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I. **United States**

1. **Trilateral Coordination Group**

Agence France Presse ("US, S.KOREA, JAPAN DEMAND IMPROVED TIES WITH NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 2/1/00) and Reuters ("S.KOREA WELCOMES N.KOREA'S DIALOGUE WITH U.S, JAPAN," Seoul, 2/1/00) reported that the US joined the ROK and Japan at the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group on Tuesday in urging the DPRK to improve relations with them. A joint statement said, "they expressed the hope that the DPRK will continue to take positive steps for the improvement of its relations with the three countries." The three nations hoped "the beginning of this millennium will mark the start of a new set of relationships" with the DPRK. The talks were attended by US State Department counselor Wendy Sherman, ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Jang Jai-Ryong, and Japan's Deputy Vice Minister for Foreign Policy Yukio Takeuchi. The statement also hailed progress made in improving relations between the DPRK and the US as well as Japan. The statement said, "the three delegations welcomed ... the DPRK's agreement to meet again toward the

end of February (in New York) to finalize preparations for the high-level visit about one month later." The three nations also said that dialogue between both Koreas has "the central importance" to peace on the Korean peninsula and "the expanded economic, and cultural exchanges and cooperation between South and North would continue to make invaluable contributions to improving the overall atmosphere on the Korean peninsula."

2. Remains of US Soldiers from Korean War

Associated Press (Robert Burns, "N. KOREA INVITES U.S. TO INVESTIGATE REMAINS," Washington, 2/1/00) reported that Li Gun, deputy DPRK representative at the UN, said in a telephone interview that the Korean People's Army had invited the US Defense Department to send a "fact-finding team" to verify that the remains found in the DPRK's land-reclamation project were those of US soldiers killed in the Korean War. To prove the remains were of US soldiers, the DPRK released the name Charles E. Sizemore from a military identification tag it said was found among the remains. According to US Defense Department records, Sizemore was a soldier from Rush County, Indiana, who went missing on the same date as the major clashes in the part of the DPRK where the remains were claimed to have been found. Kenneth Bacon, a spokesman for Defense Secretary William S. Cohen, said the US Defense Department was reviewing Li's offer. Bacon said, "our policy is that the return of remains is a humanitarian act, and should be decoupled from politics or extraordinary payments. We look forward to working with the North Koreans to return remains in accordance with our policy." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 1, 2000.]

3. Korean Forced Laborers in World War II

Washington Post (Doug Struck and Shigehiko Togo, "KOREANS PRESS WAR CLAIMS SUIT," Tokyo, 2/1/00) reported that seventeen Koreans forced into service of the Japanese army during World War II arrived at the Tokyo Regional Court in Japan on Tuesday to attend the final hearing in a wartime claims suit filed in 1991. A 79-year-old woman testified that she was coerced into serving as a so-called comfort woman to provide sex for Japanese military men occupying China before and during the Pacific war. She stated, "I want Japan to admit what was done to me for 10 years when I was young." The seventeen argued that they were conscripted by Japan, were not covered in any settlement and - at the minimum - are due their wartime wages plus interest. An anonymous Justice Ministry official who is in charge of the case said, "our position is these claims and the matter of unpaid salaries were solved by agreements between the countries" after the war. The Japanese government presented its arguments earlier in legal papers. A ruling may come in a few months.

4. US Legislation on Taiwan

Reuters ("U.S. HOUSE VOTES TO BOOST MILITARY TIES WITH TAIWAN," Washington, 02/01/00) reported that the US House of Representatives on Tuesday passed the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act by a vote of 341 to 70. The act would establish direct military communications between the US and Taiwan and expand US training of Taiwanese military officers. The act must still be reconciled with a similar measure in the Senate, and faces a likely veto by US President Bill Clinton.

4a. White House View

USA Today (Bill Nichols, "WHITE HOUSE: TAIWAN BILL COULD DO DAMAGE," Washington,

2/1/00, P.9) reported that the White House warned Monday that a congressional vote on the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act could greatly damage US-PRC relations. US National Security Council spokesman David Leavy said the bill "would actually decrease the security of Taiwan rather than increase it." Officials also fear that the legislation could threaten the passage in Congress of normalized trade relations with the PRC later this year. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 1, 2000.]

4b. Taiwan View

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN WELCOMES BILL IN US CONGRESS TO BOOST MILITARY LINKS," Taipei, 2/1/00) reported that Taiwan said Tuesday that it would welcome passage of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act in the US Congress. Taiwan's foreign ministry spokesman Henry Chen said, "we welcome the US Congress' concerns for Taiwan's security ... the law would absolutely help enhance Taiwan's safety. It's our hope that the act could be approved by the House and Senate and be supported by the US administration." Taiwan's Defense Minister Tang Fei declined to comment on the act's possible impact on arms sales to the island. PRC embassy spokesman Yu Shuning said on January 31 that if the TSEA were passed, there could be "serious damage to China-US relations." Yu warned that passage of the act would have "very serious consequences to our relations and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and trigger enhanced talk of military confrontation."

4c. PRC View

Agence France Presse ("US-TAIWAN ARMS BILL A THREAT TO REGIONAL PEACE," Beijing, 2/1/00) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao warned on Tuesday that any attempt by the US House of Representatives to adopt legislation to boost US-Taiwan military relations was a threat to peace in Asia. Zhu said, "a few congressmen in the US Congress have tried to push forward adoption of the Taiwan (security) enhancement act ... obstructing the great cause of the reunification of China. This attempt has greatly threatened the peace and stability across the Taiwan straits and Asia pacific." Zhu called on the administration of US President Bill Clinton to oppose the act.

4d. Commentary

The Asian Wall Street Journal printed an opinion article by Richard D. Fisher Junior, senior fellow with the Jamestown Foundation in Washington, D.C. ("TAIWAN NEEDS U.S. ARMS," 2/1/00) which said that passing the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act (TSEA) is "an urgent necessity as the momentum in the evolving military balance on the Taiwan Strait is quickly shifting to favor the PRC." Fisher said that the PRC's accelerating acquisition of new conventional and strategic weapon systems is a move toward "military action over Taiwan." Fisher wrote that Taiwan's defenses are not enough for the PRC's continued advancement and procurement of missiles, submarines, and expanding information warfare capabilities. He continued, however, "the PLA is also working to ensure it has the means to scare Washington from helping Taipei. To accomplish this mission it is building missile and information warfare forces that exploit specific U.S. military weaknesses in Asia, while working hard to diplomatically undermine U.S. support for Taiwan. This underscores why Washington must remain committed to Taiwan's defense. Ensuring Taiwan's survival is the preeminent test for American security arrangements in Asia, as it also sustains a Chinese democracy whose very example proves to mainland compatriots that they need not tolerate a Communist dictatorship. For that same dictatorship, subduing Taiwan is synonymous with undermining

American leadership in Asia." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 1, 2000.]

5. Taiwan Missile Defense

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN TO BUILD ANTI-MISSILE SHIELD," Taipei, 2/1/00) reported that Taiwan's Defense Minister Tang Fei said Tuesday that Taiwan plans to build a low-level anti-missile shield that will involve long-range radars and ground- and sea-based missiles. Tang declined comment on newspaper reports that Taiwan wants to buy long-range radars and up to four Aegis guided-missile destroyers from the United States. However, Tang said that the military-run Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology is heightening its missile development and adapting its Sky Sword missiles so they can shoot down cruise missiles. Tang acknowledged that it may take many years before the antimissile shield can be built because foreign countries are reluctant to offend the PRC by selling weapons to Taiwan. Tang argued that while few modern weapons are entirely defensive in nature, "we don't have any motives for launching an attack. But to build up our defense, we need to have some offensive capability."

6. US-PRC Relations

The Associated Press (Renee Schoof, "US ENVOY PUSHES TALKS WITH CHINA," Beijing, 2/1/00) reported that US ambassador to the PRC Joseph Prueher said that the US is seeking wide-ranging talks with the PRC on human rights, and not just occasional prison releases. Prueher said that the US was pleased with the PRC's release last week of Song Yongyi, a librarian at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania who had been detained since August 1999. Prueher said at a talk at the American Chamber of Commerce-China, "I think it's important that human rights discussions with China not be a series of spikes, of individuals, but rather a broader dialogue where we get more philosophically in tune. A secure, stable and prosperous China is what's in the interests of the United States." Prueher also said that the US should support the PRC's changes from rule by individuals to rule of law, from a planned economy to an open market, and from a closed society to a "world player."

7. Spratly Islands Disputes

Agence France Presse ("CHINA BLASTS PHILIPPINES FOR 'WANTON' DETENTION OF FISHERMEN," Beijing, 2/1/00) reported that the PRC on Tuesday condemned the Philippines for its detention of Chinese fishermen in a dispute over the Scarborough shoal in the South China Sea. PRC Foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao called on the Philippines to "stop interfering in China's internal affairs and refrain from creating new troubles." Zhu said that the PRC has issued two diplomatic protests to the Philippine government after the Philippine navy boarded two Chinese fishing boats last week around Scarborough Shoal. The Philippines also lodged its own diplomatic protest against the PRC over the presence of the vessels, which were ordered out of the waters on January 26. The Philippines said that its navy discovered dynamite sticks and blasting caps -- both banned under Philippine fishing laws -- on one boat, and soft corals on both vessels. Philippine Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon said Tuesday that the Philippines and fellow members of the Association of South East Asian Nations will hold talks with the PRC over the Spratlys later in February. Zhu said Tuesday, however, that there could be no debate over the Scarborough Shoal, arguing, "the Philippines has no sovereignty and no sovereign right over Huangyan Dao and its adjacent waters and has no right to administer these waters."

Reuters ("ASEAN TO MEET CHINA ON SPRATLYS, OFFICIAL SAYS," Singapore, 2/1/00) reported

that Philippine Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon said on Tuesday that the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will meet the PRC this month to discuss the disputed Spratly Islands. Siazon said at a press briefing on an official visit to Singapore, "in February there will be another China/ASEAN meeting to deal with the code of conduct," adding that the meeting could be in Thailand or the PRC. Siazon said that the Spratlys' code of conduct, which aims to govern the action of countries involved in disputes over the islands, had become an issue with the PRC "because of the inclusion of the Paracels." Ownership of the Paracels (north of the Spratlys), which the PRC took from the former South Vietnam towards the end of the Vietnam War, is disputed by the PRC and Vietnam. Siazon said, "if the area of coverage were limited to (the) Spratlys, I think that I could say that within three days, our diplomats would be able to find a set of words that would be acceptable to the contesting parties in the Spratlys." He also said that despite the disagreement over the code, conflicting parties in the dispute had agreed to more restraint. He stated, "particularly in the case of Philippines and China, we have an understanding that neither party would do anything that would negatively affect the relationship, meaning that a lot of restraint on both sides would be required."

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.

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