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I. United States

1. DPRK-Japan Cargo Ship Investigation

Reuters ("JAPANESE POLICE INVESTIGATE NORTH KOREAN CARGO SHIP," Tokyo, 01/07/02") reported that Japanese authorities found nothing unusual after inspecting a DPRK freighter docked near Tokyo on Monday and concluded that a tip about suspicious people in wetsuits that led to the inspection was false. "We have confirmed that it (the tip) was false," said a Coast Guard spokesman, who added that the man who made the report admitted to the police that he had lied. Authorities had boarded the 10,000-ton freighter Sonamu, which was docked at Funabashi, about 10 km (six miles) east of Tokyo after a tip that five or six people appeared to have come ashore on a dark stretch of beach some 50 km southwest of Tokyo on Sunday night

2. DPRK-Russian Relations

The Associated Press ("KOREA LEADER VISITS RUSSIAN EMBASSY SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA," 01/07/02) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il made a rare visit to the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang and exchanged New Year greetings with new Russian ambassador Andrei Karlov. It was Kim's first known visit to the Russian Embassy since he took power in 1994. Kim traveled to Moscow and met Putin last August. The two leaders pledged to build closer strategic and economic ties and criticized US plans for a missile defense system.

3. ROK Domestic Politics

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA RULING PARTY ADOPTS US SYSTEM BY PAUL SHIN, ASSOCIATED," Seoul, 01/07/02) reported that the ROK's ruling New Millennium Party on Monday decided to select its presidential candidate through a system similar to that used in the US. After months of debate, the New Millennium Party unveiled a new political timetable, including plans to hold its national convention on April 20 to nominate its presidential candidate through US-style primaries starting in early March. ROK presidential elections are scheduled for December. Party chief Han Kwang-ock stated, "The consensus reached today shows how eager our party is to change and accommodate the wishes of our people." According to the party's new program, its presidential nomination process will begin with the election of about 70,000 electoral delegates with a proportional representation ratio of 2:3:5 to be divided among existing delegates, party members and ordinary citizens.

4. ROK Seeks Inter-Korean Dialogue Help

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA SEEKS US HELP TO DRAW NORTH KOREA INTO DIALOGUE," 01/06/02) and Reuters ("S.KOREA, U.S. FOREIGN MINISTERS TO MEET - REPORT SEOUL," Seoul, 01/05/02) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Han Seung-Soo plans to meet US Secretary of State Colin Powell this month for talks on how to draw the DPRK back into dialogue. Another ROK foreign ministry official stated, "Regardless of what response we get from North Korea it is our position to do all we can to induce Pyongyang to restart talks both across the border and with the United States." Other issues that could be brought up in the planned meeting between Han and Powell include a visit by US President George W. Bush to the ROK.

5. PRC-Russian Anti-Terrorism

Reuters (Tamora Vidaillet, "CHINA AND RUSSIA SEEK TO REASSERT ANTI- TERROR ROLE," Beijing, 01/07/02) and The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "GROUP DISCUSSES FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN," Beijing, 01/07/02) reported that the PRC, Russia, and four Central Asian countries (Tajikistan, Kyrgzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) pledged on Monday to combat terrorism in all forms at home and abroad. A statement by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization welcomed the end of the Taliban government. The statement also called for a "peaceful, neutral" Afghanistan and warned against "any kind of administration forced on Afghanistan, or a scheme to influence it." Such efforts, it said, would lead to a "new crisis for Afghanistan and the surrounding region." Meeting for the first time since last June, the ministers also established a crisis- response mechanism under which they would meet to coordinate positions and consider joint action. The Shanghai Cooperation Group was formed in 1996 to fight terrorism, separatism and extremism.

6. WTO-Cross-Straits Relations

The China Post ("GOV'T DENIES IT WILL USE WTO TO RESOLVE MAINLAND DISPUTE," 01/06/02)

reported that the PRC will not seek to resolve the cross-strait stalemate under the World Trade Organization framework. However, the PRC does view the WTO as a platform for both sides to build mutual trust, a ranking mainland affairs official said yesterday. Taiwan's Strait Exchange Foundation's deputy director general Andes Yen is optimistic about chances for both sides to resume talks. Yen said the WTO entry has unfolded a promising platform for cross-strait interactions. Yen said both sides, being WTO members, are obligated to adhere to the set rules of games, and agreements of consultations will not be broken unilaterally.

7. Japan-ASEAN Relations

Agence France-Presse ("KOIZUMI TO USE ASEAN TRIP TO STRENGTHEN JAPAN'S INFLUENCE IN ASIA," 01/06/02) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will begin a tour of southeast Asian nations this week to try to strengthen Japan's economic and political influence in the region. Koizumi is set to visit the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. It is Koizumi's first trip to those five Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries since he took office in April last year. "This trip is a good opportunity to hammer out our new partnership with key Asian countries," a foreign ministry official said. Koizumi will start the week-long trip in Manila, where he will meet Philippine President Gloria Arroyo on Wednesday. On Thursday, the Japanese premier flies to Kuala Lumpur to meet Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad before moving on to Bangkok on Friday to meet Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Koizumi will talk with Indonesia's President Megawati Sukarnoputri in Jakarta on Saturday and Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong on Sunday before returning to Tokyo on January 15. Yasuhiro Takeda, professor of international affairs at the National Defense Academy in Japan, commented, "One of the main purposes of his trip is to stress Japan's role in the region and the importance of close ties between Japan and ASEAN members, at a time when China is approaching ASEAN rapidly. Another objective of the trip is to let Asian countries understand that Japan will never return to being a military power."

II. Republic of Korea

1. IAEA Visit to DPRK

The Korea Herald (Hwang Jang-jin, "IAEA OFFICIALS TO VISIT NUCLEAR LABORATORY IN DPRK," Seoul, 01/07/02) reported that a delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will begin a week-long visit to the DPRK on Saturday to discuss the DPRK's implementation of its nuclear safeguard responsibilities. Officials of the UN nuclear watchdog will visit an isotope production laboratory in Yongbyon and will also discuss future inspections of other nuclear facilities.

2. ROK Missile Purchase

Joongang Ilbo ("MID-RANGE MISSILES ORDERD FROM U.S.," Seoul, 01/05/02) reported that the ROK Ministry of National Defense announced that the government will buy 111 Army Tactical Ballistic Missile System Block IA missiles with a range of 300 kilometers from the Lockheed Martin corporation. The price, which includes 29 launch platforms, will be USD$307 million. The system is an upgrade of an existing missile capability with a range of 165 kilometers. An ROK Defense Ministry spokesperson said that the missiles would be deployed by 2004.

3. DPRK-Russia Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL VISITS RUSSIAN EMBASSY IN PYONGYANG," Seoul, 01/07/02) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il visited the Russian embassy in Pyongyang on Sunday. The Korean Central Broadcast reported on Monday that Chairman Kim and his entourage showed up for dinner party at which Kim expressed gratitude to Russian ambassador Andrei Karolv's for inviting him. Kim was accompanied by chief of General Staff of the People's Army Kim Young-chun, vice-minister of the People's Armed Forces Kim Il-chol and various National Defense Commission associates and Party Secretaries.

4. Kim Jong-il Public Appearances

Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-ku, "DPRK LEADER RAISES PUBLIC PROFILE," Seoul, 01/04/02) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il made a total of 83 public appearances in 2001 which is an increase of 10 compared to his visits in 2000. Among the appearances, military-related ones accounted for 39, up by 21 from 2000. Economic-related appearances decreased from 25 to 20. Kim also made 12 overseas-related appearances including trips to Russia and the PRC. Among those accompanying the DPRK's leader in his appearances, 25 were cabinet officials, 22 were party staff and 12 came from the military. General Hyun Chul Hye accompanied Kim on 49 occasions, also accompanying Kim on multiple occasions were Jae Kyong, deputy political bureau chief (48); Kim Kuk Tae, party secretary (44); Lee Yong Chul (36), Chang Song Taek (35), and general Lee Myong Soo (33).

5. ROK-US Talks Scheduled

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "ROK, US PREPARE TO MEET ON DPRK," Seoul, 01/07/02) reported that the ROK and US will hold talks at the end of this month in Washington to review their DPRK policies. ROK foreign minister Han Seung-soo and US Secretary of State Colin Powell will reportedly discuss restarting talks between the DPRK and the US. Also on the agenda is a plan for US President George W. Bush to visit the ROK. In response to the news, DPRK radio station, Radio Pyongyang, criticized Han for emphasizing the security alliance between the ROK and the US. The DPRK called Han's remark an action against national reunification and a denial of the June 15, 2000, inter-Korean declaration.

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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