

NAPSNet Daily Report 23 March, 1998

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 23 March, 1998", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 23, 1998,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-23-march-1998/>

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I. United States

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1. Four-Party Peace Talks

Reuters ("N.KOREA BLAMES U.S. FOR LACK OF PEACE PROGRESS," Tokyo, 03/23/98) said that a spokesman for the DPRK Foreign Ministry on Monday blamed the US for the lack of progress in the four- nation Korean peace talks in Geneva. The DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency quoted the spokesman as saying, "It is wholly ascribable to the U.S. stance toward the negotiation that the talks came to a deadlock." He added that the DPRK wanted separate talks with the US to discuss a bilateral peace treaty and the withdrawal of US troops from the Korean peninsula. He stated, "Through the talks, we realized again that, first of all, we should sit together with the United States to solve the matters of discontinuing its hostile policy toward the DPRK."

The Associated Press (Alexander G. Higgins, "KOREAN TALKS: NO AGREEMENT REACHED," Geneva, 03/21/98), Reuters (Elif Kaban, "KOREA TALKS FIZZLE OUT AS US, NORTH SQUABBLE," Geneva, 03/21/98), and the New York Times (Elizabeth Olson, "TALKS TO END KOREA CONFLICT HIT ANOTHER IMPASSE," Geneva, 03/22/98, 12) reported that the four-party peace talks in Geneva ended in an impasse on Saturday as the DPRK threatened to withdraw because the US refused to discuss the withdrawal of its troops from the ROK. DPRK delegation head Kim Gye-gwan said that the US troops are the only foreign troops on the peninsula and thus are a fundamental issue. He added, "We have no more interest if the four-party talks are not going to address the fundamental issues." US Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth, the head of the US delegation, said that the DPRK appeared unwilling to make "concrete progress towards peace." He stated, "We proposed to negotiate steps to reduce tensions and build confidence on the Korean peninsula. Unfortunately, the North Korean delegation was not prepared to do so." However, ROK delegation chief Song Young-shik said that the negotiations had made "modest progress," adding, "These talks are better than no talks." At the end of the session, PRC Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Jian read a statement pledging that the "four parties will work on the timing of the third plenary session through proper channels." Chen said that negotiators were close to agreement on setting up a negotiating working group to tackle the issues on Friday, but that "It was only after we returned from Gruyeres that we hit the two snags and the end positions changed on all sides." He said that the snags were failing to agree on how the troop withdrawal issue could be brought up, and how quickly to bring up confidence-building measures proposed by the US. Regarding the DPRK delegation, Chen stated, "This time I think they are very serious and quite flexible in discussing all these issues." He added, "There are problems with all delegations. But if one side says at the very beginning that there should be no discussion of the withdrawal of U.S. troops, then that is not helpful. You can maintain your position, but don't say that."

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2. Food Aid for DPRK

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA TO DEMAND TRANSPARENT FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN N. KOREA," Seoul, 03/23/98) reported that Lee Byung-woong, the chief ROK Red Cross delegate to inter-Korean Red Cross talks scheduled for Wednesday in Beijing, said Monday that transparency of distribution will be a key issue at the food aid talks. He stated, "North Korea should show its maximum sincerity in guaranteeing transparency of food distribution." He added that the Geneva-based International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies also has asked its ROK chapter to stress the importance of transparency of food distribution.

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3. DPRK Diplomacy

The Associated Press ("NKOREA MINISTER TO VISIT SINGAPORE," Singapore, 03/22/98) reported that the Singapore government said in a statement issued Sunday that Kim Dok-yong, chairman of the DPRK Information Committee, was to arrive with a delegation Monday for a three-day visit at the invitation of his Singapore counterpart, Information and Arts Minister George Yeo. Kim Tok-phil, counselor at the DPRK Embassy, said that it would be the first DPRK ministerial visit to Singapore in the last three years.

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4. Alleged Plot to Influence ROK Election

Agence France-Presse ("HOSPITALIZED FORMER SOUTH KOREAN INTELLIGENCE CHIEF SAYS HE KNEW OF PLOT," Seoul, 03/23/98) reported that Kwon Young-hae, former head of the ROK Agency for National Security Planning, said Monday that he had known about a staged press conference in Beijing during the presidential campaign which painted then-candidate Kim Dae-jung as a leftist. In a statement released by his lawyers, Kwon said, "It was my responsibility that I received a plan on the news conference by Yun Hong-jung and I let it go ahead." The lawyers quoted Kwon as saying his decision to let the press conference go ahead was made as, "Part of my duty and was not a scheme to foil a presidential bid by a certain candidate." They said that Kwon had "already clarified his position to prosecutors, and he had attempted suicide to avoid any misunderstanding of the controversy." Kwon slashed his stomach in a suicide attempt Saturday while under interrogation by prosecutors. He also expressed his regret that secrets involving national security were revealed during the investigation of North Wind, the name given to several incidents during past elections in which the DPRK appeared to be helping the ROK government fend off any bid for power by the ROK opposition. The opposition Grand National Party (GNP) on Monday demanded that the complete security planning agency papers be made public and that ruling party members also submit to interrogation. However, Cho Se-hyung, acting president of the ruling National Congress for New Politics, told a party meeting that "the investigation is making significant progress" and accused the opposition party of trying to halt it. "We are willing to accept the GNP's demand for a parliamentary investigation after the ongoing probe makes progress and uncovers the facts."

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "EX-S. KOREAN SPY ATTEMPTS SUICIDE," Seoul, 03/20/98) and United Press International ("S.KOREA EX-SPY CHIEF ATTEMPTS SUICIDE," Seoul, 03/21/98) reported that Kwon Young-hae, former head of the ROK Agency for National Security Planning, tried to kill himself Saturday while being questioned about a reported plot to smear Kim Dae-jung during his election campaign. Hospital officials said that Kwon lost a lot of blood but his condition was not critical. Senior prosecutor Kim Won-chi said that Kwon had admitted giving a US\$250,000 bribe to a Korean-American businessman who alleged in news conferences in December that Kim Dae-jung's campaign was funded by the DPRK. Prosecutor Kim stated, "He confessed the allegation was not true. But he would not say why he ordered the operation." The opposition Grand National Party accused the government of political revenge and called for an independent probe on whether Kwon was tortured. However, presidential spokesman Park Ji-won stated, "The investigation will go on to uncover the whole truth. This is not an attempt to indulge in political revenge." Investigators said they planned to charge Kwon with libel and election law violations.

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5. Clinton to Visit PRC

The Associated Press ("CLINTON SETS MEETING WITH CHINA," Accra, Ghana, 03/23/98) reported that White House press secretary Mike McCurry said Monday that US President Bill Clinton would visit the PRC in late June and early July. McCurry stated, "He will hold talks with President Jiang and other senior China officials." He added, "The president looks to the visit as an opportunity to expand areas of cooperation in our improving relationship with China and to discuss, frankly, areas of difference."

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6. US-PRC Nuclear Cooperation

The Associated Press (Barry Schweid, "HOUSE WANTS CHINA NUKE DEAL ENDED," Washington, 03/20/98) reported that a group of lawmakers led by Representative Benjamin A. Gilman, R-NY, the chairman of the House International Relations Committee, urged President Clinton on Friday to

prevent delivery of reactors and other nuclear technology to the PRC. They wrote Clinton that the PRC had failed to live up to its promise to curb the spread of its own technology to countries seeking to develop nuclear weapons. They said they wanted to make their point "in the strongest possible terms" and asked Clinton to act immediately. Meanwhile, in Beijing, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said that Chinese companies have not sold and do not intend to sell chemicals to Iran that could be used to develop nuclear weapons. [Paul L. Leventhal](#), president of the private Nuclear Control Institute, argued that Clinton should have deferred certifying the PRC as eligible to purchase US nuclear technology and Congress should have imposed a one-year waiting period to test PRC intentions.

II. Republic of Korea

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1. Four-party Peace Talks

The DPRK on March 21 threatened to withdraw from peace talks because the US refused to consider negotiating a US troop withdrawal from the ROK. The US blamed the DPRK for the failure of the four-country talks in Geneva to finish laying the groundwork for full negotiations on a permanent peace for the Korean peninsula. PRC Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Jian said both the US and the DPRK were responsible for the deadlock, but he expected a new round of talks would be held this summer. The ROK said that even without a breakthrough, there had been "modest progress." (Korea Times, "KOREAN TALKS FAIL AMID RECRIMINATIONS," 03/23/98)

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2. ROK-DPRK Relations

The ROK Ministry of National Unification has mapped out a guideline for the ROK's policy toward the DPRK, which aims to realize peace, reconciliation, and cooperation, and a separation of politics and economy. Accordingly, the new government will pave the way for peaceful reunification through peace, reconciliation, and cooperation on the basis of the three principles unveiled by President Kim Dae-jung: the non-use of force, no attempt to unify Korea through the absorption of the DPRK, and promotion of reconciliation and cooperation. (Korea Times, "ROK MAPS OUT GUIDELINES ON NK POLICY," 03/23/98)

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3. US-ROK Military Relations

General John H. Tilelli, commander in chief of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command, said that stability and security on the Korean peninsula are vital to US interests, and denied any possibility that US military officers would initiate talks with the DPRK without the presence of their ROK counterparts. General Tilelli's statement came after allegations of US military officials independently proposing a general-level talks with the DPRK. (Korea Times, Kim Hyong-min, "GEN. TILELLI SAYS ROK SECURITY VITAL TO US INTEREST," 03/23/98)

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4. ROK Military Procurement

The ROK thinks that the US, a key source of its foreign military purchases, is reluctant to provide

high technology, representatives of US defense contractors say. Subsequently, the contractors recommend greater accommodation of the ROK's requests in the future. In the aerospace and defense chapter of the 1998 American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) report, the US defense contractors claimed, "Korea has come to perceive a reluctance on the part of the US government to provide some technology or data, as well as lengthy delays in processing licenses, as not being supportive of Korea's equipment modernization program." This was said in context of their view that the ROK is striving for self-sufficiency in arms production, with a clear preference for domestically designed and produced weapons, as well as third country sales. (Korea Times, Oh Young-jin, "US DEFENSE CONTRACTORS URGE MORE HI-TECH TRANSFER FOR KOREA," 03/23/98)

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5. ROK-Japan Fisheries Talks

The ROK and Japan have agreed to resume talks on the revision of a bilateral fishing accord next month. Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Park Chung-soo and his Japanese counterpart Keizo Obuchi reached the agreement during their meeting in Seoul on March 21. The two officials also agreed to actively support a meeting between fishermen's groups of the two countries to be held in Seoul later this week to lay the groundwork for the resumption of fisheries talks, said an ROK official. Obuchi proposed to resume the talks, offering an apology for his government's scrapping of the 1965 fishing pact with the ROK. Park accepted the apology, but demanded that Japan show more serious and positive attitudes in the run-up to the resumption of fisheries negotiations. (Korea Herald, "KOREA, JAPAN AGREE TO RESUME FISHERIES TALKS," 03/23/98)

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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