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I. United States

1. DPRK Chemical Weapons

Pacific Stars and Stripes (Jim Lea, "NORTH KOREA STOCKPILING CHEMICAL WEAPONS, SOUTH REPORTS," Washington, 11/2/99) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry told the National Assembly that the DPRK has produced and stored more than 5,000 tons of chemical agents. The ministry also said that the DPRK has a "significant amount" of biological agents that are "growing continuously." The Center for Defense Information, a private, non-profit research organization based in Washington, reported that the DPRK's chemical agents include mustard gas, phosgene, sarin and VX agents. The center also said that many DPRK troops are outfitted with protective gear, chemical weapons detectors and decontamination systems. It also said, "Pyongyang has been involved in biological weapons research and development for the past three decades," including research on anthrax, cholera and bubonic plague. The center said that the DPRK probably will not sign because the convention includes a verification system. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for November 1.]

2. DPRK-Russia Talks

Associated Press ("RUSSIA, N. KOREA TO REVISE TREATY", Seoul, 10/31/99) reported that an ROK official said on Sunday that Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov is expected to visit the DPRK November 8-11 to sign a new cooperation treaty that emphasizes trade but excludes a military alliance. An anonymous ROK official said that Foreign Minister Ivanov and his DPRK counterpart, Paik Nam-sun, are also expected to discuss US plans to build an anti-missile defense system in Northeast Asia.

3. ROK Weapons Purchase

The Associated Press ("4 COUNTRIES PURCHASE $4B IN U.S. WEAPONS," Washington, 11/1/99) reported that the US Defense Department has reached arms deals with Israel, Egypt, the ROK and Norway worth more than US$4 billion. The ROK is buying 20 F-16s, minus the engines, for US$379 million. It has not decided whether to buy Pratt and Whitney F-100-PW- 200 or General Electric F-110-GE-129 engines to power the planes. The ROK also will buy 29 multiple-launch rocket systems, which are long-range artillery, plus associated equipment. The total cost will be US$498 million. The US Defense Department said that the ROK needs the weapons to counter the DPRK's long-range artillery and rocket systems.

4. PRC Electronic Warfare

Agence France Presse, ("CHINA'S ELECTRONIC WEAPONS MAY MENACE TAIWAN IN FIVE YEARS," Taipei, 11/1/99) reported that Taiwan's state-funded Central News Agency quoted a Defense Ministry report on Sunday as saying that the PRC's electronic warfare capability is expected to pose a threat to Taiwan by 2005. The report cited PRC improvements in satellite communications and reconnaissance expertise, as well as an electronic magnetic pulse which experts said could wipe out an enemy's command systems in minutes. According to the report, Taiwan is to overhaul its military electronics and command systems and move them underground as well as build up its own electronics capability to cope with the emerging threat. The defense ministry said that several war games held in the PRC's Nanjing, Beijing and Lanzhou military districts since 1985 have focused on using electronic equipment to destroy enemy computer and communications systems.

5. Taiwan Defense Spending

Agence France Presse, ("TAIWAN PLANS TO RAISE MILITARY SPENDING AMID CHINA FEAR," Taipei, 11/1/99) reported that Taiwan Defense Minister Tang Fei said Monday that military expenditure would be raised by 40 billion Taiwan dollars (US$1.26 billion) to 300 billion Taiwan dollars (US$9.45 billion) for the next fiscal year to cope with a perceived growing threat from the PRC. Tang said, "Hopefully the military spending would make up for three percent of the gross domestic product in the year 2001." He also said that given PRC's mounting threat, the military budget should have run higher if not for the earthquake on September 21. Tang added, "According to foreign experts' estimates, the military forces of the Chinese communists are expected to rise to the level enabling them to use force against Taiwan from 2005 on."

6. PRC-Taiwan Relations

Associated Press, ("TAIWAN FLOATS GESTURE TO BEIJING", Taipei, 10/31/99) reported that Taiwan's China Times on Sunday quoted Taiwanese official Wu An-chia as saying that Lee Teng-hui

would not demand that he use his official title of President when meeting with PRC envoy Wang Daohan, chairman for the Association of Relations Across the Taiwan Straits. Wu was quoted as saying that there seems to be a split in the PRC about whether to let Wang come to Taiwan soon.

7. Japanese Defense Laws

Associated Press, (JAPAN'S OBUCHI WANTS DEFENSE BOOST," Tokyo, 10/31/99) reported that Kyodo News agency quoted Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi on Sunday as saying that Japanese laws need to allow its military "to prepare the necessary framework to counter possible attacks on our country.'' Obuchi said that it was urgent to create a system to quickly respond to various kinds of emergencies such as the suspected ballistic missile launch last year by the DPRK and an incursion by suspected DPRK spy ships into Japanese waters earlier this year. He suggested that such laws could be enacted at an early date, saying that the government would "appropriately deal with'' emergency legislation while paying attention to parliamentary debates and public opinion. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for November 1.]

8. PRC-Philippine Spratlys Dispute

Agence France-Presse, ("MANILA REJECTS BEIJING REQUEST TO TOW STRANDED SHIP FROM DISPUTED SHOAL," Manila, 11/1/99) reported that defense and foreign ministry sources said Monday that the Philippines has turned down a request by the PRC to tow a stranded navy ship from a disputed shoal in the Spratly islands. Anonymous sources from the foreign office said that the PRC had asked the Philippines last week to tow the Philippine navy logistics support ship BRP Sierra Madre from the Second Thomas Shoal. The ship ran aground on the shoal last May 9 and is being guarded by Filipino troops. The Philippines maintains the shoal is well-within its 200-mile exclusive economic zone as defined by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. A senior foreign ministry source said, "We told them that the Philippines is also claiming the territory and that repairs on the ship have yet to be finished."

9. Asian Security Forum

Asia Pulse ("ESTRADA EYEING TALKS WITH CHINA, KOREA ON SECURITY FORUM", Manila, 11/1/99) reported that Philippine President Joseph Estrada said Friday that he was planning to discuss with the leaders of PRC and the ROK the issue of establishing a more effective security cooperation arrangement among Asia-Pacific nations. Estrada said that he will also push for the inclusion of this issue during the informal leaders' summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to be held in Manila on November 28. He said that prior to the summit, PRC Prime Minister Zhu Rongji and ROK President Kim Dae-jung would be holding state visits to the Philippines. Estrada said, "This is just a proposal. I still have to discuss this with the other leaders." He said this would encompass potential flashpoints in the region and non-military concerns. The President proposed that its participants explore the option of strengthening the ASEAN Regional Forum. He also suggested the possibility of expanding the mandate of the ASEAN Plus Three (the PRC, Japan, and the ROK) summit to address the security concerns of the region, or creating a new security mechanism altogether. He noted that the new forum's function should not be limited to responding to ongoing disputes but also to preventing or resolving conflicts peacefully before they worsen into armed confrontation.

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.
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