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I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Relations

Reuters ("S.KOREA SAYS NORTH COULD HEIGHTEN TENSIONS IN 2000," Seoul, 12/03/99) reported that ROK Defense Minister Cho Seong- tae and top ROK military officials met on Friday to discuss policy for avoiding conflict with the DPRK. The Ministry of National Defense said in a statement that the ROK expects the DPRK to try to bolster its fragile economy and address food shortages next year, but the threat of it intentionally stirring military tension remains. The Ministry also said that as a safeguard, the ROK would enhance national defense- related research and education.

2. ROK Response to Japan-DPRK Talks

Agence France Presse ("SOUTH KOREA WELCOMES LANDMARK JAPAN- NORTH KOREA DEAL," Seoul, 12/03/99) reported that the ROK Yonhap News Agency quoted a government official as saying, "We welcome the agreement between the Japanese parliamentary group and officials in North Korea to resume talks on normalizing ties. We believe the improvement of ties between the North and Japan will eventually lead to the improvement of the inter-Korean ties." The official said the ROK, Japan, and the US were maintaining close consultation with each other and pursuing a coordinated policy toward the DPRK to engage it in dialogue for peace and stability. The official stated, "Through its dialogue with the United States and Japan, the North will realize that it won't be harmful to open itself and will come forward to dialogue with the South as well."

3. PRC-Vietnam Relations

Associated Press (Tini Tran, "VIETNAM, CHINA OK LAND BORDER DEAL," Hanoi, 12/03/99) reported that Chinese spokesman Zhu Bangzao said on Friday that the PRC hopes to sign a treaty with Vietnam by the end of this year that would delineate the 800-mile border between the two countries. Zhu said the PRC premier and his Vietnamese counterpart, Phan Van Khai, urged negotiators to speed the process of drafting the land border treaty. Both sides agreed not to "aggravate the situation" in the disputed South China Sea.

4. US National Missile Defense

The Washington Post (William Drozdiak, "COHEN WARNS NATO ABOUT 'ROGUE STATES'," Brussels, 12/03/99) reported that Defense Secretary William S. Cohen told NATO defense ministers in a meeting on Friday that the US may soon need to develop a missile defense system to counter threats from "rogue states" with ballistic weapons, but insisted it would be done with allied security interests in mind. Cohen told reporters, "It is important for our allies to understand that the threat [from rogue states] is real, that it will intensify in coming years, and that it will put their own populations and their own forces at risk." NATO Secretary General George Robertson of Britain said the European allies raised "a number of profound questions" about the system's potential impact on the alliance. Cohen explained that NATO will face a variety of evolving threats over the next 15 years and they could not avoid the consequences of such a threat. He cited a study by the National Intelligence Council that showed the proliferation of medium-range ballistic missiles, caused mainly by exports from the DPRK, "created an immediate, serious and growing threat to U.S. forces, interests and allies, and has significantly altered the strategic balances in the Middle East and Asia." Cohen also said the US was willing to provide its European allies with a missile defense system that would provide the same kind of protection as sought by the US. German Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping noted that the proposed timing of the NMD decision was troubling because it would come in the middle of the Russian presidential election campaign and could fuel support for anti-Western nationalists there. French Defense Minister Alain Richard questioned whether the enormous investments required for the US missile defense plan could not be better spent on other military projects. He also warned about provoking the RF and the PRC into retaliating with new measures such as missiles tipped with multiple warheads designed to overwhelm such defenses. Richard stated, "we must be very cautious about a program that could end up damaging our security if it offers indirect encouragement to an arms race."

II. Japan

1. Visit by Japanese Delegation to DPRK

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPANESE-DPRK NORMALIZATION TALKS TO BEGIN THIS YEAR," Gaku Shibata, Pyongyang, 12/03/99) and the Daily Yomiuri ("DIET MISSION, N. KOREA AGREE TO RESTART TALKS," Pyongyang, 12/03/99) reported that former Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and DPRK Secretary of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party Kim Young-sun agreed on December 2 that Japan and the DPRK will resume unconditional bilateral negotiations to normalize diplomatic relations within the year. Both sides agreed to discuss the suspected DPRK abduction of Japanese nationals, the visits to Japan by Japanese spouses of DPRK citizens, and humanitarian issues such as the resumption of food aid to the DPRK. Murayama also handed Kim a letter Prime Minister Keizo Obuch wrote to Kim Jong-il, calling for an improvement of bilateral relations between the two countries. Murayama said, "It is important for both the Japanese and DPRK governments to hold bilateral talks immediately, without any preconditions, and engage in exchanges of opinions aimed at the normalization of diplomatic relations." In response, Kim Young-sum said that he was very interested in the proposal and agreed to restart the bilateral talk. Regarding the suspected DPRK abductions of Japanese civilians, Murayama told Kim that many Japanese people felt dissatisfied with the DPRK Red Cross Society's announcement in June 1998 that it could not locate any people who have disappeared. As for the return visits by Japanese spouses to Japan, Murayama proposed that cooperation be encouraged between Red Cross societies in the two countries, in addition to government-level negotiations. The Japanese Diet members also asked the DPRK to reopen investigations into the suspected abduction of ten Japanese civilians in seven separate cases on the basis that the cases involved "missing persons."

The Asahi Shimbun ("ROK FOREIGN MINISTER TALKS TO ASAHI REPORTER ON MURAYAMA DELEGATION TO DPRK," 12/03/99) reported that ROK Foreign and Trade Minister Hong Su-yong on December 2 gave credit and expressed his expectation to the Murayama delegation to the DPRK. According to the report, Hong said the Murayama Delegation "is also a good thing for Japanese-DPRK exchange and dialogue...(However, Japan) should engage in humanitarian aid to the DPRK to make Japan's say more influential." As for Japanese-US-ROK policy cooperation, known as the Perry process, Hong said, "the DPRK, on principle, accepted (the terms expressed in the Perry Report), but the policy process itself may not proceed quickly." As for Kim Jong-il's possible visit to the PRC, Hong said, "(The visit) would be a shortcut way for the DPRK to realize the changing (outside) world, and the ROK would endorse such a visit." With regard to Japan's involvement in development with the US of theater missile defense (TMD) and the new US-Japan Defense Guidelines, Hong said, "Basically, these are up to Japan's own decision...(However,) Japan should be very careful in asking for understanding of neighboring countries because these could invite regional arms races."

The Asahi Shimbun ("US STATE DEPARTMENT HAILS JAPANESE-DPRK AGREEMENT TO RESTART NORMALIZATION TALKS," 12/03/99) reported that the US State Department spokesman said on December 2, "We hope that relations between Tokyo and Pyongyang will be improved." The report described the Murayama Delegation as a part of coordinated efforts by the US, Japan and the ROK. The report added that prior to this Japanese Diet members' visit to the DPRK, US Policy Coordinator for the DPRK William Perry told the delegation members that he hoped the delegation would help advance Japanese-DPRK relations. The report suggested that this is why the US sees the delegation's visit as part of Japan's effort to be consistent with the Perry process.

2. PRC View on TMD

The Sankei Shimbun ("PRC SAYS THAT TMD STIRS PEACE," 12/03/99) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yu Er said in a December 2 press conference, "We would like to mention the UN resolution to oppose revision of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The resolution revealed that any effort to revise the treaty would be excluded from the international community. The PRC strongly opposes some efforts to promote threats to peace and arms races, including TMD, as

concerns to strategic balance." In response to a question as to whether Sun's statement contradicts a previous statement by PRC disarmament and arms control director Sha Zu Kang that the PRC would not reject the concept of TMD, Sun replied, "I am not in the position to comment on Sha's statement, but I would like to emphasize our government's stance that advanced TMD would be a dangerous move against stability."

3. Japanese-PRC Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPANESE-PRC FISHERY PACT: PRC SUGGESTS SOFTER PROPOSAL," 12/01/99) reported that the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party delegation visited the PRC between November 24 and 26. The delegation met with the PRC Communist Party authorities and discussed their disagreement on the area of fishing operation between the two countries. The report said that the PRC may agree to a limit of 1200 ships a year instead of 4000 ships a year, which the PRC had previously insisted on. However, Japan is seeking a limit of 200 to 300 ships.

4. Japanese-Russian Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("RUSSIA SUGGESTS LATE MARCH AS DATE FOR YELTSIN'S VISIT TO JAPAN," 12/01/99) reported that according to a source close to the Russian Foreign Ministry, President Boris Yeltsin's visit to Japan will be in late March 2000. The specific date will be confirmed during the visit by the Russian Foreign Minister to Japan on February 2, 2000. Japan had asked Yeltsin to visit this year in hopes of signing a peace treaty by the year 2000, but Yeltsin's health problem, the conflict in Chechenya, and other Russian domestic problems delayed the visit. Yeltsin has also said during his visit to Turkey in November that he had no clear idea when he would visit Japan even though the RF government has suggested that Yeltsin would be ready to visit Japan in March or April of 2000.

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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
The Center for Global Communications, Tokyo, Japan
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China
Asian 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

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

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

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

Leanne Paton: anjlcake@webtime.com.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