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I. United States

1. Taiwan-US "Defense Summit"

The Washington Post ("TAIWAN'S DEFENSE CHIEF IS GRANTED A U.S. VISA," 03/07/02) reported that the US State Department said it has, for the first time in decades, granted a visa to a Taiwanese defense minister who plans to attend a defense conference in the US. The minister, Tang Yiau-ming, will take part in a Florida forum billed as a "defense summit." [This article also appeared in the US State Department's Early Bird Report for March 7, 2002.]

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "CHINA WANTS US TO BLOCK TAIWAN VISIT," Beijing, 03/07/02) and Reuters ("CHINA PROTESTS OVER TAIWAN MINISTER'S U.S. VISA," Beijing, 03/07/02) reported that the PRC demanded Thursday that the US deny the visa for Taiwanese defense minister Tang Yiau-ming and block him from attending a private conference in Florida next week. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson Kong Quan stated, "We express our strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to this." It will bring about harm to both Sino-US relations and cross-Strait relations." The US State Department said on Wednesday Tang would take part in a forum in St.

Petersburg, Florida, billed as a "defense summit" by private organizers and sponsored by US weapons suppliers. Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and James Kelly, the top US State Department official for the Asia-Pacific region, are due to speak at the closed-door conference that opens on Sunday.

2. Cross-Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PHILIPPINE-TAIWAN FIGHTER DEAL WON'T AFFECT CHINA TIES: OFFICIAL," Manila, 03/07/02) reported that a senior Philippines diplomat said Thursday that the deal for the Philippines to buy surplus fighter jets from Taiwan will not affect Philippine-PRC relations. "Whatever the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Department of National Defense decides with Taiwan, the Department of Foreign Affairs will see to it that there will be no violation of the one-China policy," said Foreign Undersecretary Lauro Baja. Baja said the acquisition of about 24 F5-E jets from Taiwan, currently under negotiation, would be a "commercial transaction" with no political overtones. Philippine vice chief of staff, Lieutenant General Gregorio Camiling, said Taiwan was offering the jets at a bargain price in exchange for concessions such as letting Taiwanese fighter pilots train in Philippine air space. But Baja said this was unlikely to be granted as the Philippines would need to forge a diplomatic agreement with Taiwan.

3. PRC Military Spending

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA DEFENDS BIG HIKE IN MILITARY SPENDING," 03/07/02) reported that the PRC has defended its decision to hike its military budget by 17.6% this year, saying its defense spending is still relatively low compared with that of developed countries. "China is the most populous country in the world and has a land border of 20,000 kilometers and a sea border of 18,000 kilometers. (But) the amount of China's defence spending is only a small percentage of its GDP. It is far lower than that of developed countries," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said Thursday. The PRC announced a rise in military spending to 166 billion yuan (US$20 billion dollars) this year as part of its 2002 budget. Kong added that raising defense spending was necessary to guarantee a proper standard of living for military personnel and to fulfill the PRC's need to modernize its armed forces. The PRC's openly- stated military budget is expected to grow between 15% and 17% annually between 2001 and 2005.

4. Taiwan Domestic Politics

Reuters ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT'S DISGRACED SECURITY ADVISERS QUIT," Taipei, 03/07/02) reported that two national security advisers to Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian have resigned after being impeached for negligence in a US$5.5 million embezzlement scandal, the president's office said on Thursday. Ting Yu-chou, 58, quit as secretary-general of the National Security Council, an advisory body to Chen, and was replaced by Chiou I-jen, a member of the president's Democratic Progressive Party. Ting tendered his resignation to "avoid hurting the image of the government and the security apparatus", the National Security Bureau, which he headed from 1999 to 2001. Chen also approved the resignation of Yin Tsung-wen, 69, a senior adviser to the president. Yin had served as director of the security bureau from 1993-99.

5. Chen Shui-bian Visa Denial

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWANESE PRESIDENT DENIED PRIVATE VISIT VISA TO SWEDEN," Stockholm, 03/07/02) reported that Sweden has denied Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian a visa

for a private visit to Sweden. Chen was invited to speak at the March 15-16 centennial celebrations of Sweden's small opposition Liberal Party. Sweden Foreign Minister Anna Lindh said that even a private visit from the Taiwanese president could not be allowed. A presidential level visit from Taiwan had "political overtones, even if it is unofficial in character," Lindh said in a letter sent Tuesday to Sweden Liberal Party chairman Lars Leijonborg.

II. Republic of Korea

1. PRC–DPRK-ROK Route

Joongang Ilbo (Yoo Kwang-jong, "PANMUNJEOM ROUTE EYED FOR WORLD CUP TOURIST," Beijing, 03/07/02) reported that the ROK, the DPRK, and tje PRC are talking about allowing PRC tourists to travel to the ROK through the DPRK during the World Cup soccer games from May 31 to June 30. If the idea materializes, it would be the first case of group tourists traveling to ROK via the DPRK. PRC foreign minister, Tang Jiaxuan, confirmed that the three countries are discussing the matter. "We can expand the talks to include Japan and other countries if the need arises," he said. Should the three countries come to an agreement, the most likely route would bring PRCtourists from Dandong to Sinuiju, DPRK. From Sinuiju to Gaesong, the tourists would travel by train. Then they would proceed by bus through the truce village of Panmunjeom to reach the ROK. A source close to the talks said, "If we agree on letting tourists travel through North Korea, the opening of the country to extended travel may come earlier, as the North would want to open its doors before the Arirang festival, which kicks off in late April."

2. DPRK-US Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Jin, "NORTH ARMS EXPORTS RISING," Washington, 03/070/02) reported that General Thomas A. Schwartz, commander of the ROK-US Combined Forces stated that the DPRK's economy depends on weapons sales and the DPRK has increased exports of missile technology. However, in his report to the US Senate Armed Services Committee, the general also assured the senators that there was no evidence of direct DPRK involvement in international terrorism and that the DPRK has kept its promise so far of halting missile tests until 2003. General Schwartz did say he that he possesses specific evidence of DPRK missile and weapons sales that shows that the DPRK actively exports artillery, tanks and submarines. Schwartz commented that the DPRK is the world's number one producer of submarines, despite the nation's small size. He predicted DPRK's weapons exports would not cease in the near future.

3. ROK–US Relations

The Korea Herald ("SEOUL OFFICIAL PLANS VISIT TO U.S. ON N.K," Seoul, 03/07/02) reported that ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Tae-sik will travel to the US on Thursday to discuss with US officials ways to restart dialogue with the DPRK. During his four-day stay, Lee will focus on coordinating the two governments' policies on the DPRK in meetings with James Kelly, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. Early next month, senior officials from the ROK, US, and Japan plan to meet at a Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) session in Japan to co-ordinate their DPRK policies.

4. Inter Korean Relations

The Korea Times (Kim In-mok, "NK CANCELS ALL BUT ECONOMIC TRIPS," Seoul, 03/07/02) reported that the DPRK has disapproved or postponed all upcoming ROK visits to DPRK except for those relating to economic cooperation. According to the Ministry of Unification, the DPRK has disapproved two cultural cooperation groups' visit, scheduled for March 5 and 9 respectively, and notified the Korean Sharing Movement and National Episcopal Committee for the Reconciliation of Korean People to cancel their visit on March 26. However, three groups with economic cooperation purposes, including a processing business, made their visit to DPRK as planned on March 2, right after the cancellation of the New Year's joint celebration.

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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