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I. United States

1. DPRK Military Posture

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "NORTH KOREA CONTINUES MILITARY BUILDUP," 02/12/01, 1) reported that US military and intelligence officials said that the US is continuing to build up its military forces. CIA Director George J. Tenet told a Senate hearing on Wednesday that "the North Korean military appears for now to have halted its near-decade-long slide in military capabilities" and is expanding its short- and medium-range missile arsenal. Tenet also said there are few signs of real economic reform. He stated, "Pyongyang's declared 'military first' policy requires massive investment in the armed forces." Vice Admiral Thomas Wilson, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, said that the DPRK is unlikely to reduce its military position because the military is needed to keep the regime in power. US Defense Department officials said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is using the acquisition of new weapons and supplies to gain the support of his military leaders. Robert Manning, an Asian affairs specialist with the Council on Foreign Relations, stated, "The problem is that diplomacy is way out front of threat reduction. The threat hasn't lessened at all, and yet the diplomacy and imagery is that this is somehow a new North Korea and [Kim Jong-il] is a charming guy." He warned that the light-water reactor project is so far behind schedule that the DPRK this

spring could threaten to restart its nuclear arms program. Manning warned, "You could have a serious escalation of the threat." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 12, 2001.]

2. Inter-Korean Railway

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA DELAYS RAILWAY PROJECT," Seoul, 02/12/01) reported that ROK officials said Monday that the DPRK unilaterally postponed implementation of an accord to clear jointly with the ROK thousands of land mines along the Demilitarized Zone to build a cross-border railway. An anonymous ROK Defense Ministry official said that the DPRK notified the ROK on Saturday that the schedule should be changed for "administrative reasons." ROK media speculated that the DPRK move appears to be related to the ROK's 2001 defense white paper. Before concluding last week's talks, DPRK delegates declared there would be no more defense ministers' meetings between the two sides unless the ROK defense white paper is revised to remove the designation of the DPRK as the ROK's "principal enemy."

3. US Troops in ROK

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "NORTH KOREA CONTINUES MILITARY BUILDUP," 02/12/01, 1) reported that an unnamed senior US military official said that the US Defense Department has no plans to reduce the number of US troops based in the ROK. The official stated, "I don't see reducing numbers until we get confidence-building measures with the North Koreans. Until we can get real verifiable confidence-building measures which move them back off the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone), and increase warning time, I don't see changing it." A senior US military official said that DPRK military leaders remain "deeply suspicious" of any moves toward reconciliation with the ROK and economic reform. Noting that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is "the only one" in the DPRK with access to cable television and the internet, the official stated, "He personally has an idea about the West, and yet when he turns to pass off ideas, policies to his next echelon, they don't know beans about what's going on. They don't watch the channels, they don't get the papers, they don't get to travel. So you have in many ways an unstable situation in which you have one guy making decisions and one frame of reference, and then you have other people carrying them out with entirely another frame of reference, mostly dominated by the propaganda picture which North Korea has painted over the years." The official stated, "Basically, we've shifted our approach in Korea. Until fairly recently, it's been 'we have to fight tonight,' and therefore military requirements are the most important thing." The new approach is that US forces are in the ROK "for the long haul" and thus the military is doing more "smart good-neighbor things" to improve relations. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 12, 2001.]

4. PRC View of US-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse (CHINA WANTS CLOSER US-NORTH KOREA TIES: SCHOLAR," Beijing, 02/12/01) reported that Zhao Huji, a DPRK expert with the PRC State Council Developmental Research Center, said on Monday that the PRC views closer ties between the US and the DPRK as key to peace on the Korean Peninsula, but is alarmed at perceived US unwillingness to improve ties. Zhao stated, "A visit by Bill Clinton to North Korea would have greatly worked toward defusing tensions on the Korean Peninsula." He added, "The decision by President (George W.) Bush's administration to build the NMD (National Missile Defense) will become a huge obstacle toward North Korea's opening up." He warned, "It is not unlikely that China and Russia could end up using North Korea as a kind of card to play in joint efforts to get Washington to back down from NMD."

Zhao said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il needs to improve relations with the US to open up his country and implement economic reforms. He stated, "Kim Jong-Il is talking peace not confrontation. He sees that he will not be able to reunify with South Korea quickly and that economic development is his only way out." He argued that Kim's recent overtures to the PRC and Russia are aimed at "creating the conditions for economic reforms and opening up," while also preparing for the likelihood of continued isolation from the US and Japan. He noted that while normalization of relations between the DPRK and the US would not result in any influx of US investment, it would open the way for investment from the ROK and financial institutes such as the World Bank and possibly for compensation from Japan. Zhao said that the biggest obstacle facing Kim is opposition from his country's elites, including top government and military officials, and that a propaganda campaign on the ideological merits of economic reform has already appeared in the DPRK press. Zhao said that he expects the ruling DPRK Worker's Party to hold a key congress in the coming months in which Kim will unveil a reform plan.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-US Talks

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "SOUTH KOREA, U.S. TO HOLD HIGH-LEVEL N.K.," Seoul, 02/12/01) reported that the ROK and the US will begin diplomatic consultations at senior levels early next month to fine-tune in earnest their policies toward the DPRK, a top ROK foreign policymaker said on Saturday. "The two sides are due to hold the policy consultation meeting at the beginning of next month in Seoul for an early coordination of their North Korea policies," Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn said after returning home from his three-day visit to the US. The two sides are expected to focus their policy coordination on the DPRK's military threats, including their development of missiles and other weapons of mass destruction, observers said.

2. ROK-US Summit

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "KIM, BUSH TO MEET IN MID-MARCH," Seoul, 02/12/01) reported that the summit talks between President Kim Dae-jung and US President George W. Bush will take place in mid-March, Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn said on Saturday. "A formal announcement of President Kim's visit to the United States will come as soon as Washington is set to inform our government of the concrete summit schedule in a few days," Lee told reporters after returning home from a three-day visit to the US.

3. Prospect of DPRK Openness

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "N.K. WILL NOT BECOME 2ND CHINA," Seoul, 02/12/01) reported that the DPRK will pursue its own strategy in rebuilding its economy, rather than follow the market reform examples of the PRC, said pro-DPRK media in Japan. The Choson Sinbo, the official gazette of Chochongnyon, or the General Association of (DPRK) Korean Residents in Japan, said in an article Friday that Kim Jong-il's surprise visit to the PRC in mid-January was not aimed at following in the footsteps of the PRC, but only at examining the economic development there. The article stated, "Choson has decided to follow its own way. Our march in the new century focuses on pursuing the juche (self-reliance) idea, which we protected in the face of hardships, instead of shifting from it." While the PRC, under its market reform policy, helped part of its people become richer before moving toward making the entire country an affluent nation, the DPRK would not adopt this policy,

the newspaper said.

4. Inter-Korean Meetings

Chosun Ilbo (Yoon Young-won, "NORTH KOREA DEMANDS CHANGE OF 'MAIN ENEMY' CONCEPT," Seoul, 02/10/01) reported that at the fifth round of military talks on February 8, the DPRK demanded that the ROK drop the concept of a main enemy from its defense white paper as a pre-condition to the next round of ministerial level meetings. A high ranking government source said on Sunday that at the end of the meeting about the Seoul-Shinuiju railroad, the DPRK suddenly read out a statement concerning the concept. Colonel Yoo Young-chul said that DPRK Defense Minister Kim Il-chul was angered at the wording. This is the first official mention of the ROK's defense posture since military contacts were initiated. The DPRK's move was completely unexpected and some analysts say that it was an attempt to introduce a bargaining chip as they did last December at a deputy ministers' meeting. Others said that it is a move to pave the way for the setting up of a military hot line if the ROK abandons the concept.

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