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CONTENTS

I. [United States](#)

1. [US-DPRK Talks](#)
 2. [Albright To Visit DPRK](#)
 3. [Removal of DPRK from US Terrorism List](#)
 4. [Asia-Europe Meeting Addresses Inter-Korean Peace](#)
 5. [Japanese Criticize DPRK Hold on Terrorists](#)
 6. [Medicinal Aid to DPRK](#)
 7. [Sino-Japanese Talks](#)
 8. [Cross-Strait Relations](#)
- ### II. [Republic of Korea](#)
1. [DPRK Against ROK Arms Purchase](#)
 2. [ROK-DPRK Relations](#)
 3. [DPRK Party Congress](#)
- ### III. [Japan](#)
1. [Mori's Letter to Kim Jong-il](#)
 2. [Japanese-DPRK Economic Cooperation](#)
 3. [Japanese-Russian Territorial Issue](#)
 4. [Japanese-PRC Issue of History](#)
 5. [PRC Naval Activities](#)
 6. [ASEAN Plus Three](#)

I. United States

1. US-DPRK Talks

The Los Angeles Times published an opinion article by K.A. Namkung, chairman of Murray Hill Company in New Jersey, specializing in doing business with North Korea, ("U.S.-N. KOREA NORMALIZATION IS NOW IN SIGHT," 10/6/00) which said this week's visit by Jo Myong- rok, DPRK's first vice chairman of the National Defense Commission to the US could reshape the security landscape of Northeast Asia. Jo will hold talks with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on a

broad range of issues and meet with US President Bill Clinton. This visit, Namkung wrote, " could lead to a meeting of leaders of the two nations." He continued, "With the dramatic improvement in its relations with South Korea, the restoration of its ties underway with its former allies, China and Russia, and its normalization efforts with the European Union, Japan and other countries, now was the time for North Korea to realize its decade- old strategy of bringing its most formidable adversary, the United States, to the peace table. But the United States must be more involved in easing the military standoff. It can serve as an honest broker between the two Koreas, not on the model of Camp David but as a stabilizer and harmonizer. The U.S. was involved in dividing the Korean peninsula. It must now help bring peace to this troubled land and thereby secure its long-term presence in the region."

Agence France Presse ("US AND NORTH KOREA EDGE AWAY FROM DECADES OF HOSTILITY," Washington, 10/10/00) and the Associated Press (George Gedda, "N.KOREAN MEETING SEEN AS HOPEFUL," Washington, 10/10/00) reported that official said US President Bill Clinton and DPRK Vice Marshal Jo Myong-rok met for 45 minutes in the White House. They talked about divisive issues ranging from US concern over DPRK's missile program to its alleged support for terrorism. Ambassador Wendy Sherman, special coordinator for US policy on the DPRK said the two men "quickly began an exchange of views, a true discussion back and forth." Sherman said Jo also delivered a letter from DPRK Kim Jong-il to Clinton, containing ideas on how to piece together US-DPRK relations. Sherman said Jo "clearly had come with a very strong message from chairman Kim Jong-Il. The very fact that Chairman Kim Jong Il would send a special envoy of such high rank to the United States to convey his ideas and his personal message is an important and historic step." Jo met US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright for the first of several rounds of talks before driving to the White House. Don Oberdorfer, a Korea expert at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, said US officials were "amazed and pleased" when the DPRK offered to send Jo to the US. Oberdorfer said, "The main concerns of the U.S. are regarding military and security issues. This guy is in a much better position to speak to those than a foreign ministry type."

2. Albright To Visit DPRK

Korea Time (Lee Chang-sup, "ALBRIGHT TO VISIT N. KOREA FOR TALKS WITH KIM JONG-IL," 10/10/00) reported that according to ROK President Kim Dae-jung, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will visit the DPRK to meet DPRK leader Kim Jong-il and the other leaders of country. Kim said in an interview with the Naeil Daily (Tomorrow News) on October 9, "When she visited Seoul, I asked her to meet the North Korean leaders. Albright told me that she would visit Pyongyang. After returning from my visit to Pyongyang last June following a series of summit meetings with the National Defense Commission chairman, I advised President Bill Clinton to dispatch an envoy to Pyongyang for high-level talks with Kim Jong- il." He expects Albright to bring back a "big gift" when she returns to the US from her visit to the DPRK. Kim did not specify when Albright would visit the DPRK. It is speculated that the big gift might include opening of relations between the US and the DPRK, establishing liaison offices in the two capital cities, in addition to removing DPRK from the US list of sponsors of terrorism. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for October 10, 2000.]

3. Removal of DPRK from US Terrorism List

Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "REMOVAL OF N.K. FROM U.S. TERRORISM LIST SEEN IMMINENT," 10/10/00) reported that officials and analysts in the ROK said the chances of the US removing the DPRK from the list of terrorism-sponsoring countries appeared to grow even higher as the two sides have all but agreed on the deportation of Japanese Red Army hijackers. An anonymous

ROK foreign ministry official said, "The only remaining issue concerning the hijackers' deportation seems to be when." Regarding Jo Myong-rok's talks in the US, the official said, "The two sides will likely reach an agreement on the opening of liaison offices at both capitals in a symbolic action to show their willingness to normalize ties. Accordingly, the two sides would be able to go into the process easily if they made a decision politically." ROK officials said the high-level meeting will likely serve just as an opportunity to confirm their positions on the military issue, a major stumbling block to normalizing ties. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for October 10, 2000.]

4. Asia-Europe Meeting Addresses Inter-Korean Peace

Reuters, ("ASIA-EUROPE SUMMIT TO ADDRESS KOREA PEACE ISSUE," Seoul, 10/10/00) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Lee Jung-binn said on Tuesday that the ROK will seek support for its rapprochement with the DPRK at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) on October 20-21. Lee said, "The meeting will provide a good opportunity for Korea to gain support and cooperation from ASEM members for the consolidation of peace on the Korean peninsula." The ASEM will bring together 25 heads of government from Europe and Asia along with European Union President Romano Prodi for the biennial event. A spokesman for the ROK Foreign Ministry said members of ASEM will deliver a special declaration entitled "Seoul Declaration for Peace on the Korean Peninsula," which may include ROK's appeal for international assistance for the DPRK. The spokesman added, "The Seoul Declaration will be an expression of our joint wish for peace on the Korean peninsula and the stability in the region."

5. Japanese Criticize DPRK Hold on Terrorists

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN REMINDS US, NKOREA NOT TO FORGET WANTED JAPANESE TERRORISTS," Tokyo, 10/10/00) reported that Japan on Tuesday criticized the DPRK for harboring wanted Japanese terrorists, and urged the US to use whatever leverage it has the country to solve the issue. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hidenao Nakagawa said, "We have consistently brought up (the issue of harboring terrorists) in our normalization talks (with North Korea), and we expect the US government to take steps in accordance with the Japanese government's stance." Shizuka Kamei, the policy chief of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, stepped up pressure on the government to get the DPRK to act on the issue. Kamei said at a government meeting, "We should urge the United States not to drop (North Korea) from the list of terrorist states unless there are concrete measures to tackle the 'Yodo-go' incident." Shigeru Yokota, chairman of a Japanese association of relatives of people reportedly kidnapped and abducted to the DPRK, said on Tuesday, "The issue of missing Japanese in North Korea is hard for Japan alone to solve. Foreign pressure on North Korea can play a very big role. That is why the US government should raise this issue."

6. Medicinal Aid to DPRK

The ISR Special Report ("MEDICINES DONATED BY KOREAN-AMERICANS OPEN RECONCILIATION GATES BETWEEN DPR KOREA AND THE US," October 2000) reported that a 20-foot container of essential drugs donated by Korean-Americans began to get distributed in September and October in several hospitals and clinics located in about 20 counties of urban and rural areas of the DPRK. This medicine shipment is the third one in a year given by the Institute for Strategic Reconciliation (ISR), an independent not-for-profit think tank in Washington. ISR President Asaph Young Chun surveyed the arrival and distribution of critically needed medicines during his 8-days stay in the DPRK.

7. Sino-Japanese Talks

Agence France Presse ("ZHU TO PLAY DOWN TAIWAN AND THEATRE MISSILE DEFENSE IN JAPAN VISIT," Beijing, 10/10/00) reported that despite efforts by the PRC and Japan, it will be difficult for PRC Premier Zhu Rongji to avoid the thorny issues of Taiwan and Japan's plans for a Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system during his visit to Japan. City University of Hong Kong political scientist Joseph Cheng said, "On the whole, the leaders in both countries are attempting to patch up the relationship and minimize difficulties and are actively trying to improve relations." However, he added the sticky issue of Taiwan and the joint Japanese-US response to recent PRC saber-rattling over the island will continue to overshadow any improvements that Zhu's visit might bring. Cheng noted, "This is a real issue. Beijing sees Japan moving closer to the United States in its attempts to contain China. The Chinese are not happy with the strengthened Japan-US security guidelines and TMD cooperation, these are symptoms that Japan has become more intolerant towards Beijing's posturing toward Taiwan." Jia Qingguo, a professor at Beijing University's School of International Studies, also said Zhu would not be able to avoid the issues of Taiwan and TMD, but expressed hopes the visit could be brought onto a better track. He said, "China hopes Japan will not go ahead with TMD, but we can see that Japan has already decided to go ahead in terms of allocation of funds for certain technologies." Jia added, "The reasons for pushing ahead with TMD have also been eroding as the situation with North Korea has been changing." Regarding Taiwan, one diplomat said, "So as long as Japan doesn't make any brash moves aimed at aiding and abetting Taiwan independence, there is no reason to believe that Taiwan or TMD will become a key issue during Zhu's visit." However, Cheng said, the PRC's recent respite in criticism towards Taiwan was most likely due to US presidential elections and that Taiwan could expect renewed pressure from the PRC by early next year. He added, "There is no way that Beijing can back down from the Taiwan issue as that would be seen as a sign of weakness. Besides such a stance would encourage Chen Shui-bian to make even bolder attempts toward Taiwan independence." Meanwhile, the current issue of the PRC Communist Party-run magazine "Outlook" admitted a "feeling of crisis" over future Sino-Japanese relations, but maintained that a series of recent high-level meetings between leaders were putting an end to the crisis.

8. Cross-Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT SAYS SEEKS PEACE WITH CHINA," Taipei, 10/10/00) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian said in his first national day speech on Tuesday that he wants to pursue long-lasting peace with the PRC but would not let the PRC determine the island's future. Chen said, "In cross-strait relations, we are sincere and patient in seeking 'goodwill reconciliation, active cooperation and long-lasting peace'. Only then can we break the deadlock and achieve a 'win-win' situation." Chen added, "We reiterate our position that the resolution of cross-strait issues and the future of Taiwan must respect the will of the 23 million people of Taiwan." He also warned his people against unrealistic expectations, saying troubled ties with the PRC would not improve overnight."

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Against ROK Arms Purchase

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "NORTH WARNS SEOUL AGAINST ARMS PURCHASE," Seoul, 10/09/00) reported that the DPRK has strongly warned that it would take corresponding measures if the ROK continues to build up its military power. The DPRK's official Korean Central Broadcasting

Station said in a commentary on October 7, "The South's moves toward military expansion and modernization are an outright challenge to the spirit of the South-North Joint Declaration and an unacceptable anti-state, anti-unification activity." The commentary also threatened that the DPRK's armed forces would take corresponding self-defense steps if the ROK continues to boost its military strength despite DPRK's repeated warnings. The strong warning came days after the ROK announced its defense budget bill for 2001 and its mid-term defense plan (2001- 2005).

2. ROK-DPRK Relations

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SEOUL WELCOMES N. KOREA'S UNIFICATION FORMULA; CHONG WA DAE HAILS PYONGYANG'S MOVE AS ONE STEP FORWARD FROM JOINT DECLARATION," Seoul, 10/09/00) reported that the ROK government welcomed on October 8 DPRK's official position on the unification formula based on the "lower stage of federation" reported by a top DPRK official at a rally last week. An official said that by stipulating the lower stage of federation as a situation in which the two Koreas coordinate inter-Korean relationship while retaining their respective authorities and functions, the DPRK removed one of the biggest stumbling blocks surrounding the unification formulas between the two sides. At a rally on October 6, the DPRK official explained that "under the lower-level federation, two respective governments in the North and the South maintain their current functions and authorities on political, defense and foreign affairs."

3. DPRK Party Congress

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "NORTH KOREAN PARTY CONGRESS NOT EXPECTED TO OPEN THIS YEAR," Seoul, 10/09/00) reported that ROK officials said on October 8 that the DPRK is unlikely to hold the seventh congress of its ruling Workers' Party by year's end. The Workers' Party conference has been a matter of concern among ROK watchers as the DPRK may revise its long-standing goals of communizing the ROK at the party meeting. An official said, "Given that there have been no reports about these events, however, chances appear very slim that the congress will be held this year."

III. Japan

1. Mori's Letter to Kim Jong-il

The Asahi Shimbun ("PRIME MINISTER YOSHIRO MORI SENT PERSONAL LETTER TO KIM JONG-IL," 10/01/00) reported that sources close to Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori revealed on September 30 that Mori sent a personal letter to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il asking for Japanese- DPRK summit talks. The letter was sent in August via a person close to senior officials of the DPRK Workers' Party. Mori borrowed the idea of sending such a letter directly to Kim Jong-il from ROK President Kim Dae-jung, who told Mori last June that Mori should directly convey his will to Kim Jong-il. There has so far been no response from Kim Jong-il.

The Asahi Shimbun ("INCREASING OPPOSITION TO PRIME MINISTER MORI'S PERSONAL LETTER TO KIM JONG IL," 10/04/00) reported that opposition is mounting among Japan's ruling parties and the government toward Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's personal letter to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. Asked by reporters on October 3 if he really sent such a personal letter to Kim Jong-il, Mori remained silent. Foreign Minister Yohei Kono said to reporters, "We haven't heard about it. We are striving toward normalization with the DPRK via official diplomatic routes. I am not sure whether or not it was Prime Minister's individual decision to send a personal letter to Kim Jong-il." A

high ranking Foreign Ministry official said, "The more Prime Minister shows his desire for summit talks, the more they (the DPRK) would take advantage of it." A senior ruling party Diet member also said, "This could lead to a fatal consequence."

2. Japanese-DPRK Economic Cooperation Kyodo News Agency ("N. KOREA ASKS JAPAN TO HELP REBUILD STEEL INDUSTRY," 09/28/00) reported that according to the Tokyo Shimbun, the DPRK has asked Japanese companies to help improve or construct facilities at existing steel plants in the country. Japanese steel industry sources said that the DPRK has unofficially asked several Japanese companies, including Nippon Steel Corporation and Mitsui & Company help improve steel plants such as the Gumjak steel plant in Chongjin, close to the PRC and Russian borders.

3. Japanese-Russian Territorial Issue

The Japan Times ("JAPAN OPEN TO RETURN OF TWO DISPUTED ISLES," 10/02/00) reported that the Japanese government is leaning closer to accepting a two-stage accord over four disputed islands off Hokkaido. According to the accord, Russia would hand over two of the islands with assurances that the remaining two will also eventually be returned. The Japanese government and the ruling coalition, including the Liberal Democratic Party, New Komeito and the New Conservative Party, are beginning to accept the interim proposal "in order to make any progress over the territorial issue." The dispute, involving the islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri and Shikotan and the Habomai group of islets, has prevented the two countries from concluding a peace treaty.

4. Japanese-PRC Issue of History

The Daily Yomiuri (Sugiyama Hiroyuki, "CHINA WILL STOP GOADING JAPANESE OVER WARTIME PAST," Beijing, 10/09/00) and the Nihonkeizai Shimbun/Nikkei Shimbun (Katsuji Nakazawa, "PRC PRIME MINISTER SAYS PRC WOULD NOT STIMULATE JAPAN BY ISSUE OF HISTORY," Beijing, 10/09/2000) reported that PRC Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, who is scheduled to visit Japan on October 12, told reporters on October 8 for the very first time that the PRC would not bring up the issue of history. Zhu said, "China should not use issues concerning the wartime history any longer to spur the Japanese people. The war between China and Japan was the result of Japan's militarism, but the (ordinary) Japanese people of today as well as those back then should not be held responsible for that." However, he stressed that, "Japan should not forget its wartime history and that the Japanese government should address in a responsible manner the civil suits by non-Japanese plaintiffs who are demanding compensation for being requisitioned by Japan during the war."

5. PRC Naval Activities

The Daily Yomiuri (Sugiyama Hiroyuki, "CHINA WILL STOP GOADING JAPANESE OVER WARTIME PAST," Beijing, 10/09/00) reported that during a press conference on October 8, PRC Prime Minister Zhu Rongji vowed to reduce the number of PRC research activities in seas around Japan to promote mutual understanding and confidence. Zhu said, "The number (of maritime research activities) will be cut. A mutual notification system will be established if PRC research ships have to go (to the sensitive zones)."

6. ASEAN Plus Three

George Sioris, a former ambassador of Greece to Japan and currently president of the Center for

Japanese and Asian Studies in Athens, argued in the Japan Times ("ASEAN PLUS 3 GIVES ASIA HOPE FOR THE FUTURE," Chiang Mai, Thailand, 10/09/00) that a new acronym emerged recently in the world of international relations: APT, standing for Association of Southeast Asian Nations Plus Three (Japan, the PRC and the ROK). Sioris argued that it is encouraging for the region and beyond that the half billion people of the 10 ASEAN countries are now joining hands with the PRC and Japan, as well as with the ROK. Sioris said that whether the idea is considered a reincarnation of the older Malaysian East Asian Economic Caucus or not, it is a fact that Northeast and Southeast Asia are integral members of a broader concept: "East Asia." Secondly, he argued that new fields of cooperation will create new incentives and dynamics, although ASEAN will have to redefine its goals within the present regional and international landscape. However, he said, that does not mean that we should merely reconsider ASEAN's guiding principle of "nonintervention in the domestic affairs of member states." Sioris noted that there is the need to put member societies, economies and law in order, internally. Without harmony in ASEAN's largest member, Indonesia, little can be achieved with outside help. Third, potential "benefits" should not be viewed as flowing only in one direction: toward ASEAN. There are also gains for the other three members, which are all players within ASEAN's confines. Fourth, he argued that APT can play a big role in security. He noted that he was aware that it is not easy to do this, but argued that planners, from both groups, should focus on both dimensions. That could benefit not only group-to-group relations, but also relations between the two giants, the PRC and Japan, contenders for leadership in tomorrow's Asia. He also pointed out that some analysts are hoping, in a restrained way, that APT may contribute in the long term to lessening tensions between those countries. Finally, he argues that it is one thing for distant outsiders, like the US or Australia, to feel some disappointment at not being included in this experiment, while it is quite another for a closer and great Asian neighbor like India to be left out. He concluded that India cannot be considered a part of "East Asia," but that India is Asia as a whole that has to project a greater image and dynamism in the years to come.

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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