

NAPSNet Daily Report 29 April, 1997

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 29 April, 1997", NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, 1997,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-29-april-1997/>

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I. United States

1. DPRK Famine Situation

The Associated Press (John Leicester, "STARVING, NORTH KOREANS EAT WOOD," Beijing, 4/29/97) reported that Kathi Zellweger of the Caritas aid agency, having just returned from the DPRK, said Tuesday that food warehouses are nearly empty and officials are adding ground-up wood to rations of rice and corn to make supplies last longer. Zellweger said she saw hungry children too weak to stand, hospitals that can't feed patients and other signs that the food crisis is "heading toward a disaster if nothing is done." Zellweger said "we will have a full-blown famine with mass starvation, and possibly also refugees heading toward China and South Korea" by June or July unless food aid is delivered. Zellweger reported seeing piles of oak tree chips at a grain mill, and being told they would be made into a powder to stretch rations.

The Associated Press (Ian Stewart, "VIETNAM: N.KOREA REJECTS RICE GIFT," Hanoi, Vietnam, 4/29/97) reported that a Vietnamese Finance Ministry official said Tuesday that the DPRK has rejected an offer of free rice from Vietnam and also will not allow Vietnam to settle a debt with food. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the DPRK sent Deputy Prime Minister Kong Chin-tae to Vietnam earlier in April to appeal for 30,000 tons of rice on credit, but that Hanoi

balked when Pyongyang insisted on dictating the terms of the aid. Vietnam then proposed paying off an earli

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US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 29," USIA Transcript, 4/29/97) stated that US Secretary of State Albright met with PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen April 28, and that during the meeting a number of issues related to Korea were discussed, including the DPRK food situation. In response to subsequent questions regarding the PRC assessment of the situation, Burns said, "I think it's fair to say the Chinese share our assessment that there is a dramatic food shortage in North Korea. Minister Qichen told us that China has contributed a substantial amount of corn, grant corn aid to the North Koreans just recently. We welcome that. We think that countries have an obligation to meet this humanitarian need."

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 28," USIA Transcript, 4/28/97) defended US policy on food aid for the DPRK against charges that the US has not responded sufficiently to appeals by the UN World Food Program. Burns said, "As you know, we are the leading donor to the World Food Program. We have met two requests in the last two months. We have not been asked for any additional food aid. We will simply rely upon the World Food Program as the authoritative source to tell us if there is a need for an additional tranche of food aid from donor countries." Burns also said, "We do hope that other countries will respond favorably to the United Nations, because we think one ought to separate politics from the humanitarian need that people obviously have in North Korea." Pressed on the last point, Burns added, "You know, if we were going to tie food aid to political issues, there are four or five political issues we could tie it to in North Korea. We could do the same thing in Zaire. We could do it in any number of countries. But once you start tying food aid to political issues, I think you pretty much guarantee you won't deliver food aid to people in most countries of the world." Burns expressed skepticism regarding reports that cannibalism has begun to take place in the DPRK. Finally, Burns criticized the DPRK celebration of its military's anniversary the previous week. "It would seem -- you watch this military parade that the North Koreans had on Friday, that CNN paraded on the television screens all day on Friday and throughout the weekend, it would seem to us that those well fed soldiers, and well groomed soldiers with brilliant uniforms, that some of the money ought to be spend on their own people who are starving," Burns said.

2. Korean Peninsula Security Situation

The Associated Press ("PENTAGON: KOREAS A `TINDERBOX," Washington, 4/29/97) reported that US Defense Department spokesman Ken Bacon said Tuesday that the threat of a DPRK attack on the ROK has not grown amid widespread famine, but that the DPRK remains a "potential tinderbox." "We do not see signs of heightened military readiness in North Korea. We don't see signs that any sort of military action is imminent in North Korea," Bacon said. Two weeks ago, US Army Gen. John Tilelli Jr., the commander of the 37,000 US troops in the Demilitarized Zone between the two

Koreas, called the DPRK threat "high," partly due to the humanitarian crisis. Bacon said, however, that US intelligence hasn't observed any new troop movements or activity "that leads us to believe the situation is any more dangerous today than it was last month or last year." Bacon also discounted statements by DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop that the DPRK is preparing for war and has nuclear and chemical weapons capable of "scorching" the ROK and Japan. "Hwang used to be Mr. Ideology in Pyongyang. He was the person who was sort of in charge of their ... propaganda program," Bacon said, showing a skepticism that several other US officials have expressed. "Much of what he said recently is what North Korea has been saying for years about raining a sea of fire down on its enemies."

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 28," USIA Transcript, 4/28/97) expressed skepticism regarding reports that the Russian defense minister said during his visit to the PRC last week that in the event of war on the Korean peninsula, Russia should join the battle. Burns said, "Well, I haven't seen that statement. It doesn't seem to be -- it seems to be an improbable statement or it must have been a misquote. I think the Russian Federation has said consistently over the last few years that it supports stability in the Korean Peninsula."

The Associated Press ("AUSTRALIA OFFERS DEFENSE FOR KOREA," Canberra, Australia, 4/27/97) reported that Australian Defense Minister Ian McLachlan said on Sunday that Australian forces could intervene in a war on the Korean peninsula or anywhere freedom is threatened. The remarks during a television interview followed reports that a classified government review of the nation's defense strategy calls on the military to be more assertive against potential threats from Asia. McLachlan specifically mentioned the Korean peninsula as one place Australian troops might intervene if the DPRK launched a war. When asked to promise that Australian forces would never be used in a battle between China and Taiwan, McLachlan replied: "I can't give an ironclad guarantee that Australian forces won't be used anywhere." "If freedom, if you like, liberty or the way we've liked to live our lives over the last 40 or 50 years is threatened anywhere in the world, we have to consider that," McLachlan said. The opposition Labor Party attacked McLachlan's stance as uninformed and noted that during its time in power, its strategy was to defend continental Australia. McLachlan countered that Labor did not always follow its doctrine, such as when it sent ships to the Gulf conflict. Labor ruled the government for 13 years, but was ousted by the Conservatives a year ago.

3. US-PRC Views of Four-Party Peace Talks Status

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 29," USIA Transcript, 4/29/97) stated that during the meeting between US Secretary of State Albright and PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen April 28, the two agreed on the need for intensified communication and consultations between the US and the PRC in order to get the four-party peace talks to begin as soon as possible. The two discussed their mutual perceptions as to why the DPRK "has not yet made a clear decision to join the Four Party peace talks and let them begin," Burns said. Burns added that Albright and Qian agreed that the two countries would have meetings between senior officials on the Korea situation.

4. Chemical Weapons Convention Comes Into Force

The Associated Press ("WEAPONS TREATY TAKES EFFECT," United Nations, 4/29/97) reported that the worldwide treaty banning chemical weapons came into effect on Tuesday. The pact bans the use, development, production or stockpiling of all chemical warfare agents and requires that countries destroy existing stockpiles over the next decade. As of Tuesday, 87 countries had ratified the treaty. The US and Russia are currently the only two countries to acknowledge they have chemical

weapons. The US Senate ratified the pact on Thursday, barely in time to participate in its initial implementation. Russia's parliament postponed adoption of the ban on Friday, saying the country could not currently afford to destroy its stockpiles -- a task it says would cost US\$5 billion. Some 76 other countries that signed the agreement also have yet to conclude ratification. Several key countries suspected of having chemical weapons programs, such as Iraq and the DPRK, also have yet to sign on.

5. US Senate Approves Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense

The USIA ("CONGRESSIONAL REPORT, MONDAY, APRIL 28," 4/28/97) reported that the US Senate Armed Services Committee on April 24 approved legislation mandating US deployment of a nationwide anti-ballistic missile defense by 2003. The vote was 10-8, with all committee Republicans favoring the bill and all Democrats opposing it. The legislation would also require President Clinton to try to negotiate with Russia changes in the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty in order to liberalize that pact's stringent limits on anti-missile defenses for US or Russian territory. Democrats are expected to filibuster the legislation on the Senate floor.

II. Announcements

1. Appearance of US Representative Tony Hall

The Secretary's Open Forum and the Asian Pacific American Federal Foreign Affairs Council are jointly sponsoring an appearance by US Representative Tony Hall (D-Ohio) to discuss the DPRK food situation and related issues. The appearance is scheduled for 12:00 Noon, Friday, May 2, 1997, at the Dean Acheson Auditorium at the US State Department. In early April, Representative Hall toured the DPRK on a humanitarian fact-finding mission for the US government, and was given unprecedented freedom to make "unannounced stops." Representative Hall is the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Congressional Hunger Center, and has long worked on reducing hunger and poverty around the world. Attendance is open to everyone, including media, NGO's, and the diplomatic community. Participants from outside the State Dept./USAID must RSVP as soon as possible and get security clearance in advance by sending their Name, Social Security No, Birth Date and Organization Name to: Alan Lang (Fax: 202-647-4040), Cora Foley (Fax: 202-647-5286, or ACcfoley@inr20.us-state.osis.gov), Nguyen (703-302-4167), or Yoon Lee (Fax: 202-647-2993, Tel: 647-8737, e-mail: ylee@usaid.gov). Please arrive at the "Diplomatic Entrance" (C Street and 22nd Street) of the State Department by 11:45AM.

2. Fund-Raising Fast for DPRK Famine Relief

On May 3, the Bay Area-based "Fast for North Korean Hunger Relief" is sponsoring a nationwide fast to recognize the hunger crisis in the DPRK. The day-long fast is a grassroots campaign to publicize the urgency of the famine as well raise funds used to purchase food aid. Organizers chose the date to coincide with Children's Day -- celebrated in Korea and throughout Asia on May 5. On the evening of May 3, Fast participants will convene at Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco to publicly break the fast at an open-mike ceremony that will include a cultural performance by the Korean Youth Cultural. The Fast for North Korean Hunger Relief will be joined by groups in Boston, Chicago, New York, and other communities. The effort is the creation of a small group of Bay Area residents comprised largely of young second generation Korean Americans. The Fast for North Korean Hunger Relief is working with the American Friends Service Committee to ensure that 100 percent of all donations are used to purchase food. All funds raised by the group will be channeled through the UN World Food Program, which will monitor distribution of food from port to distribution point. Donation checks should be made out to the "American Friends Service Committee," with "Korea Relief Fund" on the memo line, and sent to: The Fast for North Korean Hunger Relief, 1400 Lincoln

Street, Berkeley, CA 94702. Email: glee@igc.apc.org WWW: <http://haas.berkeley.edu/~jkim/fast.html>
or <http://www.geocities.com/~han-queerean/fast/>

[Editor's note: NAPSNet in early March distributed a list of US non-governmental organizations providing humanitarian relief aid to the DPRK. This list will be redistributed today as a separate posting, and also may be found (using either web browsers or ftp software) in the "Special Reports" folder of the NAPSNet Archive: ftp://ftp.nautilus.org/napsnet/special_reports/]

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.

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

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