

# NAPSNet Daily Report 25 September, 2000

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## I. United States

### 1. Inter-Korean Defense Minister Talks

The Associated Press (Jae-Suk Yoo, "KOREAN DEFENSE CHIEFS MEET," Cheju, 9/25/00) reported that the ROK and DPRK defense chiefs, in their first ever meeting, pledged Monday to work for reconciliation. An ROK government official said ROK Defense Minister Cho Sung-tae and Kim Il Chul, minister of the People's Army of the DPRK, agreed to open working-level military talks to discuss clearing mines to reconnect a rail line between the two Koreas. Brigadier General Yoon Il-young, spokesman for the ROK Defense Ministry said that in their 90-minute talk, Cho and Kim "shared a basic understanding" that their militaries should support the agreements of the summit at which the two Koreas agreed to seek eventual reunification. Yoon said, "During their keynote speeches, the two ministers said South and North Korea should end the mistrust and confrontation of the past and move toward an arena of mutual trust and reconciliation."

### 2. DPRK Food Shortage

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA SAYS 1.4 MILLION TONNES OF GRAIN LOST TO

DROUGHT," Seoul, 9/25/00) and the Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA REPORTS CROP DAMAGE," Seoul, 9/25/00) reported that the DPRK government said Monday that at least 1.4 million tons of grain had been lost because of severe drought and typhoons this year. A top agriculture ministry official said in a statement, quoted by DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency, said about 360,000 tons of rice and 660,000 tons of maize had been lost to drought over one area of the state while another area hit by typhoons caused the loss of another 405,000 tons of grain. The statement said, "It is certain that the shortage of food will continue next year too." The statement also said some reservoirs had only between three and 18 percent of expected water levels in the provinces of North and South Hwanghae, North and South Phyongan, Kanwon and South Hamgyong. The DPRK government said its estimates of one million ton of lost grain "was confirmed on the spot by international organizations" on a mission to assess aid needed for the DPRK.

The Associated Press ("S.KOREA ASKS FOR FOOD FOR NORTH," Tokyo, 9/24/00) reported that ROK president Kim Dae-jung on September 24 asked Japan to increase shipments of food to the DPRK as part of a joint effort to improve relations with DPRK. Kim said on the last day meetings with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, "North Korea would be very appreciative if Japan would provide aid at this very difficult time." Mori told Kim that Japan is considering giving additional assistance.

### **3. DPRK-Japan Relations**

Associated Press ("N KOREA SAYS NOT INTERESTED IN DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH JAPAN," Seoul, 9/24/00) reported that the DPRK said on September 24 that it was not interested in opening diplomatic ties with Japan if Japan keeps accusing the DPRK of abducting its citizens. Rodong Sinmun, the official daily of the DPRK's ruling Workers' Party of Korea, reiterated that the DPRK had nothing to do with kidnapping Japanese citizens. Instead, it accused Japan of kidnapping nearly 200,000 Korean women and forcing them into sexual slavery for Japan's World War II military. Rodong said, "[The DPRK] does not care about whether diplomatic relations with Japan are improved or not. It is as foolish as coming home to roost that Japan continues to get on the nerves of the (North) by raising the nonexistent issue of 'suspected kidnapping.' "

### **4. Sino-Japanese Relations**

Reuters ("CHINA REPEATS CHARGE OF RISING JAPANESE MILITARISM," Beijing, 9/25/00) reported that the PRC's China Daily said Monday that Japan is a growing military threat to world security. The commentary said, "Militarism brewing in Japan. Japan has been bent on finding any ruse to implement its plan to build itself into a military power." The article also suggested that Japan was on the verge of taking up nuclear arms despite its longstanding non-nuclear pledge. The newspaper accused Japan of using the PRC's military build-up as a pretext for raising Japan's defense profile and said pressure by "military die-hards" made amendments to the war-renouncing Japanese constitution "only a matter of time." It added, "If passed, the amendment will assist Japan's continual efforts to become a military superpower, which will definitely pose a peril to world security. More dangerous to world security is Japan's nuclear ability." The commentary took particular issue with Japan's participation in a US plan to build an anti-missile shield in Asia, saying a thaw in ties between the two Koreas removed the suspected DPRK missile threat cited by the US and Japan as its justification.

### **5. Clinton on US-China Relations**

The New York Times published an opinion article by US President William Jefferson Clinton ("CHINA'S OPPORTUNITIES, AND OURS," 9/24/00) which praised the passage of permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) for the PRC. Clinton noted that the passage of the PNTR did not provide a solely economic opportunity to the PRC. Clinton wrote that the PNTR and membership in the World Trade Organization "puts China on a course that will diminish the role of government in its economy and its people's lives, while bringing China into an international system of rules and responsibilities." Clinton admitted that the US still has "significant differences with China, but through engagement we have a better mechanism to resolve them." Specifically, Clinton noted US and PRC engagement in working toward a peaceful resolution between the PRC and Taiwan. He added, "Taiwan will join the WTO immediately after China. Their economic ties will deepen further, and so will the costs of confrontation." Clinton also praised the PRC for its efforts in meeting WTO obligations and its participation in international regimes and institutions that set global rules. However, he wrote, "we must maintain our military presence and our alliances in Asia. There remain enough uncertainties that we must be ready if there is a crisis. If tensions between North and South Korea decrease and if China continues to open up, we may be tempted to draw back. We must not do so. For we are not in Asia simply to respond to danger, but to be a balance wheel for stability that prevents danger from arising."

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. Red Cross Talks**

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "2 MORE FAMILY REUNIONS THIS YEAR: RED CROSS ACCORD ALSO ALLOWS 300 PEOPLE TO EXCHANGE LETTERS," Seoul, 09/25/00) reported that a joint statement said Red Cross officials from the ROK and the DPRK agreed on September 23 to hold two more reunions for families separated since the Korean War (1950-53) in the last two months of the year. The statement also said they agreed to allow 300 people from each Korea to exchange letters with their separated relatives. This will mark the first-ever official correspondence between divided relatives in the two Koreas. Under the accord, the two sides will allow 100 people each to visit the other sides' capital November 2-4 and December 5-7 for temporary reunions.

### **2. ROK-Japan Talks**

The Korea Herald (Chon Shi-yong, "KIM, MORI DISCUSS APPROACH TOWARD N.K.," Atami, Japan, 09/25/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori agreed on September 24 to strive to set up various links and communications between Japan and the DPRK that could lead to a summit between the leaders of the two countries. Kim's spokesman, Park Joon-young noted that Kim and Mori shared the view that, taking advantage of rapprochement on the Korean Peninsula, Japan should improve ties with the DPRK in the summit talks. He said that the Japanese position is based on President Kim's suggestion that direct summit talks between Mori and the DPRK leader would be the best means to normalize relations between Japan and the DPRK.

### **3. Inter-Korean Defense Ministers' Talks**

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "FIRST INTER-KOREAN DEFENSE MINISTERS' TALKS DUE TODAY," Cheju, 09/25/00) reported that the ROK and the DPRK will hold their first-ever defense ministers' talks on Cheju island on Monday. A 13-member DPRK delegation, led by the DPRK's minister of the People's Armed Forces, Kim Il-chol, arrived on September 24 for the landmark talks

aimed at easing tension while building military trust between the two countries. Kim will sit opposite ROK Defense Minister Cho Seong-tae at the two-day discussions. The two sides will hold three sessions before the DPRK delegates return home on September 26 through the truce village of Panmunjom. The upcoming talks will deal with an agreed-upon agenda concerning military cooperation for the proposed reconnection of a cross-border railway and an adjacent highway. The officials said that while the DPRK wants to limit the discussion to the cross-border ventures, the ROK is expected to raise the issues of setting up a military hot line and other comprehensive confidence-building measures, including the notification of military drills and troop movements and sending observers to each other's military training exercises.

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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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea  
[The Center for Global Communications](#), Tokyo, Japan  
Center for American Studies,  
[Fudan University](#), Shanghai, People's Republic of China  
[Monash Asia Institute](#),  
[Monash University](#), Clayton, Australia

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

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

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

Kim Hee-sun: [khs688@hotmail.com](mailto:khs688@hotmail.com)  
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

Yunxia Cao: [yule111@sina.com](mailto:yule111@sina.com)  
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: [dlshen@fudan.ac.cn](mailto:dlshen@fudan.ac.cn)  
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: [John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au)  
Clayton, Australia

Leanne Payton: [lbpat1@smtp.monash.edu.au](mailto:lbpat1@smtp.monash.edu.au)  
Clayton, Australia

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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)