

NAPSNet Daily Report 24 July, 2000

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 24 July, 2000", NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, 2000,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-24-july-2000/>

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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Program

The Washington Post ("U.S. WEIGHS N. KOREAN OFFER," Nago, 7/22/00) reported that according to senior US White House officials, US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Vladimir Putin talked at length about a DPRK offer to give up its missile program if it gets international assistance in launching space satellites. Clinton and Putin discussed the top on July 21, during a break at the Group of Eight economic summit in Okinawa. An anonymous US administration official said, "There are more questions than there are answers [about the offer.]" He said that the US might agree, "if it was clearly understood that the launch capability was going to be outside the territory of North Korea and thoroughly subject to international technology controls. But a very dangerous idea would be that the international community would provide actual launch capability, that is, rockets to be launched from North Korean territory." A second U.S. official said on July 22, "President Putin himself was not entirely clear about precisely what is intended by the DPRK." US officials said that Putin brought up the DPRK proposal because "he clearly thought it was something to be studied and discussed with us. President Putin did not say that what he heard in Pyongyang was some sort of slam-dunk rebuttal to the premise of NMD." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for July 24, 2000.]

The Washington Post (David Hoffman, "RUSSIAN OUTLINES SOME OPTIONS IN N. KOREAN MISSILE PROPOSAL," Moscow, 7/23/00) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said on July 23 that the DPRK is leaving open the kind of satellite-launching capability that it could receive from other countries in exchange for giving up its own ballistic missile program. The Russian Itar-Tass news agency quoted Ivanov as saying, "This might be assistance by certain states, or a pool [by multiple countries].... In other words, there are choices in solving this question. [The issue] has been raised and needs to be solved." Ivanov added that the DPRK is ready to abandon its current missile program if it can launch one or two satellites for scientific purposes each year from the territory of other countries and with their assistance. He said, "It will be a step forward if this operates and everyone understands it. Everybody has displayed interest in North Korea's proposal, and this is without doubt. They understand that if this formula works, this will be an important step toward relieving tensions" on the Korean peninsula.

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "COHEN WARY OF N.KOREA MISSILE REPORT," Washington, 7/24/00) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen said Monday that the DPRK's offer to abandon its long-range missile program in exchange for international assistance in launching space satellites is "fairly ambiguous" and not reliable evidence that the missile threat from the DPRK has lessened. Cohen said, "It's unclear to me exactly what the offer is. It is still fairly ambiguous in terms of the scope of the proposal. It would require a great deal more clarification before I could comment that it was a positive proposal or not." Cohen said that he remains skeptical of the DPRK's intentions.

2. DPRK Participation in ARF

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA'S EMERGENCE FROM ISOLATION GATHERS PACE," Nago, 7/23/00) reported that the DPRK's official media confirmed on July 23 that an expected meeting between US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and her DPRK counterpart Paek Nam-sun, the highest ever level of contact between the two, was scheduled to take place on July 26 in Bangkok before the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting. Soon afterwards, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori hinted at the possibility of direct talks with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, saying it was "important to have communications at the leaders' level." He added, "We would like to consider what would be the most effective way of achieving communications between myself and Mr. Kim Jong-il." On July 23, Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly urged his colleagues at the Group of 8 to do more to draw the DPRK out of its shell. He said that only direct contact could ease regional tension and concerns over the DPRK's missile program. Putin said, "If we listen to the thesis that there is a permanent danger from the rocket program that North Korea is developing, we must know precisely what is in the program, what is its extent, what is the extent of the threat."

The Associated Press ("ASEAN HOPES NORTH KOREA JOINING FORUM WILL BRING PEACE," Bangkok, 7/24/00) reported that foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) said that the group was taking a major step toward that goal later this week by welcoming the DPRK into the ASEAN Regional Forum. Indonesian Foreign Minister Alwi Shihab said that the "goodwill" generated by the June summit between the DPRK and ROK leaders "could very well lead to the early solution of security issues once deemed intractable."

3. ROK-DPRK Talks

Agence France Presse (Zeo Park, "NORTH KOREA AGREES TO OPEN HIGH-LEVEL TALKS IN SEOUL," Seoul, 7/22/00) reported that DPRK Prime Minister Hong Sung-nam sent a letter on July 22 accepting the ROK's proposal to open high-level government talks in Seoul this month to discuss

peace and exchanges following last month's landmark inter-Korean summit. Ho wrote, "I accept your proposal for the first round of high-level talks to take place in Seoul to discuss issues concerning the implementation of the Joint South-North Declaration." However, he said that the DPRK wants the talks to take place from July 29-31 instead of July 27-29 as proposed by the ROK. An official from the ROK's Unification Ministry said that it was expected to agree to the new date. The DPRK also agreed that each side would be represented by a five-member delegation led by a minister, to be accompanied by five aides, 15 supporting personnel, and 10 journalists. ROK Unification Minister Park Jae-kyu is expected to head the ROK delegation to the talks, while the DPRK's delegation may be headed by Kim Yong-sun, head of the Asia-Pacific Peace Committee. The ministerial talks are expected to broadly discuss the agenda and the timing of detailed working-level meetings covering economic and political exchange and cooperation, along with cultural exchanges. The talks are also likely to cover DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's planned visit to Seoul.

4. US Missile Defense

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "COHEN WARY OF N.KOREA MISSILE REPORT," Washington, 7/24/00) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen said that US Defense Department missile defense officials are now assessing the technical feasibility of the proposed US national missile defense project, and he expects to weigh that and other factors in making a recommendation to Clinton "within about three or four weeks." He also said that one additional factor to be considered is the urgency of the missile threat against the US. He said that he has reviewed a draft of the Central Intelligence Agency's updated assessment of the missile threat, but would not comment on the substance of the assessment.

The Washington Post carried an editorial ("CONTAINING NORTH KOREA?" 7/23/00) which said that US national missile defense (NMD) proposals are forcing the great powers to address the proliferation concerns. The article said, "China's and Russia's own nervousness about NMD may be inducing them to rein in the dangerous North Korean missile program that provoked the United States to build missile defenses in the first place." The article noted that there are still many questions about the sincerity and the potential efficacy of Russian and PRC actions. It continued that even if the Russian and PRC maneuverings vis-a-vis the DPRK were just a bid to increase and exploit European misgivings about the US program, the fact that Russia and the PRC feel obliged even to appear concerned about the DPRK's capabilities is a victory for NMD. It argued, "The US Clinton administration is right to view the evolving Russian, Chinese and North Korean positions skeptically and press ahead with its NMD deliberations--while leaving the door open, just a crack, to the possibility that the mere prospect of a U.S. NMD deployment could force a tangible reduction in the North Korean threat." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for July 24, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. Nigerian Mediation of Inter-Korean Ties

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "NIGERIAN PRESIDENT WILLING TO VISIT P'YANG TO FACILITATE INTER-KOREAN TIES," Seoul, 07/24/00) reported that Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo said on July 22 that he is willing to meet with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il if it helps further inter-Korean relations. Nigeria has maintained close relations with the DPRK, with which it established diplomatic ties in 1976. He also lent support for ROK President Kim Dae-jung's policy of greater engagement with the DPRK.

2. Inter-Korean Talks

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "S-N FOREIGN MINISTERS TO MEET JULY 26 TALKS TO BE HELD ON SIDELINES OF ASEAN FORUM," Seoul, 07/22/00) and Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-ku, "MINISTERS MEETING SET FOR JULY 29," Seoul, 07/22/00) reported that the ROK Foreign Ministry in Seoul announced on Friday that the ROK and the DPRK have agreed to hold their first-ever foreign ministers' talks on July 26 in Bangkok. The talks between Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn and his DPRK counterpart, Paek Nam-sun, will take place on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Choi Young-jin said, "The meeting will be an opportunity for the two sides to discuss post-summit cooperation in the international arena and their relations with foreign countries." Choi did not elaborate on the agenda for the discussions, but Lee and Paek are expected to discuss the opening of a dialogue channel between their ministries. They are also likely to address the ROK's support for the DPRK's drive to join international organizations, including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the DPRK's efforts to improve relations with the US and Japan. It is also believed that Lee and Paek will exchange views on the DPRK's missile program and other international concerns such as the US missile defense system.

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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