# NAPSNet Daily Report 29 January, 1999

## Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 29 January, 1999", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 29, 1999, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-29-january-1999/

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## I. United States

### 1. DPRK Underground Construction

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA REPORTS PROGRESS WITH US," Seoul, 01/28/99) reported that the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency said in a dispatch late Thursday that the US has agreed to consider its demand for economic compensation for a one-time visit to a suspect underground construction site. The dispatch quoted an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying, "The US ... hinted that it affirmatively (is) taking into account the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's demand for compensation." The spokesman added, "That can be said to be significant progress." He reiterated the DPRK demand that the US must pay US$300 million in cash or "something" equivalent for a visit to the site at Kumchang-ri. The spokesman also said that the US has agreed to accelerate work on building two light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK and to speed up the delivery of heavy fuel oil promised under the Agreed Framework. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 29.]

**2. DPRK Military Threat**

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "U.S. COMMANDER VOICES 'CONCERN' OVER N. KOREA," 01/29/99, 4) reported that US Army General John Tilelli, commander of the US Forces-Korea, said Thursday that recent developments in the DPRK have raised concern about the DPRK's military capabilities. Tilelli stated, "The firing of the Taepodong missile causes concern as to what their intent is and that, coupled with the suspected site ... causes us concern." Asked if the DPRK is seeking nuclear-tipped long-range missiles, Tilelli replied, "It's hard to determine what the intent of North Korea is on any of these issues, other than they want to maintain military capabilities." He added, however, "From a military standpoint, there have been changes. Their conventional forces essentially stabilized at a stable level of readiness, lower than it was, while their missile technology, their asymmetric technologies have increased." Tilelli stated, "We know that the Nodong missile has come out of [research and development] and is being produced. Whether or not we would categorize it as deployed or not, at this point is difficult to say.... We believe they are building them." Tilelli said that, as a result, getting new missile defenses "is one of my top priorities." He warned that a second flight test of the Taepodong would further increase tensions in the region, and he expressed hope that US- DPRK talks regarding the suspected underground nuclear site at Kumchangri will help to resolve questions about the facility. Tilelli refused to speculate on whether the DPRK "collapse." He added, "We see Kim Jong-il as in charge. He is perceived to be the leader by the forces and the people." He said that despite severe economic problems, military forces in the DPRK have been given "more than their fair share" of food and fuel resources and as a result their war- fighting preparedness has decreased only slightly. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 29.]

**3. Anti-US Protests in ROK**

The Associated Press ("ANTI-U.S. PROTESTS IN SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 01/28/99) reported that hundreds of ROK students on Thursday held sometimes violent protests in Seoul and three other cities to demand the withdrawal of US troops from the ROK. In Seoul, 600 students clashed with police and burned a US flag and an effigy of President Clinton during a rally at Hanyang University. They chanted, "Let's kick the US out and unify our fatherland." In Pusan, 300 students briefly clashed with riot police after a campus rally in which they burned an effigy of Clinton wrapped in a US flag. In Kwangju, 300 students were blocked from marching into the streets after an anti-US rally at Chosun University. A similar but smaller anti-US protest was reported in the southeastern city of Taegu. The participants were all members of the outlawed student group Hanchongryon. They issued statements supporting the DPRK's claim that the US is planning to wage war on the Korean peninsula.

**4. UN Conference on Disarmament**

Reuters (Stephanie Nebehay, "UN ARMS TALKS STILL SPLIT ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT," Geneva, 01/28/99) reported that US ambassador Robert Grey, who currently chairs the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD), said Thursday that the CD remains divided on whether to launch negotiations aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons. He added, however, that the CD accepted a proposal by South Africa for him to name a "special coordinator" within two weeks to try to reach a consensus on the issue. South Africa won formal backing in the debate from other non- aligned nations for setting up a negotiating committee aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons, but Grey said that some of the CD's 61 members were opposed. He stated, "Presidential consultations indicate that South Africa's proposal does not enjoy consensus at this stage." He added, "I will try to identify a special coordinator to assist with carrying out informal consultations with a view to establishing a

subsidiary body (on nuclear disarmament)." Unnamed Western diplomats said that the five official nuclear powers would not waver from their refusal to accept a UN negotiating body with a mandate to eliminate nuclear arms.

## II. Republic of Korea

### 1. UNDP Aid to DPRK

Korea Herald ("UNDP TO GIVE US$62.27 MILLION IN AGRICULTURAL AID TO DPRK," Seoul, 01/29/99) reported that the UN Development Program (UNDP) is planning to extend US$62.27 million in loans to the DPRK this year as part of its efforts to help the DPRK's agricultural restructuring. According to the UNDP's Seoul office on Thursday, the international organization plans to put the money into 1.05 million-hectare collective farms in the DPRK's 10 areas. The 10 regions are the seven provinces and the three cities of Pyongyang, Kaesong, and Nampo, a spokesman at the office said. The UNDP loans were calculated on the basis of US$59.24 per hectare, he added.

### 2. DPRK Defector

Korea Herald ("DPRK LABORER DEFECTS TO ROK," Seoul, 01/29/99) reported that a 69-year-old DPRK laborer who had been kidnapped to the DPRK during the Korean War was smuggled into the ROK by way of a third country on Thursday, the National Intelligence Service (NIS) said. The man identifying himself as Lee Chong-ho said he was born in Sinan, South Cholla Province, ROK and worked as a laborer at construction sites and a fertilizer factory. He said he escaped from the DPRK in December last year and has a wife, a son and many relatives in the ROK, the NIS said.

### 3. DMZ Environmental Forum

Chosun Ilbo ("INTERNATIONAL GROUP FOUNDED TO PROTECT DMZ ENVIRONMENT," Seoul, 01/29/99) reported that an international foundation to preserve the flora and fauna of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas has been founded. Called the DMZ Forum, the group is based in the US and is led by a biological institute of the University of Pennsylvania, a US wildlife preservation society, and the Administration Research Institute of New York University. Other members of the forum include 22 researchers from academic circles and environmental protection groups from four countries, including the ROK, the US, Japan, and the PRC. The DMZ Forum will hold its first international academic symposium in March at the Asia Society in New York.

### 4. ROK-US Trade Talks

JoongAng Ilbo ("ROK-US TRADE TALKS HAVE STALLED," Seoul, 01/29/99) reported that recent negotiations about the trade dispute over beef between the ROK and the US have bogged down, as both sides are finding it hard to establish a middle ground. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on January 29, there was no agreement between the two countries, so one more day will be needed to reach a conclusion. The US is asking to carry over 1998's leftover portion, amounting to 117,000 tons of beef, to 1999's quota, together with the abolition of any distinctions made in retail outlets between ROK and US beef products. It also demanded a lowering of import tariff rates on beef for more distribution in the ROK market. The ROK explained that the drop in US

beef imports was strictly due to the recession in the ROK economy. ROK delegates offered to do away with separate display cases for US beef in department stores, but will not make concessions in the 42.3 percent tariff rate agreed upon at the Uruguay Talks.

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 in partnership with:
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