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I. United States

1. DPRK-US Missile Talks

Reuters (Carol Giacomo, "U.S. STUDIES NORTH KOREA MISSILE TALKS," Washington, 12/13/00) reported that the US officials said on December 12 that the US Clinton administration believes it is on the verge of a deal to curb the DPRK's missile program and is likely to undertake talks that could lead to a visit to the DPRK by US President Bill Clinton. However, officials said that no decision has been made on Clinton's trip or on sending US State Department counselor Wendy Sherman for a new round of talks, but such talks were likely. They said that an agreement curbing the DPRK's missile program was closer than generally believed and that they feared it could slip away if left for the next president. US officials said that they would like to consult with the next president and his team because the proposed accord is controversial and would depend on the next administration carrying it out. An official said, "Although there is reason to believe a serious agreement could be reached with North Korea, it has to be fully implemented in the next administration." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 13, 2000.]

2. Remains of US Soldiers from Korean War

The Associated Press (Patrick McDowell, "U.S., NORTH KOREA OPEN TALKS," Kuala Lumpur, 12/13/00) reported that the US and the DPRK opened talks Wednesday on recovering more remains of missing US soldiers from the Korean War. The US is hoping to expand search operations next year. The negotiations between the US Defense Department's POW/Missing Personnel Office and the DPRK army were expected to conclude on December 15 or 16. James L. Greer, the lead US negotiator, said "It was a very successful year by our standards. We're optimistic we can do more. There's been a steady line of progress since we started in 1996."

3. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Associated Press (Kyong-Hwa Seok, "SOUTH KOREA URGES NORTH ON PROJECTS," Seoul, 12/13/00) and Reuters ("S.KOREA PUSHES NORTH COMPLEX, TALKS GET ROCKY START," Seoul, 12/13/00) reported that the ROK urged the DPRK on Wednesday to push forward with joint projects, saying that it worries that relations between the countries are losing momentum. ROK Unification Minister Park Jae-kyu discussed the concerns Wednesday during a meeting in Pyongyang with his DPRK counterpart, Chun Gum-jin. Details of the talks were reported by ROK pool reporters traveling with the delegation.

4. Nogunri Incident

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "S. KOREANS DISPUTE U.S. FINDINGS ON NO GUN RI," Seoul, 12/13/00) reported that the ROK is upset with the US Defense Department's preliminary finding that US soldiers fired in panic - not under orders - at Korean civilians in the village of Nogunri during the Korean War. Survivors of the incident met with US government officials on Wednesday to discuss their plans for opposing the finding, and an ROK civilian advisory group was planning to fly to the US on Wednesday to try to change the conclusions before the final US report. They hope to meet with US Defense and State Department officials this week to lobby for stronger findings in the final report, which is supposed to be finished within six weeks. The survivors are pushing for a US acknowledgment that there were orders to shoot the civilians and they want an apology and compensation for injured survivors and victims' relatives. The Korean National Assembly is urging both countries to take the issue out of the hands of the military, and come to an acceptable compromise. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 13, 2000.]

5. PRC Missile Test

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "PENTAGON CONFIRMS CHINA'S MISSILE TEST," 12/13/00) and the Associated Press ("CHINA TESTED MISSILE DURING SHELTON VISIT ," 12/13/00) reported that US Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon confirmed on December 12 that the PRC conducted the third flight test of the new DF-31 road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile last month during a visit by US General Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Bacon said, "They tested one on November 4, and I believe the chairman was in China at that time." Bacon also said that the second flight of a DF-31 took place in the spring and was never announced by the PRC government, and that the first flight test took place in August 1999. Bacon said that the single- warhead DF-31 has an estimated range of about 5,000 miles, but the test flight was limited to areas inside the PRC and was shorter than its maximum range. He added, "This is a program that's been ongoing, the DF-31 program, since the late 1980s, and the test was pretty much as expected in terms of timing and in terms of results." Bacon also said that did not believe there was a connection between the test and Shelton's visit. He said that the timing may have had more to

do with a typhoon in the region that would make it more difficult for the US to monitor the test than with the general's visit. Bacon also said, "I don't think it's fair to say that this building or this government is worried about what they see in China, but clearly we watch any country that is developing its military, modernizing its military. China has been working on modernizing its long-range missile program, which is very modest compared to ours, very modest compared to the Russians, very modest compared to the French and the British. But they've been working to modernize this program for some time." [Ed. note: The Washington Times article was included as a Top Story in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 13, 2000.]

6. Cross-Straits Links

Reuters ("TAIWAN TO EASE TRADE AND TRAVEL BAN WITH CHINA," Taipei, 12/13/00) and Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN CABINET APPROVES 'MINI-LINKS' WITH CHINA," Taipei, 12/13/00) reported that Taiwan unilaterally announced on Wednesday that it would ease a ban on PRC citizens traveling to and trading with two of its islands as part of efforts to ease tensions with the PRC. However, it was not immediately clear if the PRC would go along with the plan, scheduled to go into effect on January 1. Taiwan's Executive Yuan, or cabinet, approved a set of regulations allowing residents of Quemoy and Matsu to sail to Xiamen and Fuzhou cities in the southeastern PRC province of Fujian. However, PRC ships remain barred from docking at Quemoy and Matsu. Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) vice-chairman John Deng said the regulations would "make things convenient for residents while at the same time taking national security into consideration." Opposition legislators were critical of the unilateral arrangement.

7. PRC View of Chen Shui-bian

Agence France Presse ("CHINA DOES NOT TRUST TAIWAN PRESIDENT CHEN: US GROUP," Beijing, 12/13/00) reported that former US National Security Council members Kenneth Lieberthal and Douglas Paal, and former US State Department senior PRC specialist Winston Lord met with PRC Vice Premier Qian Qichen and chief negotiator on Taiwan Wang Daohan during their visit to Beijing this week. One anonymous US official in the delegation said Wednesday, "The bad news is that they don't want to work with [Taiwan President] Chen [Shui-bian] and the good news is that they are willing to wait and go with the status quo. The feeling here was that they feel Chen is just trying to buy time, he has not made any sincere efforts and they feel they cannot trust him." The official also said that the group discussed the cross-strait situation with Chen before their trip to the PRC and were briefed on his efforts to begin a dialogue with the PRC aimed at reducing tension. The official said, "We told them (PRC officials) that Chen felt it was in his own best interests to form a dialogue with the mainland and that he was still searching for a way to do so." He said that the PRC appears unwilling to move the Taiwan issue toward greater "crisis" and content to refrain from "military talk" and rhetoric on the issue for now. The official also said that it appeared that the PRC would be content to try to isolate Chen and his followers, while encouraging friendly engagement with pro-PRC forces in Taiwan and with Chen's opposition. The US group is to make recommendations to the next US government on cross- strait ties.

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

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