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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Shipment

Washington Post (Thomas E. Ricks and Peter Slevin, "SPAIN AND US SEIZE N KOREAN MISSILES," 12/11/02), the Agence France-Presse ("SUSPECTED NORTH KOREAN MISSILES FOUND ON SHIP," 12/11/02) and the Associated Press (Pauline Jelinek, "YEMEN PROMISED BEFORE NOT TO BUY MISSILES FROM NORTH KOREA, US SAYS," Washington, 12/11/02) reported that the missile shipment seized in the Arabian Sea appears to violate an agreement Yemen made with the US not to buy such equipment from the DPRK, U.S. defense officials said Wednesday. But a Yemeni official told The Associated Press in San'a that Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Kerbi summoned US Ambassador Edmund J. Hull to protest the seizure and ask for the return of the equipment, which was planned for "defensive purposes." The Bush administration in August imposed sanctions on the DPRK company Changgwang Sinyong Corp. for selling Scud missile parts to Yemen. At that time, US authorities asked Yemen why it bought the parts, and that country apologized and promised not to do so again, two defense officials said Wednesday. Under the US sanctions, Changgwang Sinyong Corp. will be barred for two years from obtaining new individual export licenses through the Commerce or State departments for any controlled items. The sanctions have little practical effect,

one official said, because there is so little commerce between the US and the DPRK.

Reuters (Steve Holland and Mohammed Sudam, "US FREES SHIP WITH SCUD MISSILES FOR YEMEN," Washington/Sanaa, 12/11/02) reported that the US on Wednesday agreed to release a DPRK ship carrying Scud missiles which Yemen said were intended for its army. The So San, intercepted by Spain in the Arabian Sea on Monday and handed over to the US, was allowed to sail for Yemen, according to the official Yemeni news agency Saba. "There is no provision under international law prohibiting Yemen from accepting delivery of missiles from the DPRK," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said. "While there is authority to stop and search, in this instance there is no authority to seize a shipment of Scud missiles from the DPRK to Yemen and therefore the merchant vessel is being released." Yemen gave the US assurances that it "would not transfer these missiles to anyone," Fleischer told reporters. The Yemeni news agency said Secretary of State Colin Powell told Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh by telephone that the crew had returned to the ship and that the weapons cargo was headed to Yemen. After the ship was seized, Yemen, which has tried to shed its image as a haven for militants, protested to the US and Spain, saying the missiles had been bought for its army from North Korea. Independent defense experts said that the DPRK was probably not violating any law by transporting the cargo, although Spanish Defense Minister Federico Trillo said Spain had had the right to board the vessel because it was not flagged.

2. Responses to DPRK Weapons Proliferation

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "FOLLOWING INTERCEPTION OF MISSILE SHIPMENT, NORTH KOREA ACCUSES UNITED STATES OF SEEKING GLOBAL SUPREMACY," Seoul, 12/11/02) reported that the DPRK was silent Wednesday about the interception of a ship allegedly carrying missiles from the DPRK, but said it had the right to develop weapons to defend itself. "It is necessary to heighten vigilance against the US strategy for world supremacy and 'anti-terrorism war,'" the DPRK newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, said in an editorial. "All the countries are called upon to build self-reliant military power by their own efforts," the newspaper said. It was unclear whether the editorial was a response to the interception. In a possible sign of US-ROK tension, the party of a leading presidential candidate in Seoul questioned the timing of the White House announcement Tuesday that a ship carrying a dozen Scud-type missiles was intercepted in the Arabian Sea with the help of US intelligence. The party of Roh Moo-hyun, a candidate in the December 19 election who says he wants a more "equal" relationship with the US, noted that some US and ROK news media reported earlier this month about an alleged DPRK ship bound for Yemen with missile parts. "We cannot help having questions about the background of the interception," said Lee Nak-yon, spokesman of the pro-government Millennium Democratic Party. Lee did not elaborate. But a party official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the statement was meant to question whether the US timed the interception in an attempt to influence the outcome of ROK's election.

Reuters (Jonathan Ansfield, "N KOREA UNDER PRESSURE AS ARMITAGE COMES TO CHINA," Beijing, 12/11/02) reported that the DPRK came under pressure from friends and enemies alike on Wednesday after the discovery of a DPRK ship carrying Scud missiles in the Arabian Sea. US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said the discovery backed US claims that the DPRK was a major weapons proliferator. He spoke on arrival in Beijing to discuss US plans on Iraq and efforts to make the DPRK drop its nuclear programme. The Russian ambassador to Beijing, Igor Rogachev, said Russia and the PRC were putting heavy pressure on the DPRK not to develop nuclear arms and had talked to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. "Obviously, this was suspected by American authorities for some time. North Korea, as Dr (Condoleezza) Rice, our national security adviser, has said time and again, is one of the major proliferators." "I don't think there's any change. This is not exactly a development that is new. As I say, as a major proliferator, the North Koreans apparently have been caught."

3. PRC-US Military Talks

Reuters ("CHINA POSITIVE AFTER U.S. DEFENCE TALKS," Washington, 12/11/02) reported that the PRC expressed on Wednesday satisfaction with the first high-level defence talks with the US since President George W. Bush took office two years ago and hoped to continue the dialogue. "Not only the Chinese side, but both sides give a positive appraisal" to the talks on Monday between U.S. Undersecretary of Defence Douglas Feith and PRC General Xiong Guangkai, deputy chief of the People's Liberation Army, Xie Feng, spokesman for the PRC Embassy in Washington, told Reuters. "Both sides agreed the atmosphere of consultation is friendly and constructive in promoting constructive and cooperative relations between our two countries," he said. In addition, both sides are determined to "maintain this very important channel of exchange", he said. After holding lengthy talks with Feith and then meeting Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz on Monday, Xiong met on Tuesday with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. The Pentagon on Monday indicated creeping progress in resumed military ties with the PRC, calling the talks "useful, professional... real discussions".

4. DPRK Asylum Seekers

The New York Times (James Dao, "US IS URGED TO PROMOTE FLOW OF REFUGEES FROM NORTH KOREA," Washington, 12/11/02) reported that a growing number of Bush administration officials, policy experts and lawmakers argue that the stream of refugees from the DPRK into the PRC could sharply increase, particularly if the PRC agreed not to send them back, and if the ROK and the US took in more escapees. "If this regime were actually to collapse, it won't be through an elite coup," said Victor D. Cha, associate professor of government and a Korea expert at Georgetown University. "Real regime change will come from the bottom, from people who can't oppose the regime but who can vote with their feet." A senior administration official said: "When Hungary and Czechoslovakia opened their borders to East Germans, it helped speed the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Supporting refugees from North Korea could stress their system, too." In Congress, Senator Sam Brownback, the conservative Republican from Kansas, and Senator Edward Kennedy, the liberal Democrat from Massachusetts, have sponsored legislation that would remove a provision in immigration law that makes it difficult for DPRK citizens to seek asylum in the United States. House Republicans have also called on the administration to share the costs of resettling DPRK refugees with the ROK, the PRC, Russia and other Asian countries, much as it did with Vietnamese boat people in the 1970's. "It looks like factors are lining up and history is clearly against the North Korean regime," Brownback said in a recent interview. "It's a failed state. It's starving its own people."

5. PRC Radio Censorship

Washington File ("CHINESE GOVERNMENT STILL JAMS VOA, RFA BROADCASTS," Washington, 12/11/02) reported that "Beijing is working hard to prevent the news we report from getting through to the Chinese people" says Joan Mower, communications coordinator for the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), the agency that oversees Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA). Speaking before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China on December 9, she reported that the PRC government jams not only VOA and RFA broadcasts but blocks access to their Web sites as well. Mower called the PRC government policies "unfair." She noted that the PRC government allows only two US correspondents to work in the PRC for US international broadcasting; other US journalists work under stringent restrictions. VOA and RFA spend millions of dollars every year to broadcast into Asia, Mower said. Costs would be greatly reduced if the PRC government did not jam the broadcasts, she said. The BBG filed formal complaints to the

International Telecommunications Union over these issues. According to Mower, the PRC government has not responded favorably to BBG requests to formally discuss their concerns.

6. PRC-US on Iraq

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "US ENVOY IN CHINA TO DISCUSS `POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS' ON IRAQ," Beijing, 12/11/02) reported that a senior US official arrived in the PRC on Wednesday to discuss Iraq, but gave no indication whether he would bring up a seized shipment of missiles that was believed to be on its way to the DPRK. US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said he wanted to discuss the UN Security Council resolution that requires Iraq to cooperate with efforts to determine whether it still has long-range missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. As a permanent council member, "China's extraordinarily important, and we want to make sure we expose China to our thinking," Armitage told reporters. "I am most interested in hearing what China has to say about possible next steps." The PRC supported the Iraq resolution but has argued against US threats of military action, insisting that the UN respect Iraqi sovereignty and settle the matter promptly.

7. DPRK-ROK Maritime Relations

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA ACCUSES SOUTH KOREAN WARSHIPS OF INTRUDING ON MARITIME BORDER," Seoul, 12/11/02) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday accused the ROK of trying to incite a naval clash by sending warships into its territorial waters off the western coast. The ROK rejected the accusations. The DPRK' said two ROK warships and five fishing boats stayed in DPRK waters "for hours" Wednesday morning and another navy ship for about half an hour shortly after noon. "This provocation ... is a prearranged move of the South Korean military authorities to spark one more shocking incident in the west sea and shift the blame for it on the North side," said KCNA, monitored in Seoul.

8. DPRK Winter Fuel Situation

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "ISOLATED NORTH KOREA FACES A COLD AND HUNGRY WINTER," Washington, 12/11/02) reported that the onset of winter may seem an inopportune time for the US to stop shipping sorely needed heavy oil the DPRK, where temperatures of 20 below zero Fahrenheit (-29 Celsius) are routine at this time of year. The halt was announced just days ahead of a revised administration food aid policy for the DPRK that could lead to cutbacks in 2003. These are among signs of broad international unhappiness with the DPRK lately. The country may be as isolated now as it has been at any time over the past three years. The Japan is cutting back on food assistance. Europeans are feeling sandbagged by Pyongyang's policies, says Robert Einhorn of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He lists new European aid as doubtful under present circumstances. Besides the U.S. oil shipments, Einhorn believes that another doomed energy assistance initiative will be two light-water reactors for the DPRK that are being financed mostly by Japan and the ROK. "It is extremely unlikely that both light-water reactors will be produced," Einhorn says. Nobody will announce the actual pulling of the plug because, he says, that would only encourage a DPRK provocation in response. Peter Hayes, who follows the DPRK at the California-based Nautilus Institute, says the DPRK's home and workplace heating problems are such that the cutoff of US oil shipments after eight years won't make much of a difference. "The energy economy is one-tenth of what it used to be," Hayes said. "If you reduce it by 5 to 10 percent, you may get a 1 percent effect." Even if an oil shipment initially set for next week had gone ahead as scheduled, most of the country's buildings would have remained without heat anyway, he says. Hayes believes that

the DPRK will be able to evade the devastating famine that struck the country in 1996-97. But, he says, the situation remains grim, with "highly concentrated pockets of extreme malnutrition and starvation" in some areas and "generalized hunger" elsewhere. As always, food supplies in Pyongyang will be adequate, he adds

9. ROK-US Troop Treaty Revisions

Reuters ("US, SOUTH KOREA BEGIN TALKS ON TROOP PACT CHANGES," Seoul, 12/11/02) reported that US and ROK officials began talks Wednesday on modifying a treaty governing US troops in the country to defuse mounting anger over the deaths of two girls run over by a US army vehicle. The meeting in Seoul followed an apology by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage Tuesday for the accidental deaths of the teenagers and a commitment to work to improve the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

II. CanKor E-Clipping

1. Issue #109

Responding to the revelation of the DPRK's uranium enrichment programme, the European Union votes to suspend economic cooperation. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) expresses concern that the suspension of fuel oil deliveries to the DPRK will exacerbate an already critical humanitarian situation. The IFRC plans to provide fuel oil to clinics and hospitals, urging the international community to increase humanitarian contributions. A Washington Post article documents the use of humanitarian aid as political leverage in negotiations with the DPRK. Mine-clearing operations in a corridor through the demilitarized zone conclude this week, in preparation for rail and road links between the two Koreas. Following the acquittal of two American soldiers responsible for the accidental death of two Korean girls earlier this year, anti-US sentiment in the ROK spills over into a boycott of the latest James Bond movie "Die Another Day". Slated for release in South Korea on New Year's Eve, the film is criticized for misrepresenting inter-Korean relations. Several Korean entertainers join the boycott by refusing to appear with stars featured in the Bond film. Inter-Korean attitudes are said to have improved as a result of people-t--people contacts around sports activities such as the Busan Asiad games. This week's FOCUS documents the opening of DPRK roads for bicycle and motorcycle events that engage foreigners with DPR Koreans.

For back issues of CanKor, please visit our website at: http://www.CanKor.ca

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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