

NAPSNet Daily Report 3-4 April, 1997

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 3-4 April, 1997", NAPSNet Daily Report, April 04, 1997,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-3-4-april-1997/>

I. United States

1. PRC Response to Gingrich Visit

Reuters ("CHINA TO US: SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE ON TAIWAN", Beijing, 4/3/97) and the Associated Press ("CHINA CONFUSED BY GINGRICH WORDS", Beijing, 4/3/97) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang Thursday urged the United States to speak with a single voice on the PRC, pointing to "contradictions in the words of US leaders, including leaders of Congress." In commenting on US House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich's visit to the PRC and Taiwan, Shen stated that "we have seen that the words of the US government including some leaders of other departments are different from their promises." He added that Beijing does "not wish to see all the departments of the US government carrying out different foreign policies. That would be laughable."

2. Gingrich Japan Visit

Kevin Sullivan reported in the Washington Post ("GINGRICH, IN JAPAN, PLAYS UP MILITARY TIES, MUTES TRADE DISPUTE", Tokyo, 4/2/97) that Gingrich is spending two days in Japan "viewing the cherry blossoms and saying nothing too harsh about anyone." Gingrich lauded the Japan-US military alliance as the "cornerstone" of US Asia policy and dismissed trade disputes as an "irritant" in bilateral relations. He repeated his weekend statement that the US would "defend Taiwan" if attacked by the PRC, but noted that his comments were "not made in a provocative way." Sullivan described the US House Speaker as sounding "more like President Clinton's emissary than his chief rival" in his praise of Clinton's DPRK policy as "pretty rational."

3. US Japan Base Issue

Reuters ("NEW BLOW TO US MILITARY IN JAPAN ASSAULT CASE", Tokyo, 4/3/97) and CNN Interactive ("US SAILOR SUSPECTED OF BEATING JAPANESE WOMAN", Tokyo, 4/3/97) reported that a US sailor was under arrest at Yokosuka Naval Base near Tokyo on suspicion of assaulting his Japanese girlfriend. Police emphasized that there was no evidence of rape. Reuters described the

incident as a threatening "new blow to the image of the US military both at home and abroad." The incident became public as the Japanese cabinet approved measures to force Okinawa landowners to renew US military base leases. The bill was sent to the Diet for likely passage. PM Ryutaro Hashimoto hopes to enact the bill before he departs for an April 25 summit with US President Bill Clinton. The Associated Press ("JAPAN MULLS US BASE USE BILL", Tokyo, 4/3/97) noted that upon approval, the bill will strengthen Tokyo's legal position on the land issue before thousands of leases expire May 14.

4. Beijing Leaded Gas Ban

The Associated Press ("BEIJING TO BAN LEADED GASOLINE", Hong Kong, 4/3/97) reported that Beijing will ban the sale of leaded gasoline beginning July 1 in an effort to curb car and truck pollution, according to the China News Agency. The city will convert 299 service stations to unleaded-service only in the initial stage, and beginning in 1998, will ban all vehicles using unleaded gasoline. Xiang Baiqin of the Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau observed that 65 percent of the lead in Beijing's air comes from leaded-gas vehicle exhaust.

5. Gingrich's Visit to Taiwan

In his departure statement in Taipei April 2, House Speaker Newt Gingrich said that the United States encourages a resumption of cross-Strait dialogue and remains committed to the principle of peaceful, voluntary reunification of Taiwan with the PRC, consistent with the "one-China" policy. However, he added that in the event that the PRC seeks "...to reunify Taiwan with the mainland by force or intimidation, the United States will use all means necessary to prevent it." Gingrich said that Hong Kong's reversion to Chinese sovereignty is a very important test "...of whether or not Beijing is capable of having in fact a more open society with freedom of the press and with free elections." Gingrich also said he favored consideration of Taiwan on its own for accession to the World Trade Organization. USIA Transcript: Gingrich 4/2 Departure Statement in Taiwan ("US COMMITTED TO PRINCIPLE OF PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION," Washington, 4/3/97)

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Sends Food Aid to DPRK

The announcement of permission for private-sector-led rice aid to the DPRK Monday was the first step toward further food aid to the DPRK. Following the announcement, ROK government officials at the Ministry of National Unification yesterday said that the Seoul government will allow international relief agencies to buy foreign rice with its contributions and send it to the DPRK. Fearing possible diversion of rice for military purposes, the ROK government had banned international agencies from providing rice to the DPRK with the money it contributed to them since September 1995. Concerning the possibility of government assistance, the ROK government reiterated that it will discuss government-level assistance, such as provision of agro-technology, equipment and machinery, when the DPRK comes to the four-party talks. The government does not yet allow domestically produced rice to be shipped to the DPRK, saying that foreign rice is cheaper than domestic rice and that the domestic supply is insufficient. Officials said that Seoul will respond to an expected third international appeal for food aid to the DPRK by the Humanitarian Affairs Department of the United Nations. (Korea Herald, "GOVERNMENT TAKES FIRST STEP TOWARD FURTHER FOOD AID TO NORTH KOREA; TO ALLOW INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCIES TO BUT FOREIGN RICE AND SEND IT TO NORTH," Kim Ji-soo, 04/01/97)

The Korea National Red Cross (KNRC) said Wednesday it has delivered relief goods worth some 2 billion won (US \$2.22 Million) to the DPRK, since its first aid package of 5,000 blankets in

November 1995. In a report on its flood relief activities at the Seoul Press Center, the KNRC said that it has thus far sent 10,000 blankets, 2,924 tons of wheat flour, 84 tons of powered milk, 187,000 liters of cooking oil, 100,000 packages of instant noodles (ramyon) and 35,000 pairs of socks in its 13 shipments of aid to the communist country. A KNRC official said the organization will deliver its 14th shipment to the DPRK Thursday consisting of 1,650 tons of potatoes, 10 tons of powered milk and 11,200 kilograms of radish and cabbage seeds worth a total of one billion won. Welcoming the governments recent allowance of civil and economic organizations to send aid to the DPRK, the KNRC asked more enterprises and civilians to take part in the aid programs from a humanitarian standpoint. (Korea Times, "KNRC DELIVERS RELIEF GOODS TO NORTH KOREA," 04/03/97)

2. US Congressman Visits DPRK

Rep. Tony Hall of the U.S. House of Representatives will enter the DPRK tomorrow for a three-day visit aimed at assessing the severity of the DPRK's food shortages, an official here said yesterday. Hall, a Democrat from Ohio, will fly from Tokyo to Pyongyang on a chartered U.S. military plane. No U.S. administration official will accompany the congressman, but a few reporters from the US media will travel with him, said the official. By permitting the entry of a US congressman, the DPRK seems to be making good-will gestures toward the US and trying to form a favorable atmosphere for food aid to the impoverished Communist state. An ROK Foreign Ministry official said Seoul will consult with Washington and Tokyo on the amount of additional aid to the DPRK when U.N. relief agencies make a third round of appeals later this month. But he said he has no knowledge of a reported U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA) plan to appeal for \$117 million in aid for the DPRK, three times the amount requested in the second round of appeals last year. (Korea Herald, "U.S. CONGRESSMAN HALL TO ENTER NORTH KOREA TOMORROW," 04/03/97)

3. DPRK Conducts Military Exercise

The DPRK, in an effort to control its population, conducted joint military-civilian exercises across the country for about 10 days ending Sunday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) reported Wednesday. "The exercises seemed rather intended to suppress the public resentment over worsening food shortages and the defection of North Korean Workers party secretary Hwang Jang-yop than aimed at provoking the south," the JCS said. During the exercises, senior party and government officials were given emergency calls, civil anti-air raid drills were conducted and paramilitary units mobilized. Regular troops undergoing winter exercises had intensified night-time field drills. "In 1995 and last year, similar military exercises were carried out in some parts of the North. As they were unusually conducted across the country this time, however, our military reinforced surveillance," a senior JCS officer said. (Yonhap) Korea Herald, "N. KOREA CONDUCTS JOINT MILITARY-CIVILIAN EXERCISES," 04/02/97)

4. Executions in DPRK

More than 500 DPRK citizens are believed to have been publicly executed last year, a DPRK expert has claimed. Former vice national unification minister Song Young-dae, in a recent lecture to the Hyundai Economic Research, said, "North Korea, in a bid to maintain its system, is drastically reinforcing its control of the population." Song, chairman of the Central National Unification Council, reportedly told the meeting that public executions in the DPRK last year were mostly carried out against those arrested for trying to escape to the PRC, stealing food from warehouses or committing "anti-state" crimes. (Korea Times, "OVER 500 NORTH KOREANS EXECUTED IN PUBLIC LAST YEAR: NK EXPERT," 04/02/97)

5. DPRK Prepares Military Parade

The DPRK is preparing for a major military parade in its capital in April, ROK watchers of the communist state said Monday. Preparations for the annual April 25 parade in Pyongyang marking the founding of the Korean People's Army have started earlier than usual this year, said Naewoe Press, the ROK agency that monitors DPRK media. Soviet-made jet fighters screamed over rows of DPRK soldiers marching through a Pyongyang plaza in a rehearsal last Wednesday, Naewoe said, quoting Russian media reports and other sources. This year's parade comes amid reports that the DPRK's armed forces were growing irritated over massive food shortages. Kim Jong Il, the DPRK's de facto leader, may appease the military by staging a larger parade this year despite the food and fuel shortages, said Naewoe analysts. Kim has promoted generals in the government hierarchy and devoted most of his public activity to visiting military units, acknowledging that the military is an important power broker in the DPRK especially during his ascension to power. In a related development, the North's Central People's Committee, or Cabinet, has introduced a new medal for soldiers on the occasion of this year's military parade, Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency reported Monday. (Korea Times, " NK MILITARY PREPARING FOR MAJOR PARADE IN PYONGYANG," 04/02/97)

III. Democratic People's Republic of Korea

[The following "DPRK Report" is a joint project of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, California, USA) and the Center for Contemporary International Problems (ICIP, at the Diplomatic Academy, Moscow, Russia). It is funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and is written by Russian analysts associated with the ICIP.]

THE DPRK REPORT (No. 5, January-February 1997)

1. Hwang Jang-yop's Defection

Commenting on Mr. Hwang's defection, Russian analysts described him as "a staunch supporter of Juche-ism and a loyal party functionary." He never betrayed any traces of dissent from the official line.

The defection has led Russian analysts to reappraise the situation in the DPRK leadership. Kim's showering of subordinates with privileges and decorations, at first believed to be successful, could not outweigh the negative impact of the deteriorating economy and the spreading famine. Instead of concentrating efforts on overcoming these negative phenomena, Kim Jong-il has continued hostile actions against the ROK, whipped up war hysteria, and spent almost all resources on military preparations.

The disparities between real life in the country and the official slogans finally became so great that even the old guard of the regime, the theoretician of Juche ideas and member of the inner circle of the young leader, lost patience and presented an open challenge to Kim Jong-il.

As some Russian analysts now predict, this move by Mr. Hwang may cause others to try to follow Mr. Hwang's example by defecting abroad or to start requesting changes in the country and its foreign policy. Internal pressures on Kim Jong-il are bound to increase.

The Hwang affair will seriously undermine the DPRK's relations with the PRC. Beijing on many occasions advised Pyongyang to launch reforms: instead, an unrepentant North Korea has created more and more problems not only for itself but for China. It has become an embarrassment for the PRC and an obstacle to its profitable cooperation with the Republic of Korea (ROK).

Moreover, if Mr. Hwang settles in Seoul and starts denouncing Pyongyang's regime, the DPRK's

relations with the ROK will be adversely affected. The revelations of Mr. Hwang will further tarnish the Kim junior's image in the United States, Japan, and the world community at large.

Under these circumstances, Kim Jong-il faces two possible courses of action. The first one is to continue the unrelenting resistance to change. This line will soon require purges in the leadership and a new wave of terror in the DPRK at large. This would result in a worsening of conditions and perhaps even a civil war. The other option, however, is to enact certain economic and political changes, shifting the emphasis from the unworkable Juche system, the cult of personality, and hostility towards the South to an open-door policy and internal reforms. Although the reforms may mean the end of Kim's rule, Russian observers point out that this option offers a better choice for Kim junior than the hard-line approach mentioned above. Indeed, Russian observers do see some signs that Kim Jong-il might be preparing for changes (for details see "The DPRK Report," November-December 1996).

2. "Information Deprivation" in the DPRK

The DPRK propaganda machine is a unique instrument playing a very important role in keeping the present regime in power.

Information in the country is totally monopolized by the party and state. The DPRK's secret services keep a day-to-day vigil over the implementation of the leadership's information strategy and tactics. The larger part of historical and fictional literature and even dated national periodicals have been transferred to "special collections," where only authorized persons, having special assignments, can get acquainted with selected materials. Ordinary citizens are completely barred from such collections, to say nothing of foreign newspapers and magazines. Even conversations with foreigners may lead to severe punishments, including imprisonment in "reeducation" (read: concentration) camps.

Although there are exceptions, most DPRK citizens still blindly believe that their society is the most just and prosperous in the world, and that their motherland is about to be invaded by imperialist and other enemies. However, even if reforms are finally launched, the social transformation will be a painful one. This is due in no small degree to the brainwashing of the DPRK population. Authorities have perfected a specific system of "ideological work among the masses." Teaching of Juche ideas starts in kindergartens. In secondary schools, stories about the two Kim's and their teachings are studied in all details and are supposed to be the most important subject. At the college level, Jucheism dominates the curriculum and requires thousands of hours of class work and homework. At factories and offices, the work day is extended by two hours in order to conduct mandatory training lessons.

The information flow in the DPRK is designed, disseminated, and controlled by the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee (CC) of the Korean Worker's Party (KWP). Lately, the Chief Political Directorate (CPD) of the Korean People's Army has gained a certain level of independence from the CC's Propaganda and Agitation Department. Now, it is more common that key political directives originate instead in the Defense Committee (rather than in party organs) and are subsequently disseminated by the army's CPD. However the CC's Propaganda and Agitation Department is generally still in charge of the propaganda field. The ideological chiefs in all of these ministries rival the heads of the ministries in power and influence.

A number of new features have emerged in DPRK propaganda after the death of Kim Il-sung. A new interpretation has been given to the problem of interactions between the masses and the supreme leader. Contrary to the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, DPRK propaganda claims now that "only under an outstanding leader's guidance can the masses fulfill their role as history's moving force." It

is also stated in Pyongyang that in the 21st Century Juche-ism will become the universal ideology of mankind: the basis of morality, politics, economics, social life, and culture.

Summing up, it can be stated that the psychological impact of Juche propaganda is very negligible abroad, but it is quite strong inside the DPRK. Long years of impenetrable isolation and massive brainwashing via the channels of the state, the ruling Party, enterprises, schools, and even the family have succeeded in their task--a considerable portion of DPRK society has lost the ability to perceive reality objectively, is exhausted to its limits not only physically (as a result of material deprivation) also psychologically by fear of the emergence in its thoughts of ideas "alien" to the official ideology and the ruling regime.

3. The Fighting Spirit of the North Korean Armed Forces

According to Russian military experts, despite the DPRK's current economic and social difficulties, its armed forces still maintain a high fighting spirit. Soldiers are supposedly disciplined, patriotic, respectful to each other, physically tough and prepared to "sacrifice their lives for the motherland."

According Russian experts, this high level of preparedness in the DPRK armed forces is achieved through strict discipline, intensive indoctrination, the lack of independent sources of information, fear, and enjoyment of better living conditions than those of civilians. Activities of the U.S. and ROK military commands presumably help to consolidate loyalty in the ranks of North Korean servicemen. Pyongyang, as well as its military men, are--in the words of Russian experts--"genuinely afraid of an attack from the South as an extension of regular military maneuvers." As one DPRK general complained to his Russian counterpart: "You never know if it is another training session, or if this time American-South Korean marines will actually land on the DPRK's coast."

4. Russian Appraisals of U.S. Policy towards North Korea

The steps of the Clinton Administration aimed at improving relations with the DPRK create a certain apprehension in the ruling circles of Russia. The Agreed Framework, KEDO activities, and the four-power talks initiative are perceived as detrimental to Russia's interests. As officials complain in private conversations, the United States is getting the upper hand and pushing Moscow aside in a country on which the Soviet Union spent so much time, money, and effort.

The United States is criticized not only for damaging Russian interests in the DPRK, but for what one analyst calls "consistent attempts to destroy an independent republic." At various political and scholarly fora and in the media, the following interpretation of American motives and actions is given:

- a. After the collapse of the USSR and the termination of Soviet aid to the DPRK, Washington expected its early collapse due to the shortage of electricity. However, the DPRK wisely concentrated its efforts on producing electricity with the help of nuclear stations.
- b. To block such efforts, the Americans unleashed what one Russian analyst calls a "propaganda campaign which invented the story of a DPRK atomic bomb." Using the nuclear pretext the United States hoped to strangle the DPRK with international sanctions.
- c. But these accusations were completely groundless. If the DPRK wanted to it could have created a military nuclear potential long ago. But there was no reason to acquire such a capability: the DPRK's missiles cannot reach American soil anyway, while bombing its own brothers in South Korea with nuclear weapons was seen as ridiculous.
- d. Thus, American strategy failed completely. North Korea responded with strong countermeasures,

including departure from Non- Proliferation Treaty. Faced with Pyongyang's toughness, the Americans got scared and made numerous concessions.

This line of Russian "analysis" concludes with suggestions that Moscow should learn from the DPRK experience and respond to the expansion of NATO and other unfriendly policies of the United States with strong countermeasures. The Kremlin is advised to abandon all arms control agreements, conclude military alliances with friendly Arab regimes, and preserve a strategic partnership with the DPRK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

View this online at: <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-3--april-1997/>

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:
nautilus@nautilus.org