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I. United States

1. US Support of ROK Policy

Agence France Presse ("US BACKS SKOREAN APPROACH TO NORTH, BUSH-KIM MEETING SOON," Washington, 2/7/01) reported that the US on Wednesday backed the ROK's rapprochement with the DPRK, and said that the US and the ROK would work quickly toward arranging a meeting between Presidents George W. Bush and Kim Dae-jung. In a joint statement released following talks between US Secretary of State Colin Powell and ROK Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn, the two countries said that they were in sync on policy toward the DPRK. The statement said, "Secretary Powell welcomed the very positive recent advances in North-South dialogue ... and expressed his support for the South Korean government's policy of reconciliation and cooperation with the North. [Powell and Lee] also concurred on the importance of maintaining our two nations' comprehensive partnership and close cooperation on policy toward North Korea." The two officials also said that work on arranging a Bush-Kim summit would proceed. Lee said, "Basically, we are on the same track and, of course, you know we agreed to continue close consultations from now with the new Bush administration. There are no differences. We will continue our policy of reconciliation and cooperation ... and engaging North Korea."

The Associated Press (Pauline Jelinek, "KOREANS LOOK FOR BUSH SUPPORT," Washington, 2/7/01) reported that analysts said that the ROK and the US are expected to face some awkward times as the US George W. Bush administration figures out how to deal with the Korean peninsula. Kurt Campbell of the Center for Strategic and International Studies said, "Our South Korean friends are very wary and worried that the Bush administration will back away from this engagement policy." Diplomats from the ROK are hoping to lay plans this week for a US summit between ROK President Kim Dae-jung and US President George W. Bush to talk about the issue as soon as possible. Campbell said, "They're looking for a meeting ... that will underscore the U.S. intention to continue engagement, perhaps a little slower and without the same zeal, but engagement nonetheless." Patrick Cronin of the U.S. Institute of Peace said that a more hard-line US strategy "will be time-consuming, if not at times annoying, to the Kim Dae-jung administration."

2. DPRK-Spain Relations

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA AND SPAIN SET UP DIPLOMATIC TIES," Seoul, 2/7/01) reported that the DPRK said on Wednesday that it had set up diplomatic ties with Spain. A joint statement released by the state-run Korea Central News Agency said that the two countries "agreed that representation would be at ambassadorial level."

3. British Arms Sales to PRC

The Washington Times published and opinion article by Richard D. Fisher Jr., a senior fellow at the Jamestown Foundation, ("RISKY BRITISH ARMS SALES TO CHINA?" 02/07/01, 16) which said that according to British and US government sources, Great Britain is proceeding with the sale of 80 to 90 Rolls Royce Spey turbofan engines that will used to power one or more squadrons of the PRC's Xian JH-7 fighter-bombers. Fisher noted that these items could be used against Taiwan and against US forces that may intervene in a Taiwan Straits conflict. Britain has said that the Spey is old technology and does not convey a new capability, but Fisher argues that the recent operational emergence of the JH-7 does represent a new offensive strike capability for the PRC. He also pointed to the 1996 Britain's Racal Corporation sale of six to eight of Skymaster long-range airborne radar and a 1998 PRC agreement to co-develop new micro-satellites with Britain's Surrey Satellite Technology Company as "troubling." He said that these British sales "are helping China to shoot at U.S. Navy ships, to find them at sea, and potentially to blind the U.S. Navy's first line of defense in space." In conclusion, Fisher wrote, the new George W. Bush administration "will have to squarely address numerous issues" and convince Britain to heed US requests not to sell dangerous military technology to the PRC. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 7, 2001.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. Kim Jong-il's Russia Visit

Chosun Ilbo (Kwon Dae-yeol, "NK'S KIM TO VISIT MOSCOW IN APRIL," Seoul, 02/06/01) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jung-il will pay an official visit to Russia from April 17-18, it was announced Tuesday by the Asahi Shimbun. The newspaper quoted a diplomatic source saying that the preparation for the visit will get underway now that the concrete date for Chairman Kim's visit to Moscow has been decided. The paper commented that Chairman Kim would, during the visit, discuss his visit to the ROK as well as strengthening relations with Russia prior to holding negotiations with

the Bush administration.

2. DPRK Missile Purchase

The Korea Times ("NK SEEKING PURCHASE OF MISSILES FROM RUSSIA," Seoul, 02/07/01) reported that an ROK military source said Tuesday that the DPRK has been seeking to purchase Russian interceptor missiles and assemble Russian fighters in its territory. "It is highly likely that North Korea will buy S-300 interceptor missiles from Russia by the end of the year," the source said, noting that DPRK and Russia, through a basic agreement signed by the two nations in February last year, have been increasing defense equipment transactions. "I understand that the two countries were discussing ways to allow North Korea to assemble Russia's SU-27 or MiG-29 fighters in North Korea," the source said. Russia has also been discussing the sale of 10 BTR-80 armored personnel carriers and 100 BMP tanks to the DPRK, the source added. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 7, 2001.]

3. DPRK View of US

The Korea Times (Oh Young-jin, "PYONGYANG STEPS UP ANTI-US PROPAGANDA," Seoul, 02/05/01) reported that the DPRK has recently heightened the level of its anti-US propaganda, dubbing the US the "very hand that destroys the peace of Asia and the Pacific." The DPRK also vowed that it "will meet knife to knife with the U.S." A DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman responded to US Secretary of State Colin Powell's caling Kim Jong-il a "dictator" by calling the remark an "act of nonsense by a scoundrel quite out of the DPRK-US. framework of bilateral relations." The spokesman evaluated that Powell's "ulterior motive is to keep the two countries' relationship hostile to promote the interests of defense contractors and other conservative sectors of the society." After a US defense report categorized the DPRK as one of the military threats, DPRK newspapers said that the categorization was a fiction made up by the US in order to maintain its advantageous balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region. The Rodong Shinmun, the DPRK Workers Party's newspaper, claimed that the US has designated the Korean peninsula as the next theater of operations after the war in the Balkans, and that with military might 140 times greater than in the Balkans, the US is planning a second Korean War. The DPRK Central Broadcast claimed that the beefed-up Japan-US alliance is "a spear pointed at the Korean peninsula." Its media also said that its missile development program is "a matter concerning its sovereignty." However, a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman also commented, "We have positively evaluated progress in the relationship between the U.S. and Pyongyang made through consultations by reasonable politicians of the two countries. We will respond in kind to friendly overtures."

4. DPRK-US Cultural Exchange

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH KOREAN TOUR OF 5 U.S. CITIES SET," Seoul, 02/05/01) reported that an arts group will make the first DPRK tour of the US, a government official said Monday. "A group consisting of North Korean opera singers and folk music singers will go around five major cities in the United States from February 11 to 23," the official said. The performance, titled "Choson Concert, Opening the Door to Unification," will be held in Los Angeles, New York, Washington, Chicago and Houston -- cities with large Korean communities. Hailing the first visit by DPRK artists to the United States, the official said, "This reflects progress in Washington-Pyongyang relations."

III. Russian Federation

1. PRC-RF Railway Development

Nezavisimaya gazeta's Armen Khanbabyan ("CHINA ALSO RECALLED THE GREAT SILK ROAD," Moscow, 5, 02/06/01) reported that Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze said that the PRC expressed its wish "to participate in construction and development of infrastructure of Tbilisi-Kars railway." He stressed that implementation of such an idea "will allow the countries of Central Asia and China to communicate by railway with Turkey and Europe through Azerbaijan and Georgia." The RF has always disapproved the idea of reanimation of the Great Silk Road (TRACECA). Shevardnadze's words prove that "China considers that project as more promising than Moscow's intention to turn its Trans-Siberian railway into a real alternative to TRACECA and other programs posing a threat of minimization of importance of Russia as a state of transit."

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