

# NAPSNet Daily Report 28 July, 1997

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## **I. United States**

### **1. US Secretary of State on ARF Role in Korea**

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in July 27 remarks at the fourth annual meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia ("ALBRIGHT 7/27 REMARKS AT THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM," USIA Transcript, 7/28/97), said that the US appreciates the support of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in efforts to reach a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. Albright stated, "Achieved with the help of our allies and partners, the US-DPRK Agreed Framework has frozen and will eventually dismantle North Korea's nuclear program, thereby eliminating one of the most serious threats to regional security. Its implementation has reduced tensions, promoted North-South contact, and created a positive atmosphere for Four Party talks. At a preparatory session on August 5, the United States, South Korea, North Korea and China will determine the date, venue, agenda and procedures for the formal start of the negotiations. Our immediate goal will be to lower tensions and build confidence on the Korean Peninsula. The conclusion of an agreement would put a formal end to the Korean War and free the Korean people from the constant fear with which they lived with for the last half century." Albright added, "The Korean Peninsula Energy Development

Organization -- established to implement the Framework -- is facing great difficulties in funding its delivery of heavy fuel oil to North Korea. The oil is crucial, because it substitutes a safe energy source for the nuclear fuel with weapons potential North Korea was developing. I urge those of you that are not yet assisting KEDO to begin doing so in a significant and sustained manner." Albright also stated, "The members of the ARF also must work together to advance the cause of arms control and non-proliferation in this region and around the world. A top priority is the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and I urge all ARF members to work for its entry into force as soon as possible. I urge you to support the opening of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty at the Conference on Disarmament, and I hope those states that have not already done so will ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. To prevent the spread of missiles and related technology, I encourage all ARF members to adhere to the guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime. President Clinton believes that in the next century nuclear arsenals can be cut even further, and perhaps ultimately eliminated. To that end, the United States will continue to work with the ASEAN countries on the treaty for a Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, and we hope to resolve soon the remaining issues that stand in the way of our full agreement.

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eliminated. To that end, the United States will continue to work with the ASEAN countries on the treaty for a Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, and we hope to resolve soon the remaining issues that stand in the way of our full agreement.

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United Press International ("ALBRIGHT SEEKS SUPPORT ON N.KOREA DEAL," Kuala Lumpur, 7/26/97) reported that US officials said Saturday that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has appealed to wealthy Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations to contribute a substantial amount of money to help supply the DPRK with fuel oil in support of the nuclear power plant construction project. Albright reportedly made the appeal during a meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in his role as ASEAN president. Albright told the prime minister that supporting the project, a vital component of the 1994 US-DPRK agreement under which the DPRK is to freeze its atomic weapons program in exchange for receiving the new reactors, was in the security interests of all Asian nations. Albright also noted that the contribution would be small for ASEAN nations with thriving economies. US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns commented: "She asked for a single ASEAN contribution in the low double-digit millions. There was no commitment given, but there was no cold water thrown on it either."

### **2. Russia Supports Four-Party Talks**

The Associated Press ("RUSSIA BACKS KOREA PEACE TALKS," Kuala Lumpur, 7/27/97) reported that on Sunday Russia reaffirmed its support of the proposed four-party Korean peace talks, while also offering to play a greater role in the region. Russian officials attending the ASEAN Regional Forum said their government -- which claims to have an equal relationship with both Korean nations -- is seeking a greater role in settling the current conflicts. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov called the situation in the Korean Peninsula the region's "most pressing problem." Another senior official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, acknowledged that his government supports the talks. "But our position is, if there are any serious difficulties in that formula ... we think Russia can play an active role," he added. [Ed. note: See also "Russia Supports Four-Party Talks" in the US section of the July 24 Daily Report.]

### **3. EU Hopes for Improved Ties with DPRK**

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("E.U. LOOKS FORWARD TO INCREASING DIALOG WITH N. KOREA," Kuala Lumpur, 7/28/97) reported that European Commission President Jacques Poos said Monday that the European Union will consider increasing dialogue with the DPRK once the DPRK shows willingness to join the international community on a peaceful basis. "Once visible progress has been made on the path toward improvement of relations between the two Koreas -- and when North Korea has shown its willingness to peacefully integrate into the international community -- the E.U. is prepared to consider increased dialogue with the North Korea," said Poos, Luxembourg's foreign minister. Poos made his comments at the opening of the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference, which groups nine regional states and 10 developed countries in annual talks on global and inter-regional issues. The E.U. is providing US\$40 million in food and medical aid to the DPRK to promote stability, and contributing to the KEDO program to build nuclear power plants in that country.

### **4. DPRK Nuclear Plant Construction**

United Press International ("EQUIPMENT FOR N.KOREA NUKE PLANT SAILS," Seoul, 7/28/97) reported that two ROK ships on Monday set sail to the DPRK carrying bulldozers and other heavy equipment needed for the DPRK nuclear power plant construction project, proceeding under the terms of the 1994 US-DPRK Agreement under which the DPRK agreed to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

### **5. DPRK Drought**

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA ALLOWS FOREIGNERS TO INSPECT DROUGHT AREAS," Seoul, 7/28/97) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Monday that a group of representatives from UN and other international relief agencies on Saturday inspected drought-damaged Hwangju and Pongsan counties, 50 kilometers south of Pyongyang. KCNA cited Christin Roberto, a senior technical adviser to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, as saying that the famine-threatened country can expect little harvest this autumn even if rains return to normal levels later this summer. On Saturday, it was reported that the DPRK said it is now battling widespread drought that has ruined 290,000 hectares of farmland and destroyed 704,300 tons of grain. [Ed. note: See also the following item.]

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA SAYS DROUGHT RUINING CROPS," Seoul, 7/26/97) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Friday that lack of rain at the height of the growing season "has rendered the food shortage all the more serious." KCNA said some 716,300 acres of crop land had been damaged through July 21, and that grain losses were expected to total 704,300 tons. "Unprecedentedly abnormal weather is exerting a catastrophic influence upon all sectors of the national economy in Korea," KCNA said. A dry spell that lasted 50 days since the end of May has dried up thousands of small rivers and reservoirs, especially in traditional grain-

producing provinces in the western half of the North, it said. With temperatures rising, more than 237,000 domestic animals were killed and 113,620 acres were burned in forest fires, it said. Dry field crops, such as early-ripening maize which is harvested in July and August, also were devastated, it said. UN agencies have said previously that, to avert famine, the DPRK requires 800,000 tons of emergency food assistance to reach its October harvest. Now, however, the DPRK is saying it expects little from that harvest. [Ed. note: See also "DPRK Drought" in the ROK section, below.]

## **6. PRC Drought**

The Associated Press ("DROUGHT COSTS CHINA \$1.2 BILLION," Beijing, 7/28/97) reported that severe drought in the PRC's eastern Shandong province has forced factories to close, left cities short of water and caused more than US\$1.2 billion in economic losses, according to the PRC's official newspaper Economic Daily. Just 3 inches of rain has fallen on Shandong since June 1, 62 percent less than normal and the least on record since 1916, the newspaper said. The densely populated province, a major grain producer, has spent US\$116 million since June fighting the drought, even trucking in water, the newspaper reported. An earlier report in the China Daily indicated that 95 percent of Shandong's rivers and nearly half its 57 reservoirs are dry.

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. DPRK Drought**

The DPRK's official central news agency reported Friday that the abnormally hot weather was having a direct effect on its food production. A heat wave of 30 degrees centigrade, accompanied by an absence of rain, has hit the country for the last fifty days, resulting in main water reserves dropping to 10 percent with smaller reservoirs drying up completely. The news agency said that 5,300 medium and small streams and 127,000 underground irrigation systems have ceased to operate, and a resulting grain loss of some 704,300 tons is expected. It continued that farm land in Pyongbuk, Pyongnam and Hwangnam, the main grain-producing regions of the DPRK, is barren. Estimates of corn production for August and September were impossible to gauge, and therefore the current food shortage may be prolonged. In addition, according to the agency, more than 237,000 livestock animals have died. (Chosun Ilbo, "DPRK FEARS GRAIN DAMAGE DUE TO DROUGHT," 07/28/97)

### **2. ROK Criticizes PRC Repatriation**

The ROK yesterday expressed regret over the PRC's decision to repatriate a DPRK citizen involved in the 1995 abduction of a ROK priest in the PRC. "We regret that the main suspect in the incident is returning to the DPRK while Reverend Ahn Seung-woon has not yet been freed," the ROK Foreign Ministry said in a statement over the PRC government's deportation of Li Kyong-chun to the DPRK. Li will be sent to the DPRK today, according to ministry officials. Li, convicted of masterminding Ahn's abduction July 9, 1995, in Yanji, is being deported to the DPRK after having completed his two-year jail sentence, the officials quoted PRC authorities. In the statement, the ROK Foreign Ministry strongly urged the PRC government to take steps to obtain the release of Reverend Ahn. Reverend Ahn, who was last seen on a mission for the Full Gospel Church in Yanji, PRC, is believed to have been kidnapped by Li and other DPRK accomplices. The DPRK has denied the abduction charges, and Ahn appeared on DPRK television about a month after the incident, claiming that he defected voluntarily. (Korea Herald, "SEOUL UNHAPPY OVER PRC'S RELEASE OF SUSPECTED ABDUCTOR," 07/28/97)

### **3. US Army Readiness Scrutinized**

US congressional inspectors found rusting equipment, dead batteries and deteriorating engine parts on Army ships loaded with weapons and supplies that would be the first sent into a sudden war. A quarter of the equipment considered the highest priority was rated below the Army's readiness goal, according to a report made public Friday by the US General Accounting Office. As of this spring, 13 of 51 sets of equipment fell below the Army's readiness standard. The US Defense Department acknowledged the GAO study but said the Army is taking steps to correct the problems. The equipment examined in the report includes tanks and infantry fighting vehicles for 4,500 soldiers as well as combat and support equipment for an additional 5,300 soldiers. Under Army doctrine refined with the experience of the Gulf War, the "brigade set" of equipment is to be "prepositioned" in distant oceans -- the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean is one frequent stopping point -- where it can be transported to battle zones such as the Persian Gulf or the Horn of Africa in much less time than equipment shipped from the US. (Korea Times, "US ARMY'S WAR EQUIPMENT BELOW READINESS STANDARD: GAO REPORT," 07/28/97)

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

Produced by [the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development](#).

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