

# NAPSNet Daily Report 30 April, 1997

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### **I. United States**

#### **1. Korean Red Crosses to Meet**

The Associated Press ("KOREAS WILL MEET TO TALK FOOD AID," Seoul, 4/30/97) and United Press International ("S.KOREA AGREES TO AID TALKS WITH NORTH," Seoul, 4/30/97) reported that the ROK agreed Wednesday to the DPRK's proposal for a meeting in Beijing this weekend between the two countries' Red Crosses to discuss food aid. If held Saturday, the Beijing talks would be the first contact between the ROK and DPRK Red Crosses in nearly five years. Their last meeting in 1992 broke down over how to reunite families separated by the Korean War. The meeting site had been a point of contention: the ROK suggested last month that it be held at Panmunjom, the truce village along the countries' shared border, but the DPRK refused and proposed meeting in Beijing instead. The head of the ROK Red Cross, Kang Young-hoon, reportedly told his DPRK counterpart, Li Sung Ho, that the ROK's decision to agree to a Beijing meeting reflects its "belief that it is not desirable to

delay because of disagreement over the place of meeting.". In approving the Beijing meeting, the ROK government said humanitarian contacts by the Red Cross can be exempt from Seoul's long-standing policy that inter-Korean contact must be held on the Korean peninsula. Kang said a six-person delegation will leave for Beijing May 3 and hopes to discuss details of how it can improve aid efforts. The ROK Red Cross has donated US\$3.70 million in food and clothi

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## **2. ROK Official Optimistic on Peace Talks**

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA OPTIMISTIC ON N. KOREA JOINING TALKS - GOVT OFFCL," Seoul, 4/30/97) reported that Ban Ki-moon, senior secretary to the ROK President for foreign policy and national security, is "cautiously optimistic" on prospects of the DPRK agreeing to join the proposed four-party peace talks. Ban dismissed reports that the DPRK has set "preconditions" for participating in the talks, including a relaxation of US economic sanctions and improved relations with the US. "These demands have always been there," he said. "If North Korea is so eager for improved relations, it can be discussed at the talks." Ban added that if the DPRK were to come to the talks first and then ask for more food aid, the ROK will be "prepared to give." Ban also said that the ROK government generally trusts DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop to give accurate information, but that what he says will need "some process of verification." He didn't say when Hwang will be able to go public with his stories.

## **3. ROK Arrests US Businessman as Spy**

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN AGENTS ARREST AMERICAN," Seoul, 4/30/97) reported that the ROK Wednesday arrested US businessman Donald Ratliff, 62, on charges of collecting classified information on the ROK's arms procurement plans. ROK intelligence officials said Ratliff identified himself as head of the Far Eastern operations for Litton Industry Inc.'s Guidance and Control Systems Division. The company is a US defense contractor based in Woodland Hills, California. Litton's Guidance and Control Systems Division is involved in the development and manufacture of navigation and guidance systems for military aircraft, land vehicles, missiles and ships. Ratliff was accused of gathering the weapons secrets from a ROK air force lieutenant colonel and others since 1995. The ROK intelligence agency refused to give further details. Jim Coles, spokesman of the US military command in Seoul, said the businessman has no affiliation with US forces in the ROK. Last week, the ROK's Defense Ministry arrested Lt. Col. Kim Taek-jun, 47, on charges of leaking military secrets to an arms broker, Kwak Jae-jin, who also was arrested. Kwak, 57, was accused of having passed on the information to Ratliff.

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 30," USIA Transcript, 4/30/97) commented, "I saw a report that there had been an American arrested in South Korea. I understand that we have not obtained a Privacy Act waiver from the American citizen. Without that waiver, I am not at liberty, under our law, to provide you with his name or the circumstances of his arrest. But you can be assured that our embassy in Seoul is following this case. We have an obligation to this individual to try to advise him of his rights and to provide all necessary consular assistance to him. But perhaps we will try again tomorrow. But until he gives us that waiver, we can't talk about it."

## **4. US Defense Department View of Korean Security Situation**

US Defense Department Spokesman Ken Bacon ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR TUESDAY BRIEFING," USIA Transcript, 4/30/97) commented extensively on Korean security issues in response to reporters questions. Regarding the near-famine in the DPRK, Bacon said the situation was not only a humanitarian problem, but also an economic and political problem rooted in the issue of "stability. Peace and stability on the Korean peninsula." On the security threat posed by the DPRK, Bacon said, "Right now the security situation on the Korean peninsula is really unchanged. It has been a potential tinderbox for some time, and it remains a potential tinderbox, but we don't see new factors in terms of troop movements, in terms of planning, that leads us to believe the situation is any more dangerous today than it was last month or last year." Bacon reiterated that the US has "believed for some years that North Korea may have generated or accumulated enough plutonium to make at least one nuclear weapon," but added that, "In some ways, North Korea has been more forthcoming in the last couple of years than in the past. It's cooperated some on searches for the remains of U.S. soldiers from the Korean War; it signed, most significantly, the framework agreement in 1994 to freeze its nuclear program, and it's stuck to that." [Ed. note: Media reports of Bacon's comments were included in yesterday's Daily Report. Excerpts from the transcript of Bacon's comments bearing on Korean issues will be distributed separately.]

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. Korean Red Crosses to Meet**

The ROK government and the ROK National Red Cross (KNRC) yesterday tentatively decided to accept the DPRK's proposal that the Red Cross organizations of the ROK and the DPRK to meet in Beijing May 3 to discuss delivery of aid to the North. The talks, if realized, will be the first inter-Korean Red Cross talks in nearly five years. The last such meeting took place in August, 1991, over exchange visits between divided family members. A ROK government official said the KNRC will notify its northern counterpart of the decision today. Seoul initiated the proposal for inter-Korean Red Cross talks April 18, by offering to meet in the neutral village of Panmunjom. The DPRK, however, suggested Beijing as the venue. The Red Cross talks, if they happen, will involve discussions on establishing direct transport of aid and sending of KNRC officials to the North to monitor distribution of aid, the official said. (Korea Herald, "SEOUL ACCEPTS BEIJING FOR RED CROSS TALKS," 04/30/97)

### **2. Taiwan-DPRK Nuclear Waste Deal**

PRC Ambassador to Seoul Zhang Tingyan said yesterday Beijing "absolutely opposes" the planned shipment of nuclear waste from Taiwan to the DPRK. He claimed Taiwan wishes to damage relations between the PRC and the DPRK by pushing for the nuclear waste transfer. "I believe the Taiwanese are attempting to drive a wedge between China and North Korea by promoting ties with the North," said Zhang. He said that the PRC has been making its own efforts to stop the planned nuclear waste shipment, which has also garnered strong protest from the ROK. Zhang suggested the shipment of Taiwan's radioactive waste to the DPRK will not begin in June as scheduled, noting there have been no preparatory works under way recently. Zhang said he sees no immediate collapse of the Communist regime in the DPRK. "In my view, North Korea, for all its difficulties, is in a stable situation." He also played down recent press reports in Seoul about the flow of an increasing number of DPRK refugees into China. Zhang raised no direct objection to the US military presence in a unified Korea, although he said the PRC, in principle, opposes the stationing of any foreign troops in another country. He gave no clear response to a claim by top DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop that the DPRK has a nuclear bomb and is willing to launch a war against the South as a way out of its difficulties, saying he had little knowledge of the DPRK's nuclear program. The ambassador just

reiterated the PRC has been placing top priority on the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, which he said is essential for the PRC's continuous economic development. He was cautious in discussing whether the DPRK would pursue open door reform policies, adding that PRC assistance to the DPRK is not linked to any DPRK policy directions. "It will be entirely up to the North Korean leadership to decide what policy it will take in the future," said Zhang. (Korea Herald, "CHINA OPPOSES TAIWAN-NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR WASTE SHIPMENT DEAL," 04/30/97)

### **3. PRC Policy on DPRK Escapees**

The PRC allowed DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop to go to the South via a third country, but the decision does not necessarily mean a change in its policy of handling escapees from the North, said ROK Ambassador to Beijing Chung Chong-wook yesterday. "Hwang's case was a politically sensitive issue, and therefore it is difficult to say whether China's stance has changed," he said. He noted that the PRC will still be obliged to hand over DPRK escapees to Pyongyang, if requested, under a bilateral treaty on the extradition of criminals between the two countries. Chung, however, said recent Chinese legislation to strengthen punishment of illegal immigrants and those helping them does not seem to be related to Hwang's case. The action is seen as part of Beijing's work to fix its overall legal system, said the ambassador who is in Seoul for consultations with Foreign Ministry officials. In the process of negotiating Hwang's fate, the ROK offered no reward to the North for accepting Hwang's defection to the South, Chung said. He also said the ROK did not explicitly promise the PRC that it would not use Hwang for political purposes after his arrival in Seoul. The two sides, however, shared the view that Hwang's case should be handled in a way which would not adversely affect peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, he said. Chung said it was an extremely difficult decision for the PRC to allow Hwang, the highest-ranking DPRK official ever to have fled the Communist state, to go to a third country, virtually paving the way for his defection to the South. (Korea Herald, "CHINA'S POLICY OF HANDLING NORTH KOREAN ESCAPEES NOT CHANGED," 04/30/97)

### **4. US Food Aid to DPRK**

The US State Department said Monday that it shared UN concerns about the worsening famine in the DPRK and that US food aid would reach the Stalinist country starting next week. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns also said that if the UN World Food Program (WFP) makes a new appeal for emergency aid to the DPRK, "we will look at this very, very seriously." Two shipments of US food aid were meanwhile scheduled to reach the DPRK on May 4 and May 12, he said, with a third shipment to follow "later in the spring." Earlier Monday, the WFP renewed its appeal on behalf of the DPRK. The UN agency has received only one-third of the US\$95.5 million it requested in an appeal on April 2 to enable it to send some 200,000 tons of food to the most needy among the DPRK's 24 million people. That amount would meet the immediate needs of 4.7 million people, including 2.6 million children. Washington has consistently denied any link between its emergency aid to the DPRK and efforts to press Pyongyang into joining four-party talks on a Korean peace treaty and curbing its suspected missile exports. US and DPRK negotiators are due to take up the missile issue in New York from May 12-13. (Korea Times, "US FOOD AID TO REACH NK ON MAY 4, 12," 04/30/97)

### **5. US's ROK Policy**

Leading figures from various walks of life of the ROK and the US will meet in Washington Wednesday to evaluate the Korea Policy of the second Clinton Administration. Officials, scholars, businessmen and journalists from the two countries will focus on preparations for the reunification of the Korean peninsula in their meeting, set to last through Friday. The meeting is being jointly sponsored by the Institute for Global Economics (IGE) and the Institute for International Economics

(IIE), a Washington-based think tank. Korean participants include Ambassador to the US Park Kun-woo, IGE chairman SaKong Il, former foreign minister Hang Sung-joo, chairman Koo Pyong-hoi of the Korea International Trade Association, president Kim Jung-won of the Korea Foundation, chief editorial writer Kim Dae-joong of the Chosun Ilbo, and director general Yoo Myung-hwan of the Foreign Ministry's North American Affairs Bureau. American participants include IIE chairman Fred Bergsten, director Marc Barthello of the United Technology, Prof. Max Corden of Johns Hopkins University, Korea Society chairman and former US ambassador to Korea Donald Gregg and US Congressman Tony Hall (Dem.-Ohio). Others are Citibank director Peter Howell, Acting US Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific Charles Kartman, and Wall Street Journal columnist Robert Keatley. (Korea Times, "SEOUL, WASHINGTON TO EVALUATE 2ND CLINTON GOVERNMENT KOREA POLICY," 04/30/97)

## **5. US-PRC Views of Korean Situation**

PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen met Monday with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to lay the groundwork for an exchange of summit visits beginning later this year. Managing tensions on the Korean peninsula proved to be an area where Washington and Beijing appeared most willing and able to cooperate. Both governments want to keep the DPRK, which is starving and bankrupt, from either erupting into an attack on the ROK, defended by 37,000 US troops, or flooding the PRC with thousands of hungry refugees. Both want Pyongyang to enter serious peace talks with Seoul. But Albright also listed several issues for discussion on which Congress wants major Chinese concessions: human rights, arms proliferation, and civil liberties in Hong Kong after it reverts to China July 1. Despite Albright's requests, however, Qian reportedly gave no specific assurances on these issues. The only substantive outcome of the meeting between Albright and Qian concerned Hong Kong, department spokesman Nicholas Burns said after the meeting. "We now have reached an agreement on the procedures governing requests and approvals for the continuation of the U.S. Navy port calls to Hong Kong after July 1st," he said. (Korea Times, "ALBRIGHT, QIAN SEEK TO KEEP NK FROM WAGING WAR AGAINST SOUTH," 04/30/97)

## **6. DPRK Denies Kidnapping Japanese**

The DPRK on Monday denied abducting a Japanese girl 20 years ago and threatened unspecified retaliation unless Japan stops what it called a smear campaign against the communist state. The fate of the girl, Megumi Yokota, seized Japanese attention in March when the Tokyo newspaper Sankei Shimbun quoted a DPRK agent who later defected to the ROK as saying that he may have spotted her in the late 1980s in the DPRK. In February, a Japanese legislator accused DPRK agents of abducting the girl, then 13, in November 1977. Although Japan's government has not accused the DPRK in the Yokota case, officials believe it has kidnapped nine Japanese in all. "We have no need and no wish to kidnap a middle school girl in Japan," a spokesman of the DPRK's Foreign Ministry told its official Korean Central News Agency. "If the Japanese authorities ... continue with the smear campaign against (North Korea) over the false case, we will be compelled to think that Japan is not interested in improvement of bilateral ties but is willing to stand in confrontation with (North Korea)," the spokesman said. "And then, we will have to take legitimate countermeasures." He accused the ROK's main intelligence agency of concocting the kidnapping report to thwart efforts to improve relations between Japan and the DPRK. The DPRK defector, An Myong Jin, told Sankei that he first saw the girl in a suburb of Pyongyang on Oct. 10, 1988. Although he had no proof that the girl he saw was Yokota, the DPRK defector was quoted as saying the girl he saw looked like the girl in a photograph distributed by Yokota's parents. Japan and the DPRK have no diplomatic relations. While the DPRK has been seeking help in dealing with impending famine, Japan has been holding back, in part because of unresolved kidnapping cases. (Korea Times, "N.KOREA DENIES KIDNAPPING JAPANESE GIRL," 04/30/97)

## 7. Australia Would Intervene in Korean War

The Australian defense minister has dramatically widened Australia's defense posture by saying troops could be deployed anywhere freedom was under threat, including allies' internal conflicts. Defense Minister Ian McLachlan specifically mentioned the Korean peninsula as one place Australian troops might intervene if the DPRK launched a war. McLachlan's comments follow reports that a top-secret defense strategy review by the Australian Defense Force (ADF) and Defense Department says the ADF needs to be more assertive against potential Asian military threats, with expanded air power and strike weapons. McLachlan said the strategic review would probably be released in the last three months of the year. Opposition defense spokesman Arch Bevis said Asian neighbors were becoming more uncertain about the place Australia saw itself having in the region. Trouble spots for allies near Australia include the Bougainville rebellion, which sparked the Papua New Guinea army revolt over the planned use of mercenaries, and East Timor and Aceh in Indonesia. (Korea Times, "Australian Troops Would Intervene If DPRK Wages War," 04/29/97) [Ed. note: Please also note the US media version of this report in the "Korean Peninsula Security Situation" item in the US section of the April 29 Daily Report.]

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

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