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I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Talks

The Associated Press ("RED CROSS CHIEF'S APOLOGY REJECTED," Seoul, 11/8/00) reported that in an interview with the ROK's monthly Chosun, the DPRK Red Cross accused ROK Red Cross chief Chang Choong-shik of slandering the DPRK. The DPRK Red Cross rejected Chang's apology on Wednesday. Chosun's October edition quoted Chang as saying that facilities in Pyongyang were decrepit and that reunions between separated families will let people from both Koreas compare their political systems. On Wednesday, an unidentified spokesman for the DPRK Red Cross said in a statement that Chang sent a letter to the DPRK, saying that he felt "regretful" and that some of the contents of the article had been distorted. However, the statement said, "We cannot consider his letter to be honest." Meanwhile, an ROK official said that a four-member ROK delegation arrived in Pyongyang on Wednesday for three days of talks on boosting investment in the DPRK.

2. Taiwanese View of US Election

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN HOPES NEW US GOVERNMENT WILL PROMOTE TAIPEI-BEIJING DIALOGUE," Taipei, 11/8/00) reported that the Taiwan government on Wednesday said that it hoped that the next US administration would help thaw ties between the PRC and Taiwan. Lin Chong-pin, spokesman for Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), said, "It is our desire that the US would play the role to promote dialogues between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in a balanced manner. Taiwan has demonstrated its sincerity and goodwill in resuming negotiations, but such talks must be held without preconditions. Under the circumstances, Taiwan hopes steps would be gradually taken toward the resumption of dialogues and increase of exchanges."

3. South China Sea Code of Conduct

Agence France Presse ("CODE OF CONDUCT ON SOUTH CHINA SEA UNLIKELY TO BE SIGNED THIS YEAR," Singapore, 11/8/00) reported that Michael Tay, director for ASEAN affairs at Singapore's foreign ministry, said Wednesday that a code of conduct to ease tensions in the South China Sea was unlikely to be signed during a summit of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders in Singapore later this month. He said that further meetings were to be held next year to iron out differences, but he did not specify the issues holding up the signing of the code.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter-Korean Economic Talks

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "S-N ECONOMIC TALKS RESUME TODAY," Seoul, 11/08/00) reported that ROK officials said on Tuesday that working-level officials from the ROK and the DPRK would open economic cooperation talks in Pyongyang on Wednesday. During the four-day meeting, the ROK will seek to initial accords protecting investment and eliminating double taxation, two legal frameworks put forth by the ROK to boost investment in the DPRK, they said. A four-member delegation, led by Assistant Finance-Economic Minister Lee Keun-kyong, will fly to Pyongyang via the PRC on Thursday, said one of the delegates, Cho Myoung-gyun, a senior coordinator for the Unification Ministry. He added that 12 assistant personnel and six reporters would accompany the team. The ROK expects that both sides will also reach provisional agreements on a set of trade-boosting measures - one for the settlement of possible disputes stemming from inter-Korean businesses and the other for transaction settlements, Cho said. If the working-group officials manage to initial these accords, cabinet ministerial officials are scheduled to formally sign them at the fourth round of high-level talks, originally slated for November 28-December 1. The meeting will likely to be delayed to avoid overlapping with scheduled family reunions during the period.

2. ROK View of US-DPRK Relations

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "SEOUL CONCERNED ABOUT N. KOREA SHIFT TO U.S.," Seoul, 11/08/00) reported that ROK officials are beginning to have concerns that the DPRK may be reverting to its old-style foreign policy aimed at excluding the ROK, as far as military issues are concerned. "We need to look into whether it is true that the North postponed inter-Korean talks just because of shortages of manpower," said a Foreign Ministry official, who asked to remain anonymous. The article noted that while the DPRK recently decided to resume inter-Korean dialogue to arrange the reunions of separated families and to discuss a legal framework for economic cooperation, it has kept silent on holding a new round of defense chiefs' meetings and a working-level military contact to discuss building an inter-Korean railroad and highway. Other experts said

that the DPRK seems to be attempting to make a deal directly with the US on military issues, and with the ROK on economic and humanitarian issues.

3. DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo (Kwon Dae-yol, "HWANG JANG-YOP REVEALS NK NUCLEAR PLAN: SANKEI," Tokyo, 11/07/00) reported that according to high ranking DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop, the DPRK was studying a plan to conduct an underground nuclear test in 1994. In a report in the Tuesday issue of the Japanese daily Sankei Shinbun, Hwang said that since the agreement with the US to freeze nuclear weapons development, the DPRK has continued to develop the means to enrich uranium 235 to weapons grade in conjunction with a Middle Eastern partner. On ROK-DPRK reconciliation, he said that under the mask of nationalism, leaders in the DPRK were using the ROK's economy as the only way out of their own crisis. Hwang said that Kim Jong-il's definition of nationalism was a dictatorship for controlling the people. Hwang said that although the ROK has the better economy, it should not think it has won the ideological war as DPRK citizens believe in the superiority of their own system.

4. Remains of US Soldiers in DPRK

The Korea Times ("NORTH RETURNED REMAINS OF 285 AMERICAN SOLDIERS," Seoul, 11/07/00) and the Korea Herald ("REMAINS OF 285 U.S. KOREAN WAR MIAS RETURNED HOME," 11/8/00) reported that the DPRK since 1990 has sent the remains of 285 US MIAs (missing in action) from the Korean War back to the US, according to Representative Kim Won-wung of the opposition Grand National Party. The US paid the DPRK US$6,277,000 in compensation for the joint search work. The figures were included in a report submitted to the National Assembly's standing committee for its annual inspection. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for November 8, 2000.]

5. Alleged DPRK Smuggling

Chosun Ilbo (Lee Ha-won, "NK MISSION CAUGHT SMUGGLING WHISKEY IN BANGLADESH," Seoul, 11/07/00) reported that the Government of Bangladesh is investigating employees of the DPRK Embassy in Bangladesh after they were caught recently smuggling in whiskey, a diplomatic source in Seoul revealed on Monday. The source said that the Bangladeshi Government was investigating employees of five or six embassies in Bangladesh, including the DPRK and Iraq, with charges of bringing in vast amount of alcohol in ship containers. Once it concludes the investigation into each embassy concerned, Bangladesh will consider issuing expulsion orders.

Chosun Ilbo (Jee Hae-bom, "NK REFUGEES TESTIFY TO POSSIBILITY OF DRUG MANUFACTURING," Beijing, 11/07/00) reported that the DPRK is systematically involving itself in manufacturing drugs, by growing a vast amount of poppies and selling them, according to recent testimonies of two DPRK refugees who fled last year. The refugees claimed that each household received orders from the government to grow a certain amount of poppies and that once they cultivated the flowers they handed everything over to the authorities. They said each farm were allocated to grow poppy plants which after drying were bought for 20 Jeon (100 jeon=1 won) per 400 grams. The two refugees explained that although the size of each farm differed, the poppy cultivation was widespread in the rural area of Yanggang-do and Hamkyong-do, the provinces at the northern tip of the peninsula. They added that the DPRK has been doing this for 13 to 14 years, and that the reason they produced the poppies only in rural areas was in order to avoid them being

spotted by foreigners.

6. ROK Missile Purchases

The Korea Times (Kim Kwang-tae, "DEFENSE MINISTRY URGED TO WITHDRAW SAM-X PROJECT," 11/8/00) reported that Representative Kang Chang-sung, an ROK Grand National Party lawmaker, called on the ROK Defense Ministry to withdraw the SAM (Surface to Air Missile)-X project for buying US-made Patriot missile systems, and instead concentrate its efforts on developing long-range missiles. Kang said, "The Defense Ministry poured 2.3 trillion won into purchasing Patriot missile systems, which are not effective and only serve the interests of the U.S. defense industry. To consider the Patriot missile does not make any sense at all, since we cannot even detect any signs of missile launches by North Korea. It is impossible to defend Seoul and metropolitan areas with it, because Scud missiles from the North could reach Seoul in 3 minutes and 40 seconds." He also raised objection to the model of Patriot missile being considered by the Defense Ministry saying, "the model is outdated. If we purchase the Patriot, the ministry should opt for the most recent model developed by the U.S." The SAM-X project is aimed at replacing the Nike Hercules Missiles, which have a history of being launched accidentally. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for November 8, 2000.]

7. US Troops in ROK

The Korea Herald (Kil Byung-ok, "WHITE PAPER ON SOFA HIGHLIGHTS UNFAIRNESS OF KOREA-U.S. AGREEMENT," 11/8/00) reported that Representative Kim Won-ung of the ROK's opposition Grand National Party (GNP) published a white paper on the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) on November 7. The preface of the report said, "SOFA is a document demonstrating the arrogance of a superpower and comprises inequality, prejudice and discrimination, when compared with the similar agreements the United States inked with Japan and Germany." Kim said that the USFK has been in the ROK to deter possible military aggression by the DPRK, but now the changing circumstances in Northeast Asia should be reflected in SOFA and in the 1953 ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty. In the white paper, subtitled "SOFA, An Accord of Inequality/Problems and Direction for Revisions," Kim maintained that the ROK should seek ways to maximize its own national interests as opposed to only seeking security guarantees from the big powers. He also called for a wholesale revision of the SOFA agreement. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for November 8, 2000.]

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