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I. United States

1. ROK Position on US Missile Defense

The New York Times (Don Kirk, "SOUTH KOREA NOW PULLS BACK FROM RUSSIA ON MISSILE SHIELD," 3/2/01) reported that the ROK government is retreating from a joint statement with Russia in which both countries stated their support for the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, and which

many interpreted as a statement of opposition to the US missile defense program. The ROK has yet to fix its stance on the US project, which ROK analysts worry could disrupt its rapprochement with the DPRK, but has stated its intention to reveal its official position on the NMD issue before or during the summit talks between the ROK and the US next week.

The Associate Press (Christopher Torchia, "SOUTH KOREA TALKS MISSILE DEFENSE," Seoul, 3/2/00) reported that ROK Foreign Ministry spokesman Kim Euy-taek said that the ROK was sympathetic to US motives for planning a missile defense system. ROK Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn said the demise of the Cold War a decade ago required a "different approach" to global security, adding, "An answer to how to cope with these new threats should be provided by the United States."

2. US Policy toward Korean Peninsula

The Office of International Information Programs of the US Department of State ("TRANSCRIPT: STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, March 2, 2001," Washington, 3/2/01) reported that US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher stated that while the US is reviewing agreements made with the DPRK, it is "committed to carrying them out." He also stated that the ROK's affirmation of the 1972 ABM Treaty is different than taking a position of the proposed US missile defense program.

3. Alleged DPRK Spy in ROK

The Associate Press (Jae-Suk Yoo, "KOREAN-AMERICAN ARRESTED IN SEOUL," Seoul, 3/2/01) reported that the National Intelligence Service said that it had arrested Korean-American Song Hak-sam on charges of spying for the DPRK and of trying to publish in Seoul a book supporting the DPRK and its leader, Kim Jong-il. The book, titled "Kim Jong Il's Unification Strategy," was written by Kim Myong-chol, a member of Tokyo- based Chochongryon, or the General Association of Korean Residents.

4. Russian Diplomacy in Asia

Reuters ("KREMLIN PLEASED WITH IMPACT OF PUTIN'S ASIAN SWING," Hanoi, 3/2/01) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin concluded a tour of Asia that Kremlin officials are describing as successful for deepening ties with the ROK and Vietnam. A Kremlin official said, "An interesting thing about this tour is that it was rather economic. We spent less time on politics."

5. PRC Aircraft Carrier

The London Times (Oliver August, "BEIJING SIZES UP RUSSIAN CARRIER," Shenzen, 3/2/01) reported that PRC military officers have made repeated visit to study the ostensibly privately owned Minsk aircraft carrier anchored in Shenzen, PRC, in what analysts are describing as planning by the PRC to build its own carrier. While Russia removed all weapons systems and some secret technologies from the carrier before selling it, there remain a number of basic design technologies that the PRC could learn from. Malcolm Davis, of the US Joint Service Command and Staff College, said, "Aircraft carriers are definitely on the Chinese wish list for the future.... Certainly what they can do is look at them very closely to give them ideas for the construction of their own carriers or possibly for a Sino-Russian cooperation project at some point in the future." [Ed. Note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 2.]

6. US Submarine Accident

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "JAPANESE FAMILIES ACCEPT NAVY'S APOLOGY," Uwajima, 3/2/01, P.16) reported that US Commander Scott D. Waddle delivered to the Japanese Consulate in Hawaii a stack of sealed envelopes containing letters of apology for delivery to the families of those killed when the submarine he commanded struck the Japanese ship Ehime Maru. The Japanese media expressed surprise at learning that Waddle was born in Japan. [Ed. Note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 2.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Position on NMD

The Korea Herald (Oh Young-jin, "SEOUL EAGER TO PUT NMD ISSUE TO REST," Seoul, 03/02/01) reported that the ROK government on Thursday tried to calm a controversy over the ROK's common stance with Russia in support of the existing Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. This effort seems to be aimed at smoothing ROK-US relations before ROK President Kim Dae- jung heads for Washington for a summit with US President George W. Bush. In a press release, the ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry denied that the joint ROK-Russian ABM stance signified the ROK's opposition to the US missile program. "Russia wanted to put the two countries' anti- NMD stance in the joint statement, but we steered ourselves away from it," a senior ministry official said. Namkung Jin, President Kim's senior political secretary, said, "Our position is neither against the U.S. nor in favor of Russia in terms of our position on the missile shield program." A senior diplomat said that the contents of the ROK- Russia joint statement were already reviewed by the US even before its announcement, thereby leaving little chance for misunderstanding on this issue. Another diplomat said, "The U.S. is not in a position to respond, even if we announced our opposition to its NMD plan."

The Korea Times (Oh Young-jin, "US OKAYED CONTROVERSIAL ABM STATEMENT," 3/2/01) reported that a ROK senior government official stated that the ROK had consulted with the US on the contents of the Korea-Russia Joint statement ahead of its issuance. The official said, "Washington didn't object to the part in it that supports the U.S.-Russia Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty jointly with Russia." [Ed. Note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for MARCH 2.]

2. DPRK Missile Program

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Yong-won, "NK DEPLOYS 100 RODONG-1 MISSILES," Seoul, 03/02/01) reported that the DPRK has deployed more than 100 Rodong-1 missiles with 1,300km range since 1998, according to a high-ranking government official Thursday. He said that 20 of the surface-to-surface ballistic missiles were confirmed by the US intelligence authorities at underground sites at Youngjeodong, Yanagang province, only 20km from the PRC border. So far, the DPRK was learned to have deployed nine Rodong-1 at Shinori, Pyongbuk province. He said that the DPRK also carried out 4,000-6,000km range Taepodong-2 missile's engine test three to four times since December 1999. He said the US officials expressed serious concern over the DPRK move at the meetings between ROK and US officials. The DPRK is also building two more missile bases for Rodong-1 and Daepodong-2 missiles at Yonglim, Jagang province and Sangnam, Hambuk province, the official added.

3. Inter-Korean Summit

Chosun Ilbo (Kim Min-bai, "PRESIDENT SEEKS MILITARY AGREEMENT AT SEOUL MEETING," Seoul, 03/02/01) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung said Thursday he would make a firm agreement that would include military issues, in order to end the Cold War on the peninsula during his anticipated meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. He also expressed his wish to institutionalize summit talks, cultural and sports exchanges, and family exchange meetings in order to further the atmosphere of cooperation. He said that he would strive to develop an economic community between the two nations, both of which can benefit by completing the construction of Kaesong Industrial Complex and the linking of the Seoul-Shinuiju Railroad.

4. ROK-US Summit

Chosun Ilbo (Ju Yong-jung, "US TO RAISE MISSILE ISSUE AT KIM-BUSH MEETING," Seoul, 03/02/01) reported that US Department of State Spokesman Richard Boucher announced in Washington on Wednesday that in- depth talks will be held on March 7 during the summit meeting between US President George W. Bush and ROK President Kim Dae-jung concerning security issues and the controversy over the ROK's apparent support for Russia's stance on the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Boucher said that the ROK government was "reviewing their position on the missile defense issue" and that no oppositions have been made to the US National Missile Defense (NMD), nor was there any "reference to missile defense in this [ROK-Russia joint] communique." According to a diplomatic source, the US Defense Department and the White House made inquiries of protest to the ROK government regarding the content of the joint statement. Boucher also stated, "We have a longstanding alliance and consult extensively with South Korean Government on security measures, including close cooperation to address regional and global concerns about proliferation. We look forward to continuing those consultations when President Kim Dae Jung visits Washington next week. It will be a chance for him and President Bush to discuss the full range of security issues, including missile defense. I would look forward to that point, if you want to hear something further about missile defense."

5. Russian Stance on NMD

Chosun Ilbo (Kim Chang-kyun, "PUTIN EXPRESSES DISSATISFACTION WITH US NMD," Seoul, 03/01/01) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his dissatisfaction Wednesday over the fact that the US is arguing for the revision of the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty (ABM), arguing that any attempts to violate the treaty threatens the framework of strategic safety. President Putin, in his speech to the ROK National Assembly, went on to say that Russia had already ratified the START II arms reduction treaty between the US and Russia for world peace, and urged the US to do the same. He also mentioned that Russia opposed reducing the role of the UN and the Security Council regarding international issues and criticized US hard-line foreign policies including the recent bombing of Iraq.

III. Japan

1. Japanese-DPRK Abduction Issue

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Gaku Shibata, "FAMILIES OF JAPANESE ALLEDGEDLY ABDUCTED BY DPRK VISITED US SATE DEPARTMENT TO ASK FOR HELP," Washington, 02/26/2001) reported that the families of the Japanese civilians allegedly kidnapped by DPRK agents visited US Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Hubbard on February 26 to ask for help in solving the abduction issue

between Japan and the DPRK. The group of the families included the father of Megumi Yokota, who was allegedly abducted by the DPRK in 1997, and several members and supporters of the liaison office for the victims of DPRK kidnapping. The group handed to Hubbard a letter asking to deal with the abduction issue in the US-DPRK talks and not to lift the designation of the DPRK as a terrorist state until the issue is solved. Hubbard stated in response, "I have no doubts about the existence of the abduction cases. We will continue to raise the issue in the US-DPRK talks." As for the designation of the DPRK as a terrorist state, "We have no intention to lift it for the time being."

2. DPRK-German Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("DPRK AND GERMANY ESTABLISHED DILOMATIC RELATIONS LEAVING JAPAN, US, AND FRANCE BEHIND AMONG MAJOR ADVANCED COUNTRIES," 03/02/2001) reported that the ROK Yonhap News on March 1 quoted the DPRK Central News Agency as saying that the DPRK and Germany established diplomatic relations. The report said that Germany is the fourth country after Italy since last year to establish diplomatic relations with the DPRK. The report also pointed out that Germany's move has left Japan, the US, and France behind among the G7 countries.

3. Japanese View of NMD

The Japan Times ("AGENCY CALLS FOR MORE TALKS ON US MISSILE SHIELD PLAN," 03/02/2001) reported that the East Asian Strategic Review 2001, released on March 1 by the National Institute for Defense Studies, the Japanese Defense Agency's (JDA) research institute, calls for consultations between the US and the PRC over the proposed deployment of a US national missile defense (NMD) system, warning that NMD may prompt the PRC to increase its intercontinental ballistic missile capability. The Review devotes a chapter to the plan for a missile shield. JDA's annual review by its researchers says that even limited NMD deployment would have a major impact and would prompt the PRC to increase the number or ability of its ICBMs. The review says that anticipated negative impacts on the European region caused by the missile shield proposal can be mostly avoided if the US and Russia reach agreements concerning the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. The review also adds that Russia does not have an option to compete with the US by enhancing its missile capability. The report pointed out that Japan and the US have been conducting joint research on a theater missile defense system to cover Japan and its vicinity. The Japanese government will have to make political decisions when the TMD project moves on to the development and deployment phases. The review also says that under the new US administration of President George W. Bush, balancing US desires for a greater Japanese role in the bilateral defense alliance and domestic constraints over Japan's involvement in international security will become more important than ever. The article added that the 252-page report looks at recent trends concerning security matters in the PRC, Russia, the Korean Peninsula, Southeast Asia, and US policy in the Asia- Pacific region.

4. Russian and Vietnamese Stance on TMD

The Asahi Shimbun ("RUSSIA AND VIETNAM ISSUED JOINT STATEMENT OPPOSING TMD," 03/02/2001) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Vietnamese counterpart on March 1 signed a joint statement declaring a strategic partnership between Russia and Vietnam and consisting of 17 items of agreement, including their joint opposition to the deployment of US-led theater missile defense (TMD) systems.

5. US Base Issue

The Japan Times (Kyodo, "OKINAWA CAN NO LONGER BEAR US MILITARY, SAYS GOVERNOR," Okinawa, 02/26/2001) reported that Okinawa Prefecture Governor Keiichi Inamine told Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono on February 24 that the people of Okinawa Prefecture "can no longer bear" the burden of hosting such a large segment of the US military forces in Japan. Inamine said, "In a way, we had been reserved about demanding a reduction of the Marines and other US military forces. But we can no longer bear it." Inamine also reiterated Okinawa's demands that the US reduce the size and scope of its military presence in the prefecture and asked for the central government's backing. The demands also include revising the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) to facilitate the handover of US soldiers suspected of crimes to Japanese authorities. Kono, on a one-day trip to the southernmost prefecture, reiterated that if operational improvements to the SOFA fail to remedy the situation, the Japanese government might have to consider revising the agreement. Inamine, however, said, "Operational improvements alone will not put everything in order." In Tokyo earlier this month, Kono told Inamine that Japan might consider seeking a revision of the pact to facilitate handovers, in the wake of the US Marine Corps' refusal to turn over a US serviceman suspected of involvement in arson attacks in Okinawa in mid- January. In the late morning meeting with Inamine and Okinawa prefectural assembly chairman Kokichi Iramina, Kono said, "The issue of military reduction runs parallel with the international situation." He said that the perceived easing of tensions on the Korean Peninsula following last June's inter-Korean summit does not immediately imply a corresponding reduction of US forces in Japan. Inamine agreed when Kono asked for understanding that the situation on the Korean Peninsula must be observed carefully before a decision can be made on the size of US military in Okinawa. Iramina told Kono that revising the SOFA and reducing the number of US forces in Okinawa are both "inevitable" if the Japanese government's plans to develop Okinawa are to be successful. Kono also said, "I felt that we must think harder and make more efforts to prevent recurrences of incidents (involving US soldiers) and deal with the overall situation."

6. Prime Minister's Disapproval Rate

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("MORI CABINET'S SUPPORT RATING SINKS TO 8.6%," 02/27/2001) reported that the approval rating of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's Cabinet dropped sharply to 8.6 percent from the previous month's 19.2 percent. The newspaper's latest nationwide survey on the subject was conducted on February 24 and 25 in door-to-door interviews with 3,000 voters in 250 locations. Of those surveyed, 1,953, or 65.1 percent, gave valid answers. The support rating is the lowest for the Mori administration since its formation in April last year. The report concluded that the figures show that the Mori administration has lost public trust and is facing a critical situation, according to political analysts. The sudden plunge in approval is attributed to the cash-for- favors scandal involving the KSD Foundation for Promoting Welfare of Independent Entrepreneurs and the related resignation of House of Councillors member Masakuni Murakami, also a former chairman of the group of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members in the upper house, the analysts said. In addition, the alleged misappropriation of money from the government's classified fund by a former senior Foreign Ministry official, Mori's response to the initial report of the sinking of the Japanese boat Ehime Maru by a US Navy submarine and his acquisition of a golf course membership for free, as well as sluggish stock prices, are believed to have provoked the major drop in the approval rating. The report added that by political party, the approval rating of the Cabinet among respondents who support the LDP was 26.2 percent, far below the 64.5 percent recorded among LDP supporters who do not approve of the Mori Cabinet.

7. Japanese Politics

The Japan Times ("MORI QUOTE SEEN AS HINT HE READY TO QUIT," 03/02/2001) reported that speculation in political circles that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori will soon resign was rife on March 2 as the embattled leader promised to make a "sensible decision" about his future amid a series of scandals that have rocked his administration. Mori stated in a House of Representatives Budget Committee session, "I have received encouragement and (criticism) from various quarters. As a politician, I plan to make a sensible decision on what I must do now and what I must do in the future." The report said that even some in the ruling block see his comments as an indication that Mori is prepared to resign after the fiscal 2001 budget clears the Diet in late March or early April--a scenario favored by some coalition power brokers. The report also said that Mori's comments also followed sworn Diet testimony by former Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) official Masakuni Murakami over a widening political bribery scandal involving mutual-aid foundation KSD. Murakami was arrested later on March 2. Opposition parties are currently considering the best time to submit a no-confidence motion against Mori's Cabinet. Some opposition members favor submitting the motion before the fiscal 2001 budget clears the Lower House, which is expected on March 2. The report pointed out, however, that Mori later denied his comments that suggest he is ready to leave. Mori said to reporters, "I was talking about policies. It had nothing to do with (a resignation decision)." The report added that Mori has been facing resignation calls from ruling bloc lawmakers who fear they will suffer in July's House of Councilors election if the unpopular leader remains in office.

IV. Announcement

1. Journal of Pacific Affairs

The latest issue of the Journal of Pacific Affairs contains a special report on "Korea in Flux." Articles include: "North Korean Perceptions of Self and Others: Implications for Policy Choices," by Han S. Park; "North Korea's Challenge of Regime Survival: Internal Problems and Implications for the Future," by Scott Snyder; "North Korea's Defensive Power and U.S.-North Korea Relations," by Kyung-Ae Park; and "Peace and Neutrality on the Korean Peninsula: A Role for Canada?" by Robert Bedeski. For more information and ordering please visit the website at:
http://www.pacificaffairs.com/

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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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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China
Monash Asia Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

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

Gee Gee Wong: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Robert Brown: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Hee-sun: khs688@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

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

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

Yunxia Cao: yule111@sina.com
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

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

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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