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# NAPSNet Daily Report 26 August, 1998

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### **I. United States**

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#### **1. US-DPRK Talks**

The Washington Post (Dana Priest, "U.S. WARNS N. KOREA ON SUSPECT FACILITY," 08/26/98, A16) reported that US officials said that the US told the DPRK during talks in New York that it strongly objects to the underground construction of an alleged secret nuclear facility. The officials added, however, that because the precise nature of the secret installation is not known, the US does not intend to abandon the 1994 Agreed Framework. An unnamed senior official stated, "Terminating the agreement gives them the ability to restart existing facilities, which could begin producing nuclear weapons within months. These new ones will take half a decade or more" to complete. Also during the talks, the US delegation told the DPRK side that the US government is committed to the agreed framework, including reconsidering sanctions against the DPRK and delivering the promised fuel oil. The officials said that the talks were suspended last night and that the US delegation was returning to Washington for consultations. The article also said that on August 4, a select US House of Representatives panel was briefed by top administration officials on the construction. During the meeting, some members reportedly accused Secretary of State Madeleine Albright of misleading them about DPRK intentions.

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#### **2. DPRK Famine**

Reuters ("STORMY WEATHER RUINS NORTH KOREAN CROPS," Geneva, 08/26/98) reported that Marcel Fortier of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said Tuesday that heavy weekend rains, hail, and strong winds in the DPRK had destroyed corn crops and rice

fields. The UN World Food Program said that it was seeking permission from the DPRK government to send a field mission to survey the damage.

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### **3. ROK Labor Unrest**

The Associated Press ("KOREA JOBLESS RATE AT 32-YEAR HIGH," Seoul, 08/26/98) reported that the ROK government said Wednesday that the unemployment rate hit a 32-year high of 7.6 percent in July, with 1.65 million people out of work. Analysts predicted that the unemployment rate will continue to rise, reaching 8 percent by year's end. ROK Finance and Economy Minister Lee Kyu-sung predicted in a report to the National Assembly Tuesday that the economy would contract by up to 6 percent this year, one percentage point lower than he had previously forecast.

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA GOVT PLEDGES TO HALT INTERVENTION IN LABOR DISPUTES," Seoul, 08/26/98) reported that ROK Labor Minister Lee Ki-ho said Wednesday that the government will stay out of future labor disputes. Lee stated, "The government mediated the Hyundai Motor situation because a prolonged strike threatened to worsen the economic crisis. In the future, the government will leave labor strikes to be resolved by the union and management, and there will be no more direct government intervention or mediation."

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### **4. PRC Floods**

The Associated Press (Charles Hutzler, "CHINA MOBILIZES TROOPS FOR FLOOD AID," Beijing, 08/26/98) reported that the PRC's state-run Xinhua News Agency said that PRC President Jiang Zemin ordered 178,000 soldiers and police to be on top alert today to guard against further flooding from the Yangtze River. The government meanwhile raised the official death toll from the flooding from 2,000 to 3,004 people.

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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