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I. United States

1. DPRK-Japan Relations

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA SAYS JAPAN PRESENTS DANGEROUS THREAT," Seoul, 1/5/01) reported that the DPRK on Friday accused Japan of pushing ahead with a policy of militarization and said that Japanese forces had emerged as the greatest threat to the country's security. The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted an article in the Rodong Sinmun as saying, "Last year the Japanese reactionaries were busy inventing pretexts for overseas aggression." KCNA said that the signed article cited Japanese military purchases and government efforts to change laws in order to allow its "Self-Defence Forces" to operate overseas. The report said that Japan embarked last year on a policy which aims to turn its "peace constitution" into a "war constitution" and that together with the US it planned to increase its military presence in the region in order to "counter North Korea." The article said, "They (Japan) are now giving a finishing touch to their commanding system so as to carry out military actions for aggression worldwide."

2. DPRK Rally

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREANS HOLD MASS RALLY," Seoul, 1/5/01) reported that an official report said more than 100,000 people rallied and marched Friday in the DPRK, vowing to

remain loyal to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il in the new year. The state-orchestrated rally was held in Kim Il-sung Square in Pyongyang. The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported that Premier Hong Song Nam urged the crowd to "become indomitable fighters who implement the idea and line of Kim Jong Il under any circumstances." KCNA also said representatives for workers, farmers, youth and students took the podium to swear loyalty to Kim.

3. PRC Policy toward Taiwan

Washington Post (John Pomfret and Steven Mufson, "BEIJING SIGNALS NEW FLEXIBILITY ON TAIWAN," Beijing, 1/5/01) reported that PRC Deputy Prime Minister Qian Qichen signaled in an interview on January 4 that the PRC is willing to be more flexible on Taiwan and urged the incoming US Bush administration not to view the PRC as a "strategic competitor." Qian said the PRC's emergence as a regional Asian power is "irresistible" and warned that a US decision to sell advanced Aegis radars to Taiwan would harm bilateral relations. However, he said, "China and the United States have no need to begin a war against each other" over Taiwan. Asked if the PRC would be willing to accept a loose confederation with Taiwan, Qian said, "Anything can be discussed." He went on to say that the PRC has adopted a "pragmatic and more inclusive" version of its "one-China" policy. Qian noted that Taiwan's leaders have said "they were trapped" under the one China policy, so "In order to ease their doubts, we said 'one China' not only includes the mainland, but also Taiwan. We think of this China as an integral whole which can't be separated in sovereignty or territory. This is the true meaning of 'one China.' Qian went on to say, "And they had another doubt.... They think that Taiwan being part of Chinese territory means Taiwan and China are not equal.... To ease this doubt, we said the mainland and Taiwan belong to the same one China. At least, it shows some kind of equality. I think it can help ease their doubt." Qian concluded, "There is much room [for negotiations] on this problem." US President-elect George Bush's top foreign policy advisers declined to comment on Qian's remarks. However, Douglas Paal, president of the Asia Pacific Policy Center and a member of the National Security Council in the last Bush administration, said Qian's comments were "clearly aimed at the incoming administration. They are sending signals that they are prepared to work with the administration and not make unreasonable demands." Another PRC official involved in Taiwan policy said that the PRC has significantly softened the policy, and no longer views Taiwan as a renegade province. The anonymous official said, "Once we said we would liberate Taiwan, then we said Taiwan was just a province of China, now we are saying Taiwan can be our equal. For the mainland to make these kinds of adjustments in policy is not an easy thing. This is a broader understanding of China. This means there is much more space to define China. We have all said there is not much of a big change, but for me -- I was in the room when Qian said this a few months ago -- it was a great shock." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 5, 2001.]

4. PRC View of Bush Defense Policy

Knight Ridder (Michael Dorgan, "EXPERTS SAY CHINA IS WARILY EYEING BUSH'S DEFENSE PLANS," Beijing, 1/5/01) reported that experts in the PRC are wary of President-elect George W. Bush's impact on US defense policy toward the PRC. Zhang Yebai, a senior fellow at the Institute of American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a government-linked think tank, said that the appointments of Colin L. Powell as secretary of state and Donald H. Rumsfeld as secretary of defense have the PRC leaders worried that "it may be tougher to deal with the US." Yan Xuetong, executive director of the Institute of International Studies at Tsinghua University in Beijing, said that US-PRC relations could become strained beyond mere verbal disagreements. He said, "In the next four years, I would not rule out a possible military confrontation like in 1996." The PRC government has refrained from making any objections before Bush takes power, but leading experts with

government connections said that the leadership is uneasy about Bush's PRC policy. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 5, 2001.]

5. PRC Navy

The International Herald Tribune (Michael Richardson, "CHINA DEVELOPING A NAVY THAT COULD CONFRONT US," Singapore, 1/5/01) reported that Taiwanese military officials noted Thursday that the Sovremenny- class destroyers that the PRC purchased from Russia are capable of intercepting any US warships sent to protect Taiwan in the event of a PRC attack. Robert Karniol, Asia-Pacific editor of Jane's Defense Weekly, said, "The Sovremennys give the Chinese Navy a punch it has been lacking." US officials said that the modernization of the PRC Navy, and its increasing range and power, worry other Asian countries - especially those that have maritime boundary and island-ownership disputes with the PRC. As a result, officials and analysts said, Asia-Pacific countries and the US are intensifying efforts to persuade the PRC to take part in an expanding network of multilateral military exercises and other forms of defense cooperation to try to build a framework for regional order in which tensions can be contained and disputes resolved peacefully. PRC Assistant Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in Singapore last month that although there might be many kinds of military exercises, "in principle we think that since the Cold War is already over, it is against the trend of our times to continue to strengthen military alliances or relationships of this kind or to increase the number of military exercises." Wu Xinbo, a professor in the Center for American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, said, "Given the evolving political, security and economic trends in East Asia, the U.S. security involvement in the region 10 years from now will have to be transformed, both in form and substance. The U.S. forward military presence will decline, security alliances will become less relevant as an instrument of U.S. policy, and a pluralistic security community will very likely emerge." Officials and analysts said that in such a situation, the PRC and Japan would have the strongest navies in the region and that both would be increasingly dependent for their energy security on the sea lanes from the Gulf that pass through Southeast Asian waters. The PRC's growing need for oil imports means that it will rely increasingly on the same energy resources and sea transport routes shared by the US, Japan and other industrialized countries. If oil is abundant, the PRC might feel less pressure to build a "blue water" navy to safeguard its energy supplies in competition with Japan, the ROK, India and other Asian countries that are also dependent on petroleum imports. Analysts said however that if the PRC felt vulnerable on the energy front, it could become more assertive, particularly if US-PRC relations turned adversarial. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 5, 2001.]

6. US Policy toward Asia

The Far Eastern Economic Review carried an opinion article by John R. Bolton, senior vice-president of the American Enterprise Institute who also served under the first Bush administration as assistant secretary of state for International Organization Affairs, ("AMERICA AND ASIA AFTER JANUARY 20," 1/11/01) which said that national and theater missile defense will be an exceedingly high priority for the US Bush administration. Bolton noted that one diplomatic focus in Asia will be managing the PRC's negative reaction to missile defense. However, he wrote, "Unlike President Clinton, Bush is exceedingly unlikely to be deterred by Beijing. Instead, an equal if not more important diplomatic initiative will concentrate on bolstering the willingness of America's closest friends along China's periphery (Japan, South Korea and Taiwan) and elsewhere in the region (Australia) to participate in and support missile defense." In fact, he continues, "This shift away from President Clinton's Sino-centric and highly deferential policy will occur not only with respect to missile defense, but across nearly the entire array of Asia policy. The incoming team will view Asia in a fuller, more realistic and more balanced fashion than Washington has shown in the past eight

years, politically as well as economically." Bolton also said that Japan's concerns that it is being ignored can be allayed by increased political/military cooperation and a fresh perspective on economic issues, and that "Taiwan will have many friends in the new administration." He also noted that "Republican skepticism of the ROK "Sunshine policy" will not disrupt the close, important relations between the ROK and the US, which will likely receive special diplomatic focus." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 5, 2001.]

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