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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. DPRK on IAEA Inspections
2. PRC and Russia on Iraq Oil
3. Cross-Straits Direct Links
4. DPRK Humanitarian Crisis
5. PRC Internet Censorship
6. Japan-US Military Relations
7. US-Asia Relations
8. DPRK Industrial Zone

II. Republic of Korea 1. ROK President's Comment on SOFA
2. Rejection of Military Working Level Talks by DPRK
3. Anti-US Protest
4. PRC, Russia, Common Urge to DPRK
5. DPRK Defectors Issue

I. United States

1. DPRK on IAEA Inspections

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "NORTH KOREA REJECTS CALL FOR INSPECTIONS," Seoul, 12/04/02) and Reuters ("N.KOREA REJECTS U.N. NUCLEAR WATCHDOG'S CALL," Seoul, 12/04/02) reported that the DPRK said Wednesday it had rejected a call by the International Atomic Energy Agency to open its nuclear weapons program to inspections, saying the UN nuclear watchdog was abetting US policy toward the DPRK. The IAEA called on the DPRK last week to open its atomic weapons program to inspections and said it "deplored" the DPRK's assertion it had a right to possess the weapons. The DPRK spurned the resolution as "an extremely unilateral resolution." "The DPRK government cannot accept the November 29 resolution of the IAEA board of governors in any case and... there is no change in its principled stand on the nuclear issue," Korea Central News Agency

said.

2. PRC and Russia on Iraq Oil

Reuters ("RUSSIA, CHINA SHARE CONCERN OVER IRAQ OIL DEALS," Moscow, 12/04/02) and Reuters (Dmitry Zhdannikov, "RUSSIA, CHINA JOIN FORCES TO PROTECT IRAQ OIL DEALS," Moscow, 12/04/02) reported that Russia and the PRC want to join forces to protect their substantial oil interests in Iraq if a US-led invasion topples Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, a top Russian industry official said on Wednesday. The official, who accompanied President Vladimir Putin this week on his trip to Beijing, said the two states agreed that closer cooperation was needed to guarantee their interests under any new Iraqi government. "Obviously, no agreement has been signed on the issue, but there were a number of discussions, including, as far as I know, between the leaders of the two states," the source said. "It was agreed that closer economic and diplomatic coordination was needed to restrain unfettered U.S. power in Iraq (if Saddam is removed from power)," he said. Russia is concerned that if Washington ousts Saddam, oil development contracts signed by Saddam's government with Russian oil firms may be torn up by a future administration installed by the US. Members of the Iraqi opposition, who are keen to be part of any new government that succeeds Saddam, have said they would review oil deals signed by Saddam.

3. Cross-Straits Direct Links

Reuters ("TAIWAN CABINET APPROVES CHINA CHARTER FLIGHTS," Taipei, 12/04/02) reported that Taiwan gave final approval on Wednesday for its airlines to fly to the PRC for the first time, allowing charter flights to Shanghai during the Chinese New Year holiday. Taiwan airlines can apply to operate flights to Shanghai to pick up Taiwan travellers between January 26 and February 10, but their aircraft must make stops in Hong Kong or Macau to ensure the flights are indirect. Taiwan Premier Yu Shyi-kun gave approval for the small but unprecedented step towards opening direct transport links between the political rivals at a weekly cabinet meeting. "The government has done its best to overcome all obstacles across the Strait and allow Taiwan businessmen to come home for the new year," Yu was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the cabinet.

4. DPRK Humanitarian Crisis

The Agence France-Presse ("WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME COULD CLOSE IN NORTH KOREA BY APRIL," 12/04/02) reported that a slump in donations could force the UN World Food Programme to halt work in the DPRK by April 1, WFP executive director James Morris warned the Security Council. This year WFP had to cut its operations in the DPRK to help only 3.4 million people, compared with 6.4 million last year, Morris told a public council meeting. "I anticipate cutting it in half again in January," he said. "We will need 550,000 metric tons of food in North Korea next year; at this stage we have commitments for 33,000 metric tons -- 23,000 from the European Community and 10,000 from Italy," he said. "It is conceivable that, come April 1, we will not have resources to do our work and that there will not be a WFP, and ultimately a United Nations presence, in that country." Morris said WFP had 50 international staff and 60 local employees in the DPRK, and that it was the only international organization with offices outside the capital, Pyongyang, in five provincial cities. "We are essentially the presence of the United Nations in North Korea," he said, noting that other agencies such as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation had "a very small presence." "Our major supporters have not made commitments for our work in North Korea, for a variety of reasons," but WFP focused on helping hungry people and left political problems to others, he said. He did not elaborate.

5. PRC Internet Censorship

The New York Times (Joseph Kahn, "CHINA HAS WORLD'S TIGHTEST INTERNET CENSORSHIP, STUDY FINDS," Shanghai, 12/04/02) reported that the PRC has the most extensive Internet censorship in the world, regularly denying local users access to 19,000 Web sites that the government deems threatening, a study by Harvard Law School researchers finds. The study, which tested access from multiple points in the PRC over six months, found that Beijing blocked thousands of the most popular news, political and religious sites, along with selected entertainment and educational destinations. The researchers said censors sometimes punished people who sought forbidden information by temporarily making it hard for them to gain any access to the Internet. Defying predictions that the Internet was inherently too diverse and malleable for state control, the PRC has denied a vast majority of its 46 million Internet users access to information that it feels could weaken its authoritarian power. The PRC does so even as it allows Internet use for commercial, cultural, educational and entertainment purposes, which it views as essential in a globalized era. Only the most determined and technologically savvy users can evade the filtering, and they do so at some personal risk, the study says. The PRC blocks all access to many sites, and it has begun selectively filtering content in real time - even as viewers seek access to it - and deleting individual links or Web pages that it finds offensive. By regularly testing access to 200,000 popular Web addresses, the researchers found that the PRC blocked up to 50,000 sites at some point in the six-month period. Of those, the study found 19,000 sites that could not be reached from different places in China on multiple days.

The study is at http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/filtering/china.

6. Japan-US Military Relations

Reuters (Elaine Lies, "JAPAN CALLS FOR CRACKDOWN ON U.S. MILITARY CRIME," Tokyo, 12/04/02) reported that Japan called on the US military on Wednesday to crack down on crimes by servicemen, a day after police issued an arrest warrant for a US Marine for attempted rape on Okinawa, home to most of the US forces in Japan. The incident may re-ignite resentment of US forces on the tropical island chain, located some 1,000 miles southwest of Tokyo, as well as sparking renewed calls to revise a key treaty governing US military personnel in Japan. Anti-American sentiment is also on the rise in neighboring ROK after a road accident in which a U.S. Army vehicle crushed two schoolgirls to death, prompting calls to revise a similar treaty there. Japan has formally requested that Major Michael J. Brown, 39, be handed over to the Japanese authorities in connection with the incident. The US authorities hope to reach a decision as soon as possible, the Foreign Ministry said. Brown is alleged to have tried to rape a woman in a car on November 2, but she fought off the attack. Police have declined to give details about the woman, but Kyodo news agency said she was from the Philippines. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi called on the U.S. military to take steps to prevent similar incidents. "We must strongly urge that the military improve their attitude and take steps to prevent a recurrence of this sort of crime," he told reporters. A spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo said the incident was being taken very seriously. "The suspect is in U.S. custody and we are cooperating fully with the Japanese side in the investigation," he added.

7. US-Asia Relations

The Associate Press ("OFFICIAL WILL TRAVEL TO JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA, CHINA AND AUSTRALIA," Washington, 12/03/02) reported that a senior Bush administration official will travel to three Asian countries and Australia next week seeking their support in the confrontation with Iraq,

State Department spokesman Philip T. Reeker said Tuesday. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage will visit Japan Dec. 8-10, ROK Dec. 10, PRC Dec. 11-12 and Australia Dec. 13-14, he said. "It's important to look at all possibilities, to be prepared for all eventualities as we watch the process unfold and see if Iraq has made a commitment...to live up to its obligations under the (U.N.) Security Council resolution," Reeker said. Senior administration officials have been sounding out around 50 nations in recent weeks on what they would be prepared to do in the event of a war with Iraq. "The international community has spoken quite uniformly about the need for North Korea to cease its program of developing nuclear weapons and do so immediately in a verifiable way," Reeker said.

8. DPRK Industrial Zone

The Associated Press ("EXPERT CASTS DOUBT ON NEW INDUSTRIAL ZONE IN NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 12/04/02) reported that companies should be cautious about investing in a new industrial park where the DPRK hopes to attract ROK factories, a researcher at a Seoul government think tank said Wednesday. The DPRK passed a law on Nov. 20 to create the zone in Kaesong, a town near the western border with the ROK. Negotiators from the two Koreas plan to begin talks in the DPRK on Friday to discuss rules of investment there. Shin Ji-ho of Seoul's government-funded Korea Development Institute said that energy shortages and other poor infrastructure make opening businesses in Kaesung four times more expensive than in industrial parks in the PRC. The average monthly wage of DPRK factory workers is estimated at US$13. But the cash-starved DPRK is demanding that its workers in Kaesung be paid US$80-100, making them a more expensive work force than their counterparts in the PRC and Vietnam, he said. Shin also pointed out that ROK companies won't be able to export goods produced in Kaesung to the US or Japan due to trade restrictions unless the DPRK resolves international concerns over its nuclear weapons program. "South Korea should be more cautious and persuade North Korea to take steps to make its industrial park a more profitable place to invest," Shin said in his report.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK President's Comment on SOFA

Joongang Ilbo (Oh Young-hwan, Kim Chong-hyuk, "KIM RESPONDS TO MOUNTING SOFA PROTEST," Seoul, 12/04/02) reported that just as key ROK officials were preparing to board a Washington-bound flight for security consultations with their US counterparts, President Kim Dae-jung was telling a cabinet meeting Tuesday that improvements to the Status of Forces Agreement were needed. The agreement governs the stationing of US troops here, including the controversial question of criminal jurisdiction. "Both sides should try to further improve the agreement," Kim said, "so that the alliance between Korea and the United States can move forward." He said he wants the matter to be discussed at the annual Security Consultative Meeting in Washington later this week. The ROK delegation is headed by Defense Minister Lee Jun. President Kim spoke as anti-American demonstrations continued here. Protesters took to the streets, slowing traffic late Tuesday near City Hall. President Kim also said that expression of healthy criticism about US policy is acceptable, but added, "It would not be beneficial for our national interests to be indiscriminately anti-American."

2. Rejection of Military Working Level Talks by DPRK

Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-ku, "NK REJECTS TALKS ON MDL CROSSING," Seoul, 12/04/02) reported that DPRK rejected South Korean calls for military working level talks concerning crossing the

demarcation line in the demilitarized zone, Tuesday saying this was inappropriate at the moment, as no agreement had been reached on the schedule for overland tourism to Mount Kumgang, and making a permanent road connection to Kaesong Industrial Complex. ROK government official said an agreement had already been made between Hyundai Asan and DPRK's Asia Pacific Peace Committee to do a survey on December 5, and begin overland tours on December 11. He added the only problem at the moment was the failure to exchange agreements on vehicles crossing the east coast to Kumgang. He continued ROK government sent its proposal on vehicle passage on November 23, but there had been no reply yet, despite there being no areas of contention.

3. Anti-US Protest

Joongang Ilbo (Ser Myo-ja, "ANTI-U.S. PROTESTERS SET OFF FOR WASHINGTON," Seoul, 12/04/02) reported that ROK activists took their protests on the road Tuesday, vowing to tell the White House in Washington of their anger that two American soldiers were found not responsible for the June road deaths of two local girls. Seven members of the Pan National Committee, an alliance of civic groups that has staged protests ever since the accident, flew to US. "Public anger has reached its peak," Kim Jong-il, head of the group, said in a news conference at Incheon International Airport. "We will visit the White House, the Department of State and the United Nations headquarters to lodge our protest." The group said it would demand that the U.S. president apologize again in person, that the soldiers' acquittal be voided and that they be tried again in an ROK court. President George W. Bush last week relayed his apology through the U.S. ambassador to ROK. The protesters also demand that the Status of Force Agreement between ROK and US be revised. Politicians joined in the call for SOFA revision. A group of 27 lawmakers agreed Tuesday to send a resolution on the issue to the National Assembly. The US ambassador to ROK, Thomas Hubbard, reportedly told ROK lawmakers Tuesday that he is willing to discuss procedural and operational questions regarding improvement of US military operations here.

4. PRC, Russia, Common Urge to DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Yoo Kwang-jong, "CHINA, RUSSIA TELL PYEONGYANG TO BAN THE BOMB," Beijing, 12/04/02) reported that the leaders of PRC and Russia called for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula Monday during a meeting in Beijing. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Jiang Zemin urged DPRK to comply with an agreement reached with US in 1994 for DPRK to give up its nuclear program. The leaders said it was of "extreme importance" that relations between the US and DPRK are based on "adherence to agreement already reached, including the Agreed Framework of 1994." A DPRK-watcher in Beijing said the statement, coming from DPRK's two strongest allies, should have special weight in DPRK. Jiang has called for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, most recently in October after a meeting with US President George W. Bush.

5. DPRK Defectors Issue

Chosun Ilbo (Joo Yong-joon, "US TO ADDRESS NK REFUGEE PROGLEM IN CHINA," Washington, 12/04/02) reported that Assistant Secretary of the State Department Lorne Craner, head of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor announced Monday US will raise the North Korean defectors issue with PRC in two weeks during human rights talks. Attending a seminar on the crisis of defectors, hosted by Washington private research institute AEI, Secretary Craner said the US is demanding PRC not to repatriate DPRK refugees because they are subject to punishment in DPRK. Craner said PRC has to comply with the UN's 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, urging Beijing to immediately stop oppressive measures against DPRK refugees. He also noted the

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should host a discussion in the matter of DPRK refugees with parties involved, and the US is also planning to discuss the matter in concert with PRC, ROK, Japan and international organizations.

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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Ilmin Internationl Relations Institute
BK21 The Education and Research Corps for East Asian Studies
Department of Political Science, Korea University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China

International Peace Research Institute (PRIME),
Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan

Monash Asia Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Brandon Yu: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

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

Kim Young-soo: yskim328@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hibiki Yamaguchi: hibikiy84@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Saiko Iwata: saiko@akira.ne.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Hiroya Takagi: hiroya_takagi@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@online.ru
Moscow, Russian Federation

Wu Chunsi: cswu@fudan.ac.cn
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