NAPSNet Daily Report 30 March, 1998

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 30 March, 1998", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 30, 1998, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-30-march-1998/

IN TODAY'S REPORT:

I. United States

1. "Northern Wind" Scandal in ROK
2. Asia-Europe Summit Meeting

II. Analysis

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

I. United States

[][]

1. "Northern Wind" Scandal in ROK

The Washington Times (Willis Witter, "SOUTH KOREAN ELECTION HIT BY 'NORTHERN WIND'," Seoul, 3/30/98) reported that leaked ROK intelligence documents suggest that the ROK Agency for National Security Planning (NSP) had conspired with the DPRK to work against the election of Kim Dae- jung as president of the ROK. Unconfirmed reports have said that agents from the NSP handed white envelopes stuffed with cash to DPRK officials and urged them to take some provocative action that would turn ROK voters against Kim. Reportedly, Park Chae-suh, a Seoul-based businessman who at one time worked for ROK military intelligence, leaked details of the NSP smear campaign to officials of the NCNP, who then initiated contacts with DPRK officials, bribing them to keep quiet. By one account, politicians linked to former President Kim Young-sam handed their DPRK contacts a suitcase stuffed with US$3.5 million. One unnamed source said that secret contacts between the ROK and the DPRK go on all the time, and nobody meets with DPRK officials without giving them cash. Sources said that US intelligence does not appear to have played a role in the so-called "Northern Wind" scandal. An unnamed senior official at the US Embassy stated, "At this point we just don't know. We're going to have to let [the scandal] play out and at the appropriate point draw our own conclusions."

[][][]

2. Asia-Europe Summit Meeting

The AP-Dow Jones News Service (Cecilia M. Kang, "S. KOREA PRESIDENT TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR KOREA AT ASEM," Seoul, 03/30/98) reported that Lee Kyu-hyung, assistant secretary at the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said that ROK President Kim Dae-jung will try to encourage foreign investment in the ROK at a two-day Asia-Europe Summit in London beginning Friday. Lee stated, "President Kim will explain Korea's current economic status, reiterate his commitment to the International Monetary Fund, and try to get moral and substantive support from the participants. His other priority is to express his pursuit of peaceful coexistence with North Korea." An unnamed official at the Presidential office added, "President Kim will review what he has accomplished since his inauguration and even before that and will try to establish a strong diplomatic presence." ROK officials said that Minister of Foreign Affairs Park Jung-soo will accompany Kim to the meeting and will also push the president's message.

II. Analysis

[][][]

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

The following essay ("THE FOUR PARTY TALKS: A PERSPECTIVE BY PETER BROOKES") originally appeared as the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Pacific Forum #12 on March 20, 1998.

Peter Brookes is a Professional Staff Member with the Committee on International Relations in the House of Representatives. The views expressed here are his own.

"As the current round of the Four Party Talks wraps up, American policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) should be re-examined. The objectives of our current policy towards Pyongyang are unclear and the Administration's actions appear to be concentrating more on the process of negotiations than on issues of substance such as reducing military tensions on the peninsula. This current approach has proven ineffective and could be potentially dangerous to U.S. interests in Northeast Asia.

A peace treaty ending the Korean War, though a worthy goal, is not an end in itself and does not address many of the problems which plague the peninsula. The Administration's roadmap for negotiating the veritable "minefield" of inter-Korean relations is equivocal and the objectives of our policy are vague. What does the United States want---a soft-landing, a hard-landing, a collapse, an implosion, or the maintenance of the status quo? Or does the Administration have a 'wait and see' attitude which will react to events as they evolve? Unfortunately, the policy has not been well articulated and this lack of clarity is of concern to many who follow these issues closely.

This concern about current U.S. policy is amplified by a number of matters including the fact that North Korea is currently our largest 'aid' recipient in East Asia ($75 million of PL 480 Title II this fiscal year in food aid; $62.5 million last year); the several rounds of talks have arguably not produced anything more substantive than bringing the North Koreans to the table to talk; the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) is in serious financial trouble due to its inability to raise funds for heavy fuel oil (HFO) and may soon be insolvent due to outstanding debt; missile proliferation talks with North Korea are stalled and have not curbed the spread of destabilizing weaponry; and most importantly, the Korean peninsula is not any less tense today than it was before the talks began last year. This record of 'achievement', despite good intent, is

troublesome to many. The election of South Korean President Kim Dae Jung and the installment of a new government in Seoul provides a unique opportunity for the U.S. to step back and re-examine the ends and the means of the Four Party Talks and adjust policy accordingly.

Pyongyang has, and will, continue to manipulate the negotiating process and any accommodation with the Stalinist regime in North Korea is disconcerting to many Americans. The Administration must bear this in mind as this round of the Four Party Talks begin. Remember that it was North Korean aggression which started the Korean War in 1950 and took the lives of over 50,000 American soldiers. The threat today is no less than it was then and the threat comes from north of the 38th parallel--not south. The threat does not come from the United Nations Command in South Korea as the DPRK insisted during its most recent military 'mobilization' last week.

Today, the DPRK maintains one of the largest armies in the world (5th largest) with over 1.1 million men under arms and spends almost one-quarter of its gross national product (GNP) on its huge military machine while, shockingly, its own people rely on the generosity of the international community to survive a wide- spread famine which plagues the countryside. As many as 3 million North Koreans may have starved to death due to the nefarious self-centeredness of the regime and its 'juche' philosophy; its seriously-flawed economic and agricultural policies; and unfortunate natural disasters wrought by Mother Nature. The fact that Pyongyang is feeding its huge army while its people starve is a crime against humanity of the greatest magnitude.

Further, and most importantly for Americans, the North Korean People's Army (KPA) directly threatens 37,000 American servicemen and women stationed far from home in the Republic of Korea (ROK) at the cost of over $3 billion per year to the American taxpayer. Recent reports indicate that the North may be soon able to deploy the medium range 'No-Dong' ballistic missile capable of striking targets in Japan, further endangering American troops stationed there. North Korea also maintains an active chemical and biological weapons program.

Additionally, the Stalinist regime in Pyongyang is one of the world's most brutal and over 300,000 of its 23 million citizens languish in political prison camps for specious reasons. The government forcefully restricts freedom of speech, religion, assembly, citizen's movements, and workers rights. The regime has also been implicated in the kidnaping abroad of South Koreans, Japanese and other foreign nationals for use in its intelligence apparatus. The DPRK remains on the U.S. government's list of sponsors of state terrorism and has been implicated in the trafficking of drugs. The U.S. should negotiate with these facts in mind.

As the U.S. prepares for future rounds of the Four Party Talks, it would be wise to advise and admonish our negotiators that the continued support of many Americans is contingent upon a few key points. First, the security of American and ROK forces is paramount and must remain at the forefront of the negotiations with the DPRK. Reducing tensions, building confidence and increasing transparency must predominate any deliberations to a change in the status quo on the peninsula and in any future U.S.-DPRK bilateral relations. There is significant concern that Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) have not been given the priority they should be afforded in our dealings with North Korea. The 38th parallel is still one of the most volatile lines of demarcation in the world today. It is reasonable to expect that progress on security issues will be slow, but they must be addressed up front and become the foundation for further negotiations and any normalization of relations involving the U.S., ROK and the DPRK.

Secondly, reciprocity on the part of North Korea is the key for continued participation by the U.S. in the talks. There must be gestures of political goodwill by the North as a sign that they are willing to move these negotiations forward. The lack of progress in the Talks, is perhaps indicative of the North's unwillingness to compromise. It must be made clear that the North's manipulation of the

process is unacceptable. For instance, it is reasonable to expect that if the international community is feeding starving North Koreans, Pyongyang will take reciprocal steps to address the crisis, perhaps in the form of slowing down the tempo of military exercises, instituting agricultural reform or purchasing grain itself from abroad. This has not happened and must be a sine qua non of the talks.

It is shameful that there has been no attempts at reform of the agricultural sector and North Korean military exercises continue at normal levels despite the famine. The international community is generous but its skepticism about the regime is evidenced in the inability of the United Nation's World Food Program (WFP) to meet its most recent 1,000,000 ton food appeal. Reform on the part of Pyongyang is necessary and required. The Administration is wrong to think North Korea does not link food donations with its willingness to participate in the Four Party Talks. Denying this linkage, on the part of the Administration, does not make it untrue. The adage, 'perception is reality' applies.

Third, the American negotiators must insist on the DPRK's participation in North-South dialogue as a basic aspect of the Four Party Talks. The problem on the peninsula is ultimately a Korean question and the two Koreas must do the 'heavy lifting' in reducing tensions and finding a lasting peace. This, of course, may be the most problematic of all, because Pyongyang prefers to align its future with Washington-- not Seoul. Interestingly, the DPRK often hypocritically complains about adherence to the Agreed Framework by the U.S. and the ROK, but the North-South dialogue is an integral aspect of the basic agreement that Pyongyang has not adhered to itself. The U.S. must press for a genuine North-South dialogue.

The Four Party Talks and the desire to find a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula are a worthwhile effort, but the Administration should re-examine its policy towards the Korean peninsula. It should take another look at its approach and assemble a comprehensive plan which starts with the end in mind; protects and advances American interests; integrates, in a measured fashion, North Korea into the international system; does not get out in front of American public opinion or the Congress; and most importantly, reduces tensions and the military threat on the Korean peninsula."

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:
Yonsei University, Seoul, Republic of Korea
The Center for Global Communications, Tokyo, Japan
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Wade L. Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Shin Dong-bom: dongbom_shin@wisenet.co.kr
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Choi Chung-moon: cily@star.elim.co.kr
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-30-march-1998/

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