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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Talks

Agence France Presse ("N.KOREA TO SEEK US REMOVAL OF TERRORIST STATUS AT TALKS THIS WEEK," Seoul, 3/5/00) reported that ROK analysts said that the DPRK is expected to intensify efforts to be removed from the US State Department's list of terrorist states during talks with the US this week. Kim Sung-han, a fellow of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) in the ROK, said that the meeting would provide the first expert-level forum for US and the DPRK to tackle the terrorist status issue. Kim said, "North Korea has been, and will be, displaying great tenacity in its call to be unshackled from the list of terrorist states." Kim said that the US removal of the DPRK from the list could pave the way for the DPRK to become "a normal state" in the world community. He said, "removing the North from the list would have a spill-over effect on improving its relations

with other Western states." US Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Michael Sheehan, will head the US in discussions on terrorism. US and ROK analysts do not have high expectations that the US-DPRK talks in New York talk will make major progress on the terrorism issue. Kim said, "on the scale of 10, the chances for reaching a breakthrough will be below five." One US official said it would take "a miracle" for the US to remove the DPRK from the terrorist nation list by April, but added, "I don't want to rule out the possibility of divine intervention but I don't expect it."

2. DPRK High-Level Visit to US

Agence France Presse ("US, NKOREA TOP-LEVEL MEETING IN WASHINGTON ON TRACK," Washington, 3/4/00) reported that an anonymous senior US State Department official said on March 3 that a top DPRK official's visit to Washington is "on track." The official said that US and DPRK negotiators were at the "closing point of negotiations ... to bring a senior North Korean official to Washington." Robert Manning, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, said that the visit is "a tiny step forward. It raises the level of diplomacy, and that's not insignificant, but there's a substance deficit here." Regarding US objectives to convince the DPRK to halt development of long-range missiles, Manning said, "there may be a price at which they are prepared to sell, but what we have on the table is nothing, only normalization." Instead, Manning recommended that the US and its allies put together a massive aid and development package for the DPRK.

3. Japanese Food Aid to DPRK

The Associated Press ("JAPAN PROMISES RICE FOR NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 3/6/00) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono said Monday that Japan plans to give rice to the DPRK to facilitate talks on setting up diplomatic ties between the two nations. Kono did not say how much rice would be donated to the DPRK. The Kyodo News agency reported that Japan planned to donate about 100,000 tons of rice through the UN World Food Program.

Agence France Presse ("FAMILIES OF ALLEGED KIDNAP VICTIMS OPPOSE JAPANESE FOOD AID TO NKOREA," Tokyo, 3/6/00) reported that a Japanese foreign ministry official said that the families of Japanese people allegedly kidnapped by DPRK agents staged a sit-down rally in front of the foreign ministry on Monday to protest plans to resume food aid to the DPRK. The protesters handed out leaflets that said, "to give rice to North Korea at this point in time is to shelve the abduction issue." Kimio Naito, the official charged with the foreign ministry's security, said that some of the protesters met with Foreign Minister Yohei Kono to state their case. Chief Cabinet Secretary Mikio Aoki said the kidnapping issue would remain Japan's top priority in dealing with the DPRK. Aoki said, "we are fully aware of how the families feel. It must be dealt with as the most important issue in future negotiations."

4. DPRK-PRC Relations

Reuters ("N.KOREA'S KIM MAKES RARE VISIT TO CHINA EMBASSY," Tokyo, 3/6/00) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il made a rare visit to the PRC embassy in Pyongyang on March 5. Analysts said that the visit could be a step toward a historic trip to the PRC. The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said that Kim, accompanied by several top military officials, visited the PRC embassy at the invitation of ambassador Wan Yongxiang. The DPRK's Korean Central News Agency said, "Kim Jong-il expressed thanks for the invitation and conversed with the leading officials of the embassy in a cordial and friendly atmosphere." Shinya Kato, an analyst at the Tokyo-based Radiopress news

agency, said, "this is probably closely linked to any plan by Kim to visit China."

5. ROK Foreign Minister's Trip to US

Reuters ("S.KOREA FOREIGN MIN TO VISIT U.S. ON N.KOREA-PAPER," Seoul, 3/6/00) reported that in its early Tuesday edition, the ROK daily Dong-A Ilbo reported that ROK Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn will visit the US next week. Lee will meet US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to discuss maintaining close cooperation in dealing with the DPRK.

6. PRC Military Spending

Agence France Presse ("CHINA BOOSTS DEFENCE SPENDING BY 12.7 PERCENT AMID TAIWAN THREATS," Beijing, 3/6/00) reported that PRC Finance Minister Xiang Huaicheng said Monday that the PRC would increase spending on the army and public security organs by 12.7 percent this year to a total of 120.5 billion yuan (US$14.5 billion) in 2000. Xiang presented the central government budget draft to the National People's Congress (NPC). Although he gave no figure for actual spending in 1999, the projected figure was 104.65 billion yuan (US$12.6 billion). The funds this year would "mainly cover the increased salaries and allowances for officers and men in the army as well as expenditures for troops stationed in Macao." PRC Premier Zhu Rongji told the NPC on March 5 that the PRC military should improve its combat effectiveness by harnessing new high technology and upgrading its arsenal.

The Washington Post (John Pomfret, "CHINA PLANS HIGHER DEFENSE SPENDING," Beijing, 3/6/00, P.A16) and the Associated Press (Charles Hutzler, "CHINA INCREASES MILITARY SPENDING," Beijing, 3/6/00) reported that the increase in the PRC's military budget marks the 11th straight year of double-digit increases in defense spending since 1989. The PRC does not release its actual defense budget--believed to be around US$36 billion--so the publicly announced figure only indicates a trend. David Shambaugh, an expert on the PRC military at George Washington University, said that the increase, which was equal to last year's, led him to conclude that the military "did not receive a significant boost as a result of the Kosovo crisis and generally more tense atmosphere in China's national security environment." [Ed. note: The Washington Post article was included as a Top Story in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 6, 2000.]

7. Cross-Straits Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA TO FURTHER PRESSURE TAIWAN ON REUNIFICATION AT NPC: ANALYSTS," Taipei, 3/6/00) reported that Taiwan analysts said Monday that the PRC at its parliamentary session is expected to put more pressure on Taiwan to enter reunification talks. The analysts said that the PRC's heightened rhetoric is meant to warn Taiwan's next president on his PRC policy. Chang Lin-cheng, a political science professor of National Taiwan University, said, "Communist China is to play the 'people card' during the current National People's Congress (NPC) session, in which delegates from all over the mainland are participating. The 'people' will condemn secessionism and voice their support for reunification in a gesture to back their government's hardened stance on Taiwan." Zhang Wannian, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission and the People's Liberation Army's highest ranking officer, however, said, "Taiwan independence means war, while splittism certainly means that peace will not prevail."

8. PRC Military View of Taiwan Issue

Agence France Presse ("CHINA'S MILITARY ON ALERT, WARNS TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE MEANS WAR," Beijing, 3/6/00) reported that the PRC military published a commentary on Monday that said that it backed peaceful reunification, but that if Taiwan dragged its feet the island could expect war. The report said, "the People's Liberation Army's millions of troops stand in combat readiness, are on high alert and will never allow and sit idly by for any attempt to split China to succeed. We will adopt all measures to firmly crush any attempts to divide China and will realize the complete reunification of the motherland. We must explicitly point out that Taiwanese independence means war and separation will lead to no peace." For the first time during the Taiwanese election campaign, the military openly warned voters to steer clear of Democratic Progressive Party candidate Chen Shui-bien. The editorial said, "recently the leader of the group who have always advocated Taiwan independence has used beautiful words to deceive the Taiwan people."

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "TAIWAN RECEIVES THREAT OF WAR," 3/6/00) reported that a 15-page document dated August 1, 1999 and produced by the Office of the Central Military Commission, the ruling body of the People's Liberation Army, called "Watching Closely for Changes in Relationships With Taiwan and Enhancing the Awareness by Military Leadership of the Current Situation" was recently disclosed. The report said that remarks by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui last summer about holding state-to-state talks are "solid grounds for achieving reunification using military power." Regarding the US, the document said that the PRC military commission planned to release data on its strategic weapons "so that the US will exercise some caution in decision-making and be aware that it would have to pay a high price if it decided to intervene in a military conflict. The purpose is to prevent the US from being deeply involved if a war becomes unavoidable so that the losses on both sides of the Taiwan straits will be minimized throughout the war." The document stated that a peaceful solution was still an option, but "at present the foundation of a peaceful dialogue between the two sides [the PRC and Taiwan] has been destroyed, and the possibility for military actions has been greatly increased." The military document was obtained from a US government official, who said that it was translated from a Chinese-language original obtained by PRC sources. The document has been reviewed by US intelligence agencies who said it was difficult to verify the document's authenticity.

9. US View of Taiwan Issue

The Washington Post published an opinion article by Constantine C. Menges, director of the Program on Transitions to Democracy at the George Washington University and former special assistant to US President Ronald Reagan for national security affairs, ("A LOOK AT ...THE CHINA PUZZLE," 3/5/00, P.B3) which said that it is impossible to know precisely how the cross-strait tension between the PRC and Taiwan will play out. The author warned, however, "giving in to China's coercion would have grave consequences for the United States and its foreign policy throughout Asia." He wrote that a more aggressive PRC could seek "to neutralize and dominate Japan and end other US security alliances in the region. This would make the United States far less secure and sharply increase the risk of conflict with China." The article said that engagement with the PRC has not led to a more peaceful and less politically repressive PRC. He also argued that the PRC sought control of Taiwan because of its territorial claim and its intention to eliminate "a Chinese democratic alternative to its regime." He continued, "China would try to use its domination of Taiwan to demonstrate to other Asian nations--Japan and South Korea in particular--that US security guarantees are worthless." Menges suggested that the US should strengthen its defensive alliance relationships with friendly countries in Asia, and deploy an Asian regional missile defense and a US national missile defense. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 6, 2000.]

10. Effect of Missile Defense on PRC

The Washington Post published an opinion article by Bates Gill, director of the Brookings Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies, and James Mulvenon, deputy director of the Rand Center for Asia-Pacific Policy ("A LOOK AT ... THE CHINA PUZZLE," 3/5/00, P.B3) which said that they support the deployment of a national missile defense (NMD) by 2005 but question whether the US President Bill Clinton administration has adequately taken into account its effect on the PRC. The article said that it was a mistake that the Clinton administration did not reassure the PRC about NMD like it did for Russia. The authors met with PRC military officers and policymakers and found them irritated about the missile defense issue. They said that some of the PRC leaders' alarm can be attributed to military issues related to the viability of their country's nuclear deterrent, "but their principal misgivings have more to do with politics and perceptions than with hardware. In their view, U.S. missile defense plans are aimed at them and signal increased hostility toward China." They warned that ignoring PRC concerns -"could jeopardize the security benefits that a national missile defense would be designed to provide." They outlined a number of possible steps the PRC could take if NMD were implemented, including accelerating the development ofcountermeasures, selling them to other countries to make US systems quickly ineffective, staging an aggressive nuclear buildup, building more short- and medium-range nuclear missiles, or diminishing PRC cooperation on the Korean peninsula. Therefore, the authors argued, the US needed to "strongly convey US interests and expectations as a basis for stabilized relations. Then firm commitments should be made to pursue issues China finds important." They concluded that the US needs to be "prepared to avert or shape negative Chinese reactions in ways that favor U.S. interests. As long as the missile defense debate focuses largely on military-technical or Russo-centric arguments, the opportunity we have to exercise political, military and diplomatic leverage over China will be wasted." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 6, 2000.]

11. PRC-Indian Security Talks

Agence France Presse ("INDIA AND CHINA BEGIN FIRST EVER SECURITY DIALOGUE IN BEIJING," Beijing, 3/6/00) reported that diplomatic sources said that India and the PRC began their first ever security dialogue in Beijing on Monday. The Indian foreign ministry announced the dialogue last week, but the Indian embassy declined to provide any details or say who was representing the Indian side. The PRC has also made no comment on the talks.

12. PRC Foreign Policy

Agence France Presse ("CHINA'S PREMIER PULLS HIS PUNCHES AGAINST UNITED STATES," Beijing, 3/5/00) reported that PRC Premier Zhu Rongji said on March 5 at the annual National People's Congress session that the PRC would remain active in the global arena to ensure a peaceful environment for the PRC's modernization drive. Zhu said, "Sino-US relations suffered a severe setback in the first half of the year. But, President Jiang Zemin's meeting with US President Bill Clinton in Auckland helped improve the bilateral relations." Zhu praised the "strategic partnership of cooperation" between the PRC and Russia and the development of relations with the European Union. However, Zhu said, "we must keep up our guard against the attempts of a handful of ultra-right forces in Japan to obstruct and undermine Sino-Japanese relations." He also said that the PRC's basic principle in the foreign policy arena would continue to be "the strengthening of unity and cooperation with other developing countries."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Military Development

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "GOV'T CALLS FOR SUBSTITUTE FORCE IN EVENT OF U.S. MILITARY PULLOUT," Seoul, 3/6/00) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry on March 5 released a report entitled "National Defense in the 21st Century and the Defense Budget," which stated that the ROK needs to gradually assemble a substitute force capable of defending the nation in the event of a withdrawal of US forces stationed there. The ministry cited the need to raise the defense budget in order to build the troops necessary to make up for the possible pullout of US forces. The report was recently posted on the ministry's Internet home page. It is the first time that the ROK Defense Ministry has officially raised the issue of the possible withdrawal of US forces from the ROK and the necessity of securing a substitute force. The ministry said that it would foster an elite corps of soldiers capable of defending the nation even after the reunification of the divided Korean Peninsula. It also said that a surplus force should be maintained as long as the DPRK remains a threat to the ROK. The report stated that after a period of coexistence of the ROK and the DPRK, reunification and a transition period, the existing 690,000-member Korean armed forces should be reduced to 400,000-500,000. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 6, 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