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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Talks

US State Department Deputy Spokesman James Foley ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 4, 1999," USIA Transcript, 03/04/99) reported that the DPRK delegation to US-DPRK talks on the Kumchangri underground construction site canceled plans to travel to Iowa Thursday to attend a Stanley Foundation program on conflict resolution. Instead the delegation remained in New York to continue negotiations.

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA SCRAPS IOWA VISIT," Washington, 03/04/99) quoted an unnamed US official as saying that the DPRK's decision not to attend the Iowa seminar did not signify that a

breakthrough in US-DPRK talks was near.

2. Alleged DPRK Missile Deployment

The Associated Press ("REPORT: N. KOREA DEPLOYS MISSILES," Tokyo, 03/05/99) reported that Japan's Sankei newspaper quoted unidentified US and Japanese sources as saying that the DPRK has deployed Rodong missiles with a range of 620 miles near the border with the PRC. The paper said a major DPRK missile factory is located near the Rodong missile site in Yongodong north of Pyongyang. It added that a total of about 30 Rodong missiles have been deployed in several unidentified sites in the DPRK. The Japanese Self-Defense Agency refused to comment on the report.

3. Possibility of Japanese Airstrikes against DPRK

Dow Jones Newswires ("S KOREA REJECTS THE IDEA OF PREEMPTIVE STRIKES ON N KOREA," Seoul, 03/05/99) reported that ROK Defense Minister Chun Yong-taek warned Japan against carrying out preemptive strikes against the DPRK's missile launch facilities. Chun stated, "It could escalate into a full-blown war all over the Korean Peninsula. That's a very, very dangerous idea. I firmly opposes such an idea." Chun said that peace and stability on the peninsula must take priority over the DPRK missile threat. He added, "Japan must consult first with South Korea and the United States if it ever thinks about a preemptive attack on the North." Chun was responding to a news report that quoted the head of Japan's Defense Agency, Hosei Norota, as telling a parliamentary committee that Japan might launch a preemptive attack on an enemy state. Japanese Defense Agency spokesman Kazushi Tanaka could not confirm the report, but said that Norota has repeatedly said that Japan has a constitutional right to conduct a preemptive strike if circumstances warrant. Tanaka added that Japan is not considering such a strike at present. Also Friday, the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency called Norota's remark "blackmail" and warned of "ensuing catastrophic consequences."

4. PRC-Taiwan Talks

Reuters ("CHINA CALLS FOR POLITICAL TALKS WITH TAIWAN," Beijing, 03/05/99) reported that PRC Premier Zhu Rongji urged Taiwan on Friday to enter into political negotiations aimed at eventual reunification. Zhu stated, "We urge the Taiwan authorities to see clearly the trend of the times and enter into political negotiations with us as early as possible." He also urged Taiwan to make "actual efforts for the sake of further improving relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and formally ending the state of hostility between the two sides under the principle of one China." Zhu added, "We firmly oppose the 'independence of Taiwan' and the attempt to create 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan' in whatever form." He stated, "We will be placing our hopes on the people of Taiwan, uniting with them, listening to their voices and supporting their reasonable propositions which are in the interest of the reunification of the motherland." Zhu also called for expanding economic and cultural exchanges with Taiwan and boosting mutual visits. He also encouraged trade and investment with Taiwan and called for greater protection of the legitimate rights and interests of Taiwanese. Zhu said that the PRC would push for the early establishment of direct links for postal, air and shipping services and trade between the two sides.

5. PRC-Taiwan Trade Relations

The Wall Street Journal (Russell Flannery, "TAIWAN INVESTS IN FEWER PROJECTS ON MAINLAND IN TREND REVERSAL," Taipei, 03/05/99) reported that the Taiwan Economics Ministry said that Taiwanese companies' investment in the PRC fell 75 percent in January from a year earlier

to US$41.9 million. Economists said that such investment is declining in part because of slower growth and a stock market fall in Taiwan.

6. US Theater Missile Defense

Reuters (Andrew Browne, "CHINA SAYS U.S. MISSILE DEFENSE PLAN 'LAST STRAW'," Beijing, 03/05/99) reported that an anonymous senior PRC official warned the US Friday against including Taiwan in a Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system. The official said that advocates of Taiwan independence "may say that 'we're well protected, let's declare the independence of Taiwan'." He added that TMD would give the pro-independence lobby a "false sense of security." The official argued that, since TMD would form part of a global US defense system, the US would operate its command, communications, and control system, necessitating "a US military presence in Taiwan." He warned that such an arrangement would result in a "semi-military alliance" between Taiwan and the US in violation of the three US-PRC joint communiques. He also said that the TMD plan amounted to missile proliferation since the technologies were related. The official said that US warnings about PRC missile buildup were a pretext to increase military arms sales to Taiwan, and that the DPRK threat was "very much exaggerated." The official stated, "Whether we should deploy missiles on our own territory is our own business." He also argued that extending TMD to Japan would "enhance military cooperation between Japan and the United States and we don't like it."

7. US Land Mine Training

Pacific Stars And Stripes (Richard Roesler and Mayumi Yamamoto, "DUMMY MINES RAISE RUCKUS," Tokyo, 03/06/99, 1) reported that local Japanese officials have called on Sagami General Depot, a US Army base near Tokyo, to stop training soldiers there in the use of claymore mines. Tokio Kaneko, a Sagamihara city councilman, stated, "I am very resentful that they practice installing anti-personnel mines here in Sagamihara City in spite of the world-wide concerns about anti-personnel mines." US Army-Japan officials said Friday that the training is absolutely routine and necessary, and does not involve live munitions. They added that claymores, which are typically hand-fired by a soldier with a remote detonator, do not fall under last year's landmine ban treaty. A statement from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed, saying such training was no problem. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 5.]

8. Indian Missile Development

Dow Jones Newswires ("OFFICIALS DENY INDIA PREPARING LONG-RANGE MISSILE TEST," New Delhi, 03/05/99) reported that Indian officials denied that India is preparing to test an Agni missile this week. B. B. Misra, police chief in Bhadrak district, where the missile launch center is located, stated, "I have received no intimation of any test. I have to make all the security arrangements and the government always tells me about any test."

9. Asian-US Pollution Vector

The Associated Press ("ASIAN AIR POLLUTION REACHING U.S. WEST COAST," Washington, 03/05/99) reported that researchers at Cheeka Peak Observatory in Washington state have detected industrial chemicals from factories in Asia in air arriving in the US Northwest. Dan Jaffe, a professor at the University of Washington, Bothell, said that this is believed to be the first time anyone has detected Asian pollution in the US. The chemicals included carbon monoxide, radon, hydrocarbons

and peroxylacetyl nitrate. Jaffe said that the concentrations of the pollutants measured were not high enough to be an acute hazard to health. He added, "We make pollution too. Everybody's pollution goes somewhere else."

II. Republic of Korea

1. US-DPRK Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. COMMITS TO NK GRAIN DONATION," Seoul, 03/05/99) reported that on Friday morning, the US and the DPRK were reported to have made some headway in their nuclear talks on the Kumchangri underground facilities. The US has reportedly agreed to provide a donation of 500,000 to 600,000 tons of grain to the DPRK within the year, and the meeting continued on to fine-tune the terms for site access to the suspected nuclear weapons structure. The US government apparently claimed that what was important is not the number of times that it has access to the site, but to have systematic preventative measures against DPRK utilization of the facility for nuclear armaments. For this, the US is demanding the right to have regular access to the site if deemed necessary or if suspicions of other uses or developments at the site arise. In response, the DPRK demonstrated strong dissent and refused to accept these demands, claiming that regular access could repeat the situation of the UN inspections in Iraq. Overall, however, the DPRK appears to be showing an amicable attitude and a desire for a settlement of the issues, so observers say a concrete agreement may be soon forthcoming.

Korea Times ("NORTH KOREA VOWS REGULAR ACCESS TO NUKE SITE," Seoul, 03/05/99) reported that the DPRK has pledged to grant the US "regular" access to its Kumchangri underground site if the US grain aids meet the desired level of nearly 1 million tons. "The United States and North Korea have made substantial progress in the ongoing talks. Therefore, the two parties are now deliberating whether to end the talks now or hold one more round of talks late this month," an ROK government official said. At first, the DPRK said that it would grant the US only one visit to the site, but changed its posture recently to offer unlimited access to the facility, if the US offers enough food to alleviate its food shortages, he said. The DPRK demanded a supply of 1 million tons of grain for US access to the facilities in the initial stage of the bilateral talks, while the US hinted that it could offer around 500,000 tons of grain. "North Korea has now lowered its demand slightly while the United States is now pledging slightly more," the official said.

2. Possibility of Japanese Airstrikes on DPRK

Korea Herald ("DEFENSE MINISTER URGES COOPERATION BETWEEN ROK, JAPAN ARMED FORCES," Seoul, 03/06/99) reported that ROK Defense Minister Chun Yong-taek cautioned Japan on Thursday not to launch a preemptive strike on the DPRK. Speaking at the Seoul Foreign Correspondents Club before some 80 journalists and diplomats, Chun responded to reports that officials of the Japanese Diet insisted that "Japan cannot rule out that it can preclude a preemptive strike on North Korea." "If Japan launches a preemptive strike or if North Korea launches another missile and Japan retaliates, that is not acceptable to the ROK government," Chun said. "There is nothing more important than sustaining peace on the Korean Peninsula. Close coordination between Japan, ROK, and US forces is essential." While continuing its policy of transparency in national defense with Japan, Chun said that the ROK is seeking more active exchanges with its neighbor. He said the infiltration of a DPRK semi-submersible craft last summer via the East Sea demonstrates the need for such close cooperation between the ROK and Japan. "It is important to understand North Korea's intentions behind its missile development when formulating our bargaining tactics against

this threat," said Chun. "To this end, Korea, the US, and Japan should make orchestrated efforts."

3. DPRK Economy

Korea Herald ("NORTH KOREA'S INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT OF 1 PERCENT IN FEBRUARY," Seoul, 03/05/99) reported that the DPRK's industrial output increased 1 percent month-to-month in February, according to the DPRK Korean Central Broadcasting Station (KCBS). However, the DPRK did not release the growth rate of January. "Thanks to the people's efforts, our economy showed positive signs by recording 1-percent growth in the energy sector and 6-percent increase in steel making," said the official KCBS.

4. ROK-PRC Military Cooperation

Korea Times ("KOREA STRIVING TO DEEPEN MILITARY TIES WITH CHINA," Seoul, 03/05/99) reported that ROK Defense Minister Chun Yong-taek said Thursday that the ROK will strive to enhance military ties with the PRC, saying development of ROK-PRC military cooperation is imperative to securing peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. "Since Korea and China established diplomatic ties in 1992, we have reaped demonstrable progress in numerous fields. As compared to these achievements, progress in the military field has been relatively slow," Chun said during a luncheon meeting with Seoul-based foreign correspondents at the Press Center in central Seoul. "I have a great interest in increasing military exchanges with China in various fields in an effort to break up the Cold War structure on peninsula," he said, adding that the ROK will also focus greater effort on regularizing and institutionalizing military relations with Russia. The ROK has been pursuing closer military ties with the PRC but the PRC has been relatively cautious toward military cooperation with the ROK, apparently conscious of the DPRK, with which the PRC maintains close ties.

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.
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