of Panmunjom, Pyongyang, or Seoul. Making the proposal, Kang expressed the South's intention to reveal the amount of its aid package at the resumed talks. The proposal coincided with Seoul's announcement that it would provide the North with US$10 million worth of corn and milk powder in emergency food aid through the UN World Food Program. At the Beijing talks, the ROK delegation is expected to repeat a call for Pyongyang to allow southern

officials to monitor the distribution of relief goods and expand areas to be covered by the relief assistance. (Korea Herald, "SOUTH-NORTH RED CORSS TALKS TO BE HELD IN BEIJING FRIDAY," 05/21/97)

2. ROK-US Diplomacy

After his trip to Beijing, ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha will travel to Washington May 22-24 for talks on the DPRK with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. They will also exchange ratification instruments of the recently concluded treaty on mutual legal assistance, aimed at handling criminals of one country who flee to the other, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said yesterday. The ROK hopes that the treaty will pave the road for the prevention and reduction of crimes involving the two countries, the spokesman said. The two countries have held several rounds of negotiations since 1991 to achieve the treaty, which calls for the exchange of information and material that will assist in the apprehension of criminals from both countries. The ROK has signed treaties on mutual legal assistance with Australia, Canada, and France, and has initiated one with Russia. The ROK also maintains extradition agreements with Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Paraguay, the Philippines and Spain. After his visit to Washington, Yoo will fly to Paris, and also will meet with his Japanese counterpart Yukihiko Ikeda Monday on the sidelines of the annual ministerial meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to discuss the DPRK and other issues of mutual concern, the spokesman said. (Korea Times, "YOO, ALBRIGHT TO EXCHANGE RATIFICATIONS OF LEGAL AID TREATIES," 05/21/97)

3. PRC Urges Four-Party Talks

PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen has called for an urgent start to stalled four-party peace talks aimed at securing a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, PRC media reported Tuesday. In a meeting with his ROK counterpart Yoo Chong-ha on Monday, Qian called for Seoul, Washington and Pyongyang to bridge their differences and agree to the talks, which would also involve Beijing. "China hopes the parties concerned will reach consensus on holding the four-way talks in order to work towards the early establishment of a peace mechanism on the peninsula," Qian said, according to the China Daily. "China supports the establishment of a peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula and believes it is relatively realistic and feasible to discuss the establishment of the mechanism by means of four-way talks," he added. During his three-day visit to Beijing, Yoo also met with PRC Premier Li Peng, who emphasized the PRC's determination to work towards a lasting peace to replace the 1953 armistice agreement. Although a long-term ally of the DPRK, the PRC established diplomatic ties with the South in 1992, and trade between the two reached US$20 billion last year, making the ROK the fourth largest trading partner for the PRC. Relations between Beijing and Seoul were severely strained in February following the defection of Hwang Jang-yop, who took refuge in the ROK consulate in Beijing. The PRC at one point accused the ROK of leaking too much information about the case to the media, but Hwang was allowed to leave Beijing in March to eventually reach the ROK, and the PRC's relations with both the DPRK and the ROK now appear unaffected by the incident. (Korea Times, "CHINA URGES EARLY START TO FOUR-WAY KOREAN PEACE TALKS," 05/21/97)

III. Russian Federation

1. RF Media on RF-DPRK Relations

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Andrei Ivanov ("KOREAN PASSIONS OF YOUNG RUSSIA," Moscow, 4, 5/7/97) published an article on the post-war history of Korea and the USSR/RF's relations with the DPRK and the ROK. Regarding the present situation, the author argued in favor of "restoring the unwisely broken ties with the DPRK" and the participation of both the ROK and the DPRK, the UN

Security Council Permanent Members, and Japan in working toward a Korean Peninsula settlement.

2. RF-US Cooperation on Chemical Weapons Demolition

Segodnya ("US DON'T SPARE MONEY TO DESTROY RUSSIAN WEAPONS," Moscow, 3, 5/15/97) reported that the US will free-of-charge build a plant in the RF city of Perm to annihilate components of discharged land- and sea-based Soviet ICBMs as a result of arrangements negotiated between US Defense Secretary William Cohen by RF Defense Minister Igor Rodionov during his on-going visit to the US. The plant, which will cost US$52.4 million, is to annihilate 17.5 thousand tons of solid missile fuel, 916 missile engines and 410 missile containers by 2002.

3. DPRK Food Crisis

Izvestia's Aleksandr Platkovskiy ("KIM JONG-IL AFRAID OF A HUNGER REBELLION," Moscow, 3, 5/8/97) reported that facts on the food shortages, on ROK-DPRK food aid negotiations, and on DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's alleged secret conference where he threatened to punish "corrupt" officials and said that if nothing changes "hunger rebellions might occur," are mostly quoted from ROK sources. The most desperate food shortages can be observed in DPRK Northern areas adjacent to the DPRK-RF border. An RF specialist living in Pyongyang and representing an RF enterprise there revealed that during his working trip to a Northern province the local administrative officials asked him to share some of his food with them. As such, Izvestia's author concluded that "Russian border guards should get ready for a wave of refugees from the DPRK."

4. DPRK Defectors

Izvestia's Yuriy Savenkov ("IS THERE TO BE A MASS SEA-ROUTE EXODUS FROM NORTH KOREA," Moscow, 3, 5/14/97) reported that a ROK naval police boat patrolling the ROK territorial waters discovered a 32 ton DPRK vessel with 14 refugees aboard, all of whom applied for political asylum. Some in the ROK fear that a Vietnam-style "boat people" mass exodus scenario of the 1970s might repeat itself, but the majority of experts believe it to be nearly impossible considering the difficulties of obtaining a vessel with fuel in the DPRK. Izvestia's author also dwelled upon the cases of Hwang Jang-yop and a DPRK diplomat turned defector last year, paying special attention to the latter who provided valuable insight to widespread domestic discontent in the DPRK. The 1995 assassination attempt of Kim Jong-il at a military academy and an alleged number of other similar attempts were mentioned.

5. Estimates of Korean Unification Costs

Kommersant-DAILY's Ivan Arshynov ("FINANCIERS ESTIMATE THE KOREA UNIFICATION COSTS AT US$460 BILLION," Moscow, 4, 5/15/97) reported that SBC Warburg brokerage company published a report on the financial implications of Korea's unification. The report's authors estimated that the process would cost approximately US$460 billion. SBC Warburg experts believe that the ROK will have to carry the entire burden, which will mean that during the first 5 post-unification years the ROK will have to allocate 10 percent of its annual budget during the first 5 post-reunification years and 4.8 percent of it during the next 5 years to amass the total amount mentioned above. They believe that the ROK will be able to pay 60 percent of that sum from its own sources: US$200 billion would come from the post-unification economic growth effects and US$120 billion would come from increased taxation. Per capita income tax would go up 10 percent in those 10 years. The remaining US$140 billion would have to be obtained abroad. The experts believe that the world community will be prepared to buy ROK state securities assuming that their paid interest is about 150 percent from the present level.

6. RF-PRC Relations

Sovetskaya Rossia ("THESE DAYS .... TOKYO," Moscow, 7, 5/15/97) presented a report by Japan's "Tyuniti Shimbun" newspaper that PRC Foreign Minister Qian Quichen stated during an interview that the PRC "wants neither an alliance nor a confrontation" with the RF and other CIS countries but rather strives to maintain "normal friendly relations" with them.

7. RF Arms Exports to PRC

Segodnya's Yevgeniy Krutikov ("CHINA'S ARMY TO BE STRONG WITH RUSSIAN ARMS," Moscow, 4, 5/14/97) published an article reviewing RF arms sales to the PRC in the context of the PRC's relations with Japan, the ROK, ASEAN, and others. The author speculated on the possible future uses of the RF military, considering that "China gets ready for three parallel armed conflicts: with Taiwan (in order to eliminate its independence); with South East Asia states' coalitions (presumably Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei with an active support from Japan, Portugal and Britain) for the control over the Spratly Isles; and with Vietnam for the same isles." Segodnya's author argued that the RF sales of naval armaments are de-stabilizing in this respect.

8. RF Arms Exports to Southeast Asia

Segodnya's Yevgeniy Krutikov ("ARMS RACE IN EAST ASIA BECOMES A GLOBAL PHENOMENON," Moscow, 2, 5/19/97) reported that "the circumstances" of Malaysia buying 18 MiG-29 fighters from the RF "were not as smooth as RF Defense Ministry would like it to seem," hinting that the nature of the payment was never publicly disclosed. Some time ago the Philippines paid some bananas and coconut oil to the RF's Rosvo'oruzheniye state-controlled arms trading company in exchange for Tarantul-1 missile boats, Abhay anti-sub ships, and Nadya minesweepers. Concerning RF arms trade with Taiwan, Segodnya's author noted that the ROC is considering buying RF-made Grisha frigates but that its Air Force "emphatically refuses to cooperate with Russia" and prefers to buy aircraft from other countries.

9. RF Media on ASEAN Role

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Dmitriy Kosyrev ("GEOMETRY OF GEOPOLITICS," Moscow, 4, 5/16/97) analyzed the geopolitical situation of ASEAN in the context of RF-PRC-US "triangle" relations. He argued that changes within the "triangle" directly concern the South East Asia nations. In particular, due to a relative strengthening of the PRC, ASEAN member countries' desire to have good relations with the US couldn't but become stronger. The matter is that Vietnam actually asked its fellow members to protect it against the PRC, with which it has a territorial dispute. The author's opinion is that the recently introduced US economic sanctions against Myanmar are harmful to US interests in Asia because now "the American demarche against Myanmar made its admission to ASEAN practically inevitable, irrespective of whether it violates human rights or not." On the other hand, the PRC welcomes Myanmar's accession to the Association. Thus, it seems that in the case of Myanmar ASEAN is at odds with the US and in agreement with the PRC. The situation is hardly pleasant both to ASEAN and the US. The author speculated that after Hong Kong and some time later possibly Taiwan return back to the PRC it will gain control over the "oil life line" between South East Asia and Japan. So far the US is the strongest force in Asia and with no territorial claims there at that. "But what will happen if China continues to grow and return its lost territories while the US goes on asking themselves for useless Myanmar-type conflicts with ASEAN?," the author wondered. He concluded with the moral that, just as RF-NATO relations affect the RF-PRC link, so is RF-PRC interaction bound to change the geopolitical balance in South East Asia, and therefore "Russia cannot get rid of its global power role whether we like it or not."

10. RF National Security Concept Approved

Segodnya's Aleksandr Koretskiy ("RUSSIA IS TO KNOW HER ENEMIES BY THEIR NAMES," Moscow, 3, 5/8/97) reported that on 5/7/97 an enlarged session of the RF Security Council presided over by RF President Boris Yeltsin finally approved the "RF National Security Concept." Despite experts' expectations, the 30-page document contains rather generalized notions: On National Interests; National Interests and Goals, the Tasks of Their Implementation; Threats to National Security; Maintaining Russia's National Security. The Concept is the first RF attempt of that kind and has been obviously inspired by the respective US Presidential practice.

11. RF Defense Minister Visits

Obshchaya Gazeta's Igor Golovin ("IGOR RODIONOV'S TOKYO DEBUT," Moscow, 4, 5/15-21/97, #19(198)) reported that the visit of RF Defense Minister Igor Rodionov to Japan which is to start on 6/5/97 is an "extraordinary event." Around 1995, according to Obshchaya Gazeta's author's "trustworthy sources at the National Defense Agency" of Japan, the Japanese SDF military has started to actively advocate closer defense links with the RF which, in exchange, has ceased to criticize the US-Japan military alliance. Considering that, the RF Defense Minister's visit is, as RF Ambassador in Japan Aleksandr Panov put it, "simply doomed to success."

Nezavisimaia Gazeta ("IGOR RODIONOV ARRIVED IN JAPAN YESTERDAY," Moscow, 2, 5/17/97) reported that RF Defense Minister Igor Rodionov arrived in Japan on a 3-day official visit "for the first time in the history of Russo-Japanese relations." He is accompanied by RF Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Vladimir Kuroyedov and some high-ranking Defense ministry and General Staff officials. Igor Rodionov said that the absence of RF-Japan peace treaty will not affect his visit and that the visit precisely has been aimed at preparation of such a treaty. There being no "multilateral" international security system in the Asia Pacific region, "our main efforts are aimed at active participation in the creation of such a system."

Segodnya's Stanislav Tarasov ("FOREIGN MINISTRY AND DEFENSE MINISTRY OF RUSSIA START TO ACT COORDINATELY," Moscow, 2, 5/19/97) reported on "Russia's Defense Ministry head Igor Rodionov's amazing and diplomatic wisdom unusual to him that will be written about in all new history text books," referring to his visits and statements in the US and Japan. As soon as "Moscow declared a successful completion of talks on its relations with the NATO," the RF Defense Minister stated that "Russia feels no wariness" about the US-Japan alliance and called for a transformation of East Asia's bilateral security links into multilateral arrangements. Segodnya's author agreed with the Japanese media that "a global breakthrough" seems to be approaching between the world powers.

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Vadim Solovyov ("'AROUND THE WORLD' OF IGOR RODIONOV," Moscow, 2, 5/20/97) reported on RF Defense Minister Igor Rodionov's visits to the US and Japan last week. The author praised the signing of the RF-US 5 year defense cooperation document which includes about 100 various articles ranging from closer links at the top defense establishment levels to interaction at unit levels in carrying joint combat missions within a peacekeeping framework. Both Igor Rodionov and US Defense Secretary William Cohen said "in one voice" that the RF nuclear strategic forces are "under sound control." They stressed "in unison" that the START-2 treaty should be ratified by the RF State Duma and that a START-3 preparation efforts should be undertaken. The RF Defense Minister's foreign contacts continued upon his return to Moscow where he hosted Gen. Yui Yungbo, PRC Central Military Committee member and the PLA Political Department chief. They discussed military-political problems and RF-PRC bilateral military-technical cooperation issues raised during Igor Rodionov's visit to the PRC in April.

12. RF membership in the G7

Segodnya ("JAPAN SOFTENED ITS POSITION," Moscow, 4, 5/20/97), Finansoviye Izvestia's Jilian Tett and Christia Freeland ("JAPAN WILL REMOVE OBJECTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA'S JOINING OF THE 'BIG SEVEN'"), Moscow, I, 5/20/97) and Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Dmitriy Gornostayev ("THE PATH INTO THE 'SEVEN' IS IN FACT OPEN FOR RUSSIA," Moscow, 2, 5/21/97) reported that according to the Japanese press, Japan "decided to support Russia's participation as a full-fledged member in the June conference of the leaders of the major industrial countries in Denver." Japan's Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda is expected to make an official announcement to such effect during his visit to the RF later this week. So far Japan has been known to be reserved about the RF joining the G7 despite US President Bill Clinton speaking in favor of the idea during his March meeting with RF President Boris Yeltsin in Helsinki.

13. RF Far East Energy Crisis Problems

Komsomolskaia Pravda's Natalia Ostrovskaya ("STATE OF EMERGENCY VLADIVOSTOK: SWITCH ON THE LIGHT OR WE WILL SWITCH OFF THE AUTHORITIES!," Moscow, 1, 2, 5/15/97) reported that a state of emergency has been introduced in Vladivostok. Vladivostok Deputy Mayor Yuriy Kopylov said it had to be done "in connection with an artificially created energy crisis and criminal actions of the Dal'energo company." For three days, Vladivostok residents have been staging mass protest demonstrations against the "endless switch-offs of electricity" causing both inconvenience and some grave security risks.

Izvestia's Valentina Korobeyeva ("VLADIVOSTOK: A DARK MAY," Moscow, 1, 5/15/97) reported that in the energy crisis-ridden city of Vladivostok, electric power supply switch-offs last for as long as 16-18 hours a day. Central heating and hot water supplies have also stopped. Primorskiy Region coal miners who were paid their last wages in November 1996 stopped supplying coal to the city power plants on 5/1/97.

14. RF Far East and US Marines in Japan

Segodnya's Oleg Kryuchek ("NATO CRAWLED FROM THE EAST," Moscow, 3, 5/15/97) reported that a public movement emerged on the RF island of Sakhalin that pledged to defend it against possible "aggression." The concern was caused by the fact that US Marine units stationed in Okinawa are expected to be moved to Hokkaido which is quite close to the RF. Sakhalin Regional Governor Igor Farkhutdinov stated that the US and Japanese authorities are undermining international confidence in the area and creating another source of tension. He appealed to governors of several Japanese prefectures to oppose the move as the RF will have to respond by stationing rapid deployment forces on the Kuril Isles which administratively are a part of Sakhalin Region. Thus encouraged, some local Communists called for creation of self-defense units to be on duty on the Kurils, and some local newspapers carried warnings that "NATO is on the offensive from the East as well."

15. Alleged RF Laser Attack on Canadian Helicopter

Segodnya ("PEACEFULLY GOING 'KAPITAN MAN' ACCUSED OF A LASER ATTACK," Moscow, 4, 5/16/97), Segodnya's Vladimir Kozlovskiy ("HYPERBOLOID OF 'KAPITAN MAN' IN THE STRAITS OF JUAN DE FUQUI," Moscow, 4, 5/17/97) and Izvestia's Vladimir Nadein ("A LASER ATTACK FROM A RUSSIAN VESSEL?," Moscow, 3, 5/16/97) reported on the developments following the incident of 4/4/97 when RF dry cargo vessel "Kapitan Man" allegedly emitted a laser burst against a Canadian helicopter and inflicted temporary eye-damage to the Canadian pilot and a US communications officer present in the helicopter. The RF vessel sailing between Los Angeles and Vladivostok is often trailed by US submarines. In this case, it followed US nuclear sub "Ohio." The helicopter was sent to

check whether the RF vessel was busy with sonar spying. While watching the RF vessel, the two men in the helicopter felt an burning sensation in the eye. Medical tests later established it was a "laser burn." Picture 16 of the 30 taken by the helicopter allegedly depicted some "beam" bursting from the RF vessel. But a subsequent search on board the RF vessel proved nothing. RF Foreign Ministry expressed "grave concern" with the fact of detention and search of the RF vessel.

16. RF Connection to the AUM Synrikyo Case

Segodnya ("OLEG LOBOV DENIED HIS 'SARIN AFFAIR' INVOLVEMENT," Moscow, 1, 5/7/97) reported that the former RF Security Council Secretary Oleg Lobov was questioned as a witness at the RF Attorney General Office several days ago following accusations that he supplied sarin production blueprints to the Japanese AUM Synrikyo terrorist sect. Oleg Lobov emphatically denied any involvement, saying that when he was the SC Secretary he gave them no documents and received no money from them. The investigation is complicated by the fact that the Japanese law-enforcement bodies have not provided their RF colleagues with their own AUM Synrikyo investigation results and no mutual legal assistance agreement exists between the RF and Japan. RF authorities have recently proposed that a temporary agreement of that kind be concluded specifically for the AUM Synrikyo joint investigation purposes.

17. Mongolia's Former Communists Back in Power

Segodnya's Aleksandr Chudodeyev ("URGA - DEMOCRATS-FREE TERRITORY," Moscow, 4, 5/20/97) and Nezavisimaia Gazeta ("A COMMUNIST ELECTED MONGOLIA'S PRESIDENT," Moscow, 1, 5/20/97) reported that the People's Revolutionary Party of Mongolia (PRPM) won the presidential elections with 60.8 percent of the voters casting their vote in favor of Natsagiyn Bagabandi, 46. His main rival, the acting President Punsalmagiyn Ochirbat, nicknamed "Mongolian Gorbachev," got less than 30 percent. Mr. Ochirbat has been Mongolia's President since 1993 after his sweeping victory over the PRPM, and in 1996 his democratic followers won 50 out of 76 parliamentary seats, "literally pushing the Communists out." The present "decline of Mongolian democracy" is explained by the wide popular discontent with the failure of economic reforms and the fact that the per capita income of 20 percent of the population is less than US$10 a month. The PRPM leaders stressed that they are not Communists and criticized a simplistic "black and white" political vision. The newly elected President plans to strengthen national unity, law, and order, to finance the agriculture from the state budget, and to turn Mongolia's army all-professional. But, as Segodnya's author remarked, "just recently the local democrats stood for exactly the same policies."

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 Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Choi Chung-moon: cily@star.elim.net
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Return to the top of this Daily Report

Go to the Daily Report Archive

Return to the Nautilus Institute Home Page

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 Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Choi Chung-moon: cily@star.elim.net
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Return to the top of this Daily Report

Go to the Daily Report Archive

Return to the Nautilus Institute Home Page

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report--1-may-1997/

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