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I. United States

1. Inter-Korean Defense Minister Talks

New York Times (Howard W. French, "DEFENSE CHIEFS OF TWO KOREAS MEET ON REDUCING TENSIONS," Cheju, 9/26/00) reported that at the conclusion of the inter-Korean defense minister talks Tuesday, ROK military officials said the two sides had agreed to opening the demilitarized zone along the border so that workers could begin the reconstruction of severed railroad links. The details of which areas of the heavily armed zone would be opened are to be negotiated at a lower level next month. ROK defense minister Cho Seong-tae and Kim Il-chol, minister of the People's Army of the DPRK headed the talks. Despite a huge range of potential items for discussion, the delegations remained behind closed doors for less than an hour and a half before going on a sightseeing tour of mountain fortifications on Cheju. Cho and Kim said they would meet again in mid-November in the DPRK. Although results of the two-day meeting fell short of ROK hopes, both sides were satisfied with the symbolism of the defense chiefs of two countries negotiating for the first time ever. Lieutenant General Kim Hee-sang, an ROK spokesman said, "The significance of the meeting is that the military chiefs of both sides, which had been hostile to each other for 50 years, sat together." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for September 26, 2000.]

2. Food Aid for DPRK

Agence France Presse (Jun Kwan-Woo, "SOUTH KOREA PROMISES MORE FOOD FOR FAMINE-HIT NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 9/26/00) reported that the ROK on Tuesday promised more food aid for the DPRK following a surprise request during economic talks in Seoul. Lee Keun-Kyung, the ROK chief delegate at the talks, said, "There were discussions (on food aid). The government will announce the plan at an early date after taking necessary legal procedures." Lee said an announcement would be made before the next round of inter-Korean economic talks which start on October 18. ROK officials refused to disclose details on the timing and amount of the food aid. ROK's Yonhap News Agency reported that the government plans to buy around 600,000 to 700,000 tones of foreign grain - rice from Thailand and corn from the PRC - for the DPRK.

3. William Perry Resigns

Washington Times ("PERRY STEPS DOWN FROM NORTH KOREA POST," 9/26/00) reported that the US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said on September 25 that former US defense secretary William Perry resigned as coordinator of US policy toward the DPRK. Boucher said US State Department Counselor Wendy Sherman, already a key player in contacts between the US and the DPRK, will take over the part-time post while retaining her current position. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for September 26, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-Canada Talks

The Korea Times ("NK, CANADA TO OPEN DIPLOMATIC TALKS IN BEIJING," Seoul, 09/25/00) reported that an ROK Foreign Affairs- Trade Ministry official said yesterday the DPRK and Canada are expected to hold negotiations on diplomatic normalization in Beijing, for from September 26-27. The talks, to be headed by assistant minister-level officials, will focus on the time framework for normalization of their relations and whether to open resident missions in each other's capitals. On July 26, Foreign Ministers Paek Nam-sun and Lloyd Axworthy met in Bangkok on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to exchange opinions on diplomatic ties. During the meeting, Canada recognized the DPRK as a state. The Canadian delegation will be led by Assistant Deputy Minister Joseph Caron, who is scheduled to visit Seoul, following his trip to Beijing to brief ROK officials on the results of normalization talks.

2. DPRK Nuclear Status

The Korea Times ("IAEA CONCERNED OVER NK NUKE PROGRAM," Seoul, 09/25/00) reported that an international nuclear watchdog has reiterated its "concern" over DPRK's nuclear programs, noting it cannot conclude whether the DPRK is diverting nuclear materials. The resolution was issued on September 22 by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during its 44th general conference held in Vienna. The resolution said, "The general conference urges the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) to come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with IAEA, to cooperate fully and promptly with the Agency in the implementation of the safeguards agreement and to take all steps the Agency may deem necessary to preserve all information relevant to verifying the accuracy and completeness of the DPRK's initial report on the inventory of nuclear material subject to safeguards until the DPRK comes into full compliance with its safeguards

agreement."

3. ROK-DPRK Defense Ministers' Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("DEFENSE MINISTERS AGREE WORKING LEVEL COMMITTEE," Seoul, 09/25/00) and Joongnang Ilbo (Choi Hoon, "DEFENSE MINISTERS AGREE TO WORK TOWARD EASING TENSIONS," Seoul, 09/25/00) reported that ROK Minister of National Defense (MND) Cho Seong-tae held the first round of talks with his DPRK counterpart Kim Il Chol on September 25, at the Lotte Hotel on Cheju Island. The two agreed to set up a working committee to deal with issues related to the clearance of land mines in the corridor through which the Seoul-Shinuiju railroad and Munsan-Kaesong highway will pass, and to a second round of talks in November to be held in the DPRK. Sources said the meeting place would likely be the Baekdu mountain. Cho had proposed the establishment of a military hot line, advanced notification and observation of troop movements and exercises, regular meetings and the establishment of a military committee headed by four star generals from both sides. MND spokesman Yoon Il-young said that the two sides shared, in principle, the concept that the military should guarantee the implementation of the June 15 Joint Declaration, but would focus on matters related to land mine clearance first. Staff of the delegations held working level discussions on the draft of a joint communique to be announced on September 26, containing a military guarantee to maintain peace on the peninsula.

4. DPRK-ROK Economic Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo (Song Eui-dal, "ECONOMIC TALKS GET UNDERWAY," Seoul, 09/25/00) reported that delegations from the DPRK and the ROK held their first round of working level talks in Samchung-dong, Seoul, on September 25 and discussed guarantees for investments, the prevention of dual taxation and the setting up of a dispute arbitration committee. Deputy Assistant Minister of Finance and Economy (MOFE) Lee Keun-kyung raised these issues and the setting up of a clearing account with his counterpart, Jong Un Op. However, the DPRK wanted to limit the talks to investment guarantees and the prevention of double taxation.

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.
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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
Berkeley, California, United States

Gee Gee Wong: napsnet@nautilus.org

Berkeley, California, United States

Robert Brown: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Hee-sun: khs688@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

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

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

Yunxia Cao: yule111@sina.com
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

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

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

Leanne Payton: 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