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CONTENTS

I. [United States](#)

1. [DPRK View of Missile Defense](#)
 2. [US-ROK SOFA Talks](#)
 3. [PRC View of US Presidential Campaign](#)
- ### II. [Republic of Korea](#)
1. [US Policy towards DPRK](#)
 2. [Inter-Korean Railway](#)
 3. [DPRK-Russia Talks](#)

I. United States

1. DPRK View of Missile Defense

Agence France Presse ("NKOREA SLAMS US REPUBLICAN PARTY'S STANCE ON MISSILE SHIELDS," Seoul, 8/3/00) reported that a commentary in the DPRK's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper on Thursday said that the pledge in the Republican Party platform to push ahead with the missile shields showed that the US wanted to dominate the rest of the world and ignore the current peace process on the Korean peninsula. The commentary said, "Such outbursts will convince no one and can never be justified as they were made by those who are keen on chilling the atmosphere of detente prevailing on the (Korean) peninsula. US conservative hardliners, obsessed by their wild ambition to become the 'world's only superpower' consider the situation on the Korean peninsula developing in favor of detente as an obstacle in the way of achieving their strategic goal." The paper said that goal was to set up missile defense shields "at any cost" so that the US could "get the unchallenged military strategic upperhand." It also said the US was using the threat of the DPRK missiles as an excuse to maintain a large military presence in Asia. It continued, "They get nervous and vexed about the defusion of the tensions because they want to see a divided and unstable Korea, not a reunified and peaceful Korea."

2. US-ROK SOFA Talks

Agence France Presse ("SKOREAN-US TALKS ON TROOP TREATY END WITH NO DEAL, SOME PROGRESS," Seoul, 8/3/00) and the Associated Press ("U.S. TO GIVE SOUTH KOREA MORE

JURISDICTION OVER U.S. SOLDIERS," Seoul, 8/3/00) reported that US and ROK officials on Thursday broke up two days of talks in Seoul about revising the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Both sides reported progress. A joint statement said that the US had agreed in principle with ROK demands that the SOFA be brought in line with similar agreements for US troops in Germany and Japan. The statement said, "The talks were constructive and productive and provided the basic framework for the early revision of the ROK-US SOFA." It said that the two sides would meet again within the next two months in the US in a bid to finalize a revision. The statement also said, "The two sides agreed to transfer custody at the time of indictment with ensured legal rights for the accused." Press reports on Thursday said that because the US had less faith in the justice system of the ROK than those of Japan or Germany, it was demanding a series of safeguards. The reports said that the US wanted better confinement facilities for suspects and total legal jurisdiction over all crimes committed by US troops that would carry a jail sentence of less than three years. Leaks of the reported demands sparked outrage from civic groups in the ROK who complained the exemption would mean that US troops would evade Korean justice for virtually all but the most serious crimes.

3. PRC View of US Presidential Campaign

Agence France Presse ("BEIJING WARNS U.S. TO KEEP CHINA OUT OF ELECTION DEBATE," Beijing, 8/3/00) reported that the PRC struck back at criticism from the US Republican Party and warned US politicians to keep Sino-US relations out of its presidential election campaign. The PRC's official Xinhua news agency quoted foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao as saying, "We have taken note of the fact that in the U.S. election campaign, the Republican Party's platform criticizes China and we are concerned and regretful about it. US presidential election politics should not be involved in Sino-U.S. relations." The US Republican Party platform, issued this week at the party's convention in Philadelphia, had criticized the PRC for political oppression at home, for stealing US nuclear secrets, for threatening Taiwan with forceful reunification, and stifling freedom and proliferating weapons of mass destruction. Zhu responded to the statements by saying that the further development of bilateral relations between the PRC and the US was in the interests of both countries and in the interests of global stability and prosperity. Zhu said, "We hope the Republican Party has a clear understanding of the overall situation of Sino-U.S. relations, and will act wisely, abide by the commitments of past U.S. governments and work to stabilize and improve relations." However, he made no mention of the platform's strong commitment towards building a National Missile Defense (NMD) system.

II. Republic of Korea

1. US Policy towards DPRK

The Korea Herald (Young-bae Shin, "DESPITE TOUGH GOP RHETORIC, EXPERTS PREDICT NO DRASTIC CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD N.K.," Seoul, 08/03/00) reported that most ROK officials and analysts forecast that there would be no drastic change in the basic US policy toward the DPRK even if the US Republican Party won the November presidential election. ROK officials cast doubt over whether the US Republican Party would scrap the current US government's engagement policy and resort to confrontation to address the DPRK's missile and nuclear issues. Pointing to the Republican Party's pledge to cooperate with the ROK and Japan to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction on the peninsula, analysts said that there was little difference between the basic DPRK policies of the two parties. ROK diplomatic observers also agreed with this view. Professor Yu Suk-ryul of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), an ROK government think tank, said, "The Republicans' tough attitude is seen to aim at

criticizing the Clinton government to draw more votes in the elections."

2. Inter-Korean Railway

The Korea Times (Park Yoon-bae, "RESTORATION OF ANOTHER NORTH-SOUTH RAILWAY MAY LEAD TO LINK WITH TSR," Seoul, 08/02/00) reported that the ROK is gearing up for a project to link another severed railway line between the two Koreas, after agreeing during the three-day inter-Korean ministerial meeting in Seoul to link the Seoul-Shinuiju line. It was reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung plans to propose an international project to link the ROK, the DPRK and Russia by restoring the Kyongwon line. Sources predict that the DPRK and Russia will welcome the railway plan, considering that the connection will speed up economic cooperation between the three countries. The project is based on Kim's ambition to construct a "new silk road" designed to connect the two Koreas with the Trans-Siberian Railroad (TSR), which stretches across to Europe.

3. DPRK-Russia Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Ye Yong-june, "NORTH KOREA-RUSSIA FOREIGN MINISTERS SLATED TO MEET IN SEPTEMBER," Seoul, 08/02/00) reported that DPRK Foreign Affairs Minister Park Nam-sun will visit Moscow at the end of September to meet with Russian Prime Minister Igor Ivanov. According to Yomiuri daily newspaper of Japan on August 2, the two ministers will primarily discuss details for DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's visit to Russia. Yomiuri made its report based on statements by Matsura Koichiro, UNESCO secretary general, who met Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ivanov on July 31. According to Yomiuri's report, Matsura had explained that Ivanov had stated that the schedule for Kim's visit is unavailable at this time but that Kim make an official visit to Moscow after minister-level talks by the two nations. Ivanov said that Kim will make a short stop at Vladivostok in Siberia, and then meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. Matsura is scheduled to visit Pyongyang on August 19.

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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